

# (Informal Joint) Cabinet



**Forest Heath**  
District Council

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Agenda</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Tuesday 14 June 2016</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<p><b>5.30 pm</b> <b>Open Forum</b> At each Cabinet meeting, up to 15 minutes shall be allocated for questions from and discussion with, non-Cabinet members in <b>Part 1(A)</b> of the agenda only. Members wishing to speak during this session should if possible, give notice in advance. Who speaks for and for how long will be at the complete discretion of the person presiding.</p> <p><b>5.30 pm</b> <i>(or at the conclusion of the Open Forum, whichever is the later)</i> Members of the public who live or work in the District (or St Edmundsbury Borough) are invited to put one question or statement of not more than three minutes duration relating to items to be discussed in <b>Part 1(A)</b> of the agenda only. If a question is asked and answered within three minutes, the person who asked the question may ask a supplementary question that arises from the reply.</p> <p>A person who wishes to speak must register at least 15 minutes before the time the meeting is scheduled to start.</p> <p>There is an overall limit of 15 minutes for public speaking, which may be extended at the Chairman's discretion.</p>
	<p><b>6.00 pm</b> The formal meeting of the Cabinet will commence at 6.00 pm or immediately following the conclusion of the informal discussions, whichever is the later, in <u>Room GFR14</u>.</p>
<b>Venue:</b>	<p><b>Conference Chamber (F1R11)</b> <b>West Suffolk House</b> Western Way Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU</p> <p><i><b>Please note that the Conference Chamber holds a maximum number of 100 persons seated, which includes Councillors, officers and members of the public present. Therefore, access by members of the public will be on a 'first come, first served' basis and permission is not given for standing room only.</b></i></p>

<b>Membership:</b>	<p><b>Leader</b> James Waters</p> <p><b>Deputy Leader</b> Robin Millar</p> <p><b>Councillor</b></p> <p>David Bowman</p> <p>Stephen Edwards</p> <p>Andy Drummond</p> <p>Robin Millar</p> <p>Lance Stanbury</p> <p><b>Portfolio</b></p> <p>Operations</p> <p>Resources and Performance</p> <p>Leisure and Culture</p> <p>Families and Communities</p> <p>Planning and Growth</p>
<b>Interests – Declaration and Restriction on Participation:</b>	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.
<b>Quorum:</b>	Three Members
<b>Committee administrator:</b>	<p><b>Sharon Turner</b></p> <p>Democratic Services Officer (Cabinet)</p> <p><b>Tel:</b> 01638 719237</p> <p><b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:sharon.turner@westsuffolk.gov.uk">sharon.turner@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a></p>

# Public Information

<b>Venue:</b>	<b>West Suffolk House</b> Western Way Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP33 3YU	Tel: 01638 719237 Email: <a href="mailto:democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk">democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a> Web: <a href="http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk">www.westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>
<b>Access to agenda and reports before the meeting:</b>	Copies of the agenda and reports are open for public inspection at the following address at least five clear days before the meeting and are also available to view on our website:  <b>District Offices</b> College Heath Road Mildenhall Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP28 7EY	
<b>Attendance at meetings:</b>	The West Suffolk Councils actively welcome members of the public and the press to attend its meetings and holds as many of their meetings as possible in public.  <b><i>Please note that the Conference Chamber holds a maximum number of 100 persons seated, which includes Councillors, officers and members of the public present. Therefore, access by members of the public will be on a 'first come, first served' basis and permission is not given for standing room only.</i></b>	
<b>Public participation:</b>	Members of the public who live or work in the Borough/District are invited to put one question or statement of not more than three minutes duration relating to items to be discussed in Part 1 of the agenda only. If a question is asked and answered within three minutes, the person who asked the question may ask a supplementary question that arises from the reply. A person who wishes to speak must register at least 15 minutes before the time the meeting is scheduled to start. There is an overall time limit of 15 minutes for public speaking, which may be extended at the Chairman's discretion.	
<b>Disabled access:</b>	West Suffolk House has facilities for people with mobility impairments including a lift and wheelchair accessible WCs. However in the event of an emergency use of the lift is restricted for health and safety reasons.  Visitor parking is at the car park at the front of the building and there are a number of accessible spaces.	
<b>Induction loop:</b>	An Induction loop is available for meetings held in the Conference Chamber.	
<b>Recording of</b>	The Council may record this meeting and permits members of	

<b>meetings:</b>	<p>the public and media to record or broadcast it as well (when the media and public are not lawfully excluded).</p> <p>Any member of the public who attends a meeting and objects to being filmed should advise the Committee Administrator who will instruct that they are not included in the filming.</p>
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# Agenda

## **Procedural Matters**

All Members of St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Cabinet will be in attendance to enable informal discussions on the reports listed in Items 5. to 8. below to take place between the two authorities:

### **Councillor**

Robert Everitt  
Sara Mildmay-White  
John Griffiths  
Ian Houlder  
Alaric Pugh  
Jo Rayner  
Peter Stevens

### **Portfolio**

Families and Communities  
Housing  
Leader  
Resources and Performance  
Planning and Growth  
Leisure and Culture  
Operations

*QUORUM: Three Members*

On the conclusion of the informal joint discussions, the Cabinet will hold its formal meeting in Room GFR14 as follows:

## **Part 1 (A) - Public**

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

### **2. Minutes**

**1 - 8**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 17 May 2016 (attached).

### **3. Open Forum**

*(This item was undertaken at the beginning of the informal discussions, to allow Members to consider the issues raised by the non-Cabinet Members in relation to Items 5. to 8. The Open Forum on Items 9. and 10. will be subject to the following rules)*

At each Cabinet meeting, up to 15 minutes shall be allocated for questions from and discussion with, non-Cabinet members in **Part 1(B)**. Members wishing to speak during this session should if possible, give notice in advance. Who speaks and for how long will be at the complete discretion of the person presiding.

#### 4. Public Participation

*(Public speaking on Items 5. to 8. was undertaken at the beginning of the informal discussions, to allow Members to consider the issues raised by the members of the public. Public speaking on Items 9 and 10. will be subject to the following rules)*

Members of the public who live or work in the District are invited to put one question/statement of not more than three minutes duration relating to items to be discussed in **Part 1(B)** of the agenda only. If a question is asked and answered within three minutes, the person who asked the question may ask a supplementary question that arises from the reply.

A person who wishes to speak must register at least 15 minutes before the time the meeting is scheduled to start.

There is an overall time limit of 15 minutes for public speaking, which may be extended at the Chairman's discretion.

***(Following the informal discussions held with St Edmundsbury Borough Council's (SEBC) Cabinet on Items 5. to 8. below, Members are asked to refrain from partaking in any further discussion. Separate formal meetings of both Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Councils' Cabinets will then commence with Members being requested to formally resolve Items 5. to 8. below, before commencing separate consideration of Items 9 and 10.)***

#### NON-KEY DECISIONS

#### 5. West Suffolk Operational Hub: Outcome of Second Round of Consultation and Proposed Next Steps 9 - 32

Report No: **CAB/FH/16/023**

Portfolio Holder: David Bowman

Lead Officer: Mark Walsh

***(Note: Appendices A, B and C to this report have been circulated separately)***

*(For reference purposes, St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Report Number is CAB/SE/16/024)*

#### 6. Draft West Suffolk Annual Report 2015/2016 33 - 80

Report No: **CAB/FH/16/024**

Portfolio Holder: James Waters

Lead Officer: Davina Howes

*(For reference purposes, St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Report Number is CAB/SE/16/025)*

**7. Introduction of Charging for a Pre-Application Advice Planning Service 81 - 86**

Report No: **CAB/FH/16/025**

Portfolio Holder: Lance Stanbury

Lead Officer: Rachel Almond

*(For reference purposes, St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Report Number is CAB/SE/16/026)*

**8. Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Devolution - Update**

Portfolio Holder: James Waters

Lead Officer: Ian Gallin

**Part 1(B) – Public**

**9. Report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 25 May 2016 87 - 92**

Report No: **CAB/FH/16/026**

Portfolio Holder: Stephen Edwards

Chairman of the Committee: Louis Busuttil

Lead Officer: Christine Brain

**10. Decisions Plan: 1 June 2016 to 31 May 2017 93 - 106**

Report No: **CAB/FH/16/027**

To consider the most recently published version of the Cabinet's Decisions Plan

Portfolio Holder: James Waters

Lead Officer: Ian Gallin

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# Cabinet



**Forest Heath**  
District Council

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Cabinet** held on  
**Tuesday 17 May 2016 at 6.00 pm** at the **Council Chamber, District**  
**Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall, IP28 7EY**

Present: **Councillors**

**Chairman** James Waters  
**Vice Chairman** Robin Millar

David Bowman  
Andy Drummond  
Stephen Edwards

**By Invitation:**

Simon Cole (Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

**In attendance:**

Rona Burt

**184. Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**185. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 April 2016 were unanimously approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**186. Open Forum**

No non-Cabinet Members in attendance wished to speak under this item.

**187. Public Participation**

There were no questions/statements from members of the public.

**188. Report of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee: 22 March 2016 (Report No CAB/FH/16/017)**

Councillor Stephen Edwards, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, presented this report which provided an outline of the issues discussed by the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee at its meeting on 22 March 2016.

On 22 March 2016, the Joint Committee considered the following substantive items of business:

- (1) Performance Report.
- (2) Welfare Reform Update.
- (3) Enforcement Agency Update.
- (4) Forthcoming Issues.
- (5) Exempt Item: Risk Based Verification.
- (6) Exempt Item: Commercial Update.
- (7) Exempt Item: Shareholders' Agreement and Presentation.

The Portfolio Holder also drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

**RESOLVED:**

That the contents of the report be noted.

**189. Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 21 April 2016 (Report No CAB/FH/16/018)**

Councillor Simon Cole, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, presented this report, which informed the Cabinet of the following items discussed by the Committee on 21 April 2016:

- (1) Presentation by the Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities.
- (2) Monitoring of Community Safety Activities, including Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership.
- (3) Review and Revision of the Constitution.
- (4) Director Surveillance Authorised Applications (Quarter 4).
- (5) Decisions Plan: May 2016 to May 2017.
- (6) Work Programme Update.

Councillor Cole also drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, in relation to the above items and, in particular, commended the Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities on his presentation to the Committee.

With the vote being unanimous, it was:

**RESOLVED:**

That the contents of the report be noted.

**190. Recommendations of the West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group: 10 May 2016 - Mildenhall Hub - Development Brief (Report No CAB/FH/16/019)**

The Director and Councillor David Bowman, Chairman of the Steering Group both presented this report, which set out the recommendations of the Group emanating from its meeting held on 10 May 2016.

On 10 May 2016, the Steering Group considered the following substantive item of business:

(1) Mildenhall Hub: Development Brief

In January 2016, the Group had approved the draft Mildenhall Hub Development Brief for public consultation. The formal consultation process had commenced on 7 March 2016 and ran until 25 April 2016 and had also included a drop-in event for neighbours and interested parties. In addition, a separate meeting had been held with a local residents' group, at their request.

There were two distinct themes arising from the consultation. The first related to the principle of grouping facilities together on a single site and whether Sheldrick Way was the appropriate site and the second theme related to concerns and issues arising from the development of the site at Sheldrick Way. The detail of these themes were set out in paragraphs 1.4 to 1.6 of Report No CAB/FH/16/019. Following the consultation exercise, the Masterplan had been amended to take account of the many comments and suggestions.

Immediately prior to their meeting on 10 May 2016, the Steering Group had undertaken a site visit to Sheldrick Way, to assist with their understanding of the principle of the development. The Steering Group also considered the consultation responses, as had been set out in Appendix B to Report No JGG/JT/16/004, along with the amended Development Brief, as had also been set out in Appendix A to that report and had recommended that the Brief be adopted as non-statutory planning guidance.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

**RESOLVED:**

That the Development Brief for the Mildenhall Hub, be adopted as non-statutory planning guidance.

**191. Exemption to Contract Procedure Rules**

**Creation of a Vision for the Regeneration of RAF Mildenhall**

The Director explained that on 18 March 2016, the MOD had advised the Council that they would be making an internal decision in the Summer about the future of the RAF Mildenhall site. There was a tight window of opportunity for Forest Heath District Council to prepare a vision prospectus for the future of the site to encourage Government to take a wider view of the site's potential. The Council had completed the work to develop the specification for this visioning contract and that had shown the specialist nature of the support needed with a consultancy needing experience of MOD disposals and aviation use.

A procurement process would mean that a contractor would not be appointed until mid June 2016 at the earliest and so would be unable to complete the

Vision work before the Summer and so miss the opportunity to influence government decision making.

The Council had been awarded £230,000 funding from the Cabinet Office for the OPE programme. The Cabinet Office had instructed the Council to use up to £100,000 of this money to develop a vision and prospectus for the future of the site. As part of OPE process, the Government had appointed Cushman and Wakefield (C&W) to advise local authorities on their submissions and worked with West Suffolk Councils on our successful OPE submission. The Council then worked with C&W to develop the consultancy brief and they have demonstrated their ability to grasp the issues and the specialist nature of the development work needed. Through developing the brief they have also gained an understanding of the issues meaning that the timescale for developing the Vision would be shorter than appointing a company that had no previous information on the site.

Time was imperative as the sooner this information was provided to the Government, the greater chance of influencing one of the most significant decisions for the Forest Heath area.

The estimated total value of the exemption was £90,000 and was made under the following exemption criteria, as stated in Section 4.5 of the Contract Procedure Rules:

*'The specialised nature of the goods, services to be supplied or the works to be executed means that only one suitable supplier has been identified or is available; and*

*Unforeseen works where delay will adversely impact on the service delivery for the Council(s).'*

With the vote being unanimous, it was

**RESOLVED:**

That the exemption to the West Suffolk Contract Procedure Rules, as contained in the Constitution, be noted.

**192. Revised Suffolk Flood Risk Management Strategy (SFRMS) (Report No CAB/FH/16/020)**

The Portfolio Holder for Operations presented this report which sought approval for the recently revised Suffolk Flood Risk Management Strategy. This was a statutory requirement for Suffolk County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) to produce the Suffolk Flood Risk Management Strategy (SFRMS) document, in partnership with other flood risk management authorities (which included Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) and St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC)). Adoption of the Strategy by the flood risk authorities would ensure that all parties were working to a common flood risk management approach across Suffolk.

Adoption of the Strategy was also being sought by the SEBC's Cabinet (FHDC's shared services partner) at their meeting on 24 May 2016.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

**RESOLVED:**

That the recently revised Suffolk Flood Risk Management Strategy (SFRMS) as contained in the Appendix to Report No CAB/FH/16/020, be adopted.

**193. Annual Review and Appointment of Cabinet's Working Group, Joint Committees/Panels and Other Groups (Report No CAB/FH/16/021)**

The Cabinet considered this report which presented the annual review and re-appointment of Cabinet Working Group, Joint Committees/Panels and Other Groups for 2016/2017. An addendum to this report had also been circulated which set out further information and an amended recommendation (6) in relation to Section 1.7 of the report (Re-appointment of representatives to outside bodies).

Councillor James Waters, Leader of the Council drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that the Cabinet was required to review the membership and Terms of Reference of its Working Group, Joint Committees/Panels and other Groups for 2016/2017. The existing Terms of Reference for the relevant bodies were attached as Appendix A to E inclusive.

No changes were recommended to the majority of the existing arrangements, with the exception of a proposal to disband the West Suffolk Joint Diversity Working Party. Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council were now in a position across the West Suffolk organisation where, instead of diversity and equality being considered in isolation, it was now mainstreamed into the way in which the Councils worked and was reported to Members through the Annual Report.

Together with the other recommendations contained in the report, the Cabinet supported this proposal and with the vote being unanimous, it was

**RESOLVED:**

Current Cabinet Working Group: Forest Heath District Council Membership only

1. That:

- (a) The Local Plan Working Group continues to operate at the present time in accordance with its current Terms of Reference, as detailed in Appendix A to Report No CAB/FH/16/021.
- (b) The future direction of the Local Plan Working Group, as outlined in Section 1.2.3 of Report No CAB/FH/16/021, be noted.

Current Joint Panels and Steering Group: Joint Membership with St Edmundsbury Borough Council

2. That:

- (a) The West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group, West Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Panel, West Suffolk Joint Health and Safety Panel and the West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel continue to operate in accordance with their current Terms of Reference contained in Appendices B, C D and E to Report No CAB/FH/16/021 respectively.
- (b) Meetings of the Joint Panels set out in Section 1.3.1, continue to be scheduled as and when required, but with regard to the discussion outlined in Section 1.3.4.

Political Balance

3. That:

- (a) The Interim Service Manager (Legal and Democratic Services) be given delegated authority to re-appoint or appoint as applicable, Members and substitute Members to the Working Group, Joint Panels and Steering Group for 2016/2017, as set out in Sections 1.2.1 and 1.3.1, on the nominations from the Group Leaders.
- (b) Such re-appointments/appointments be made on the basis of political balance requirements, where applicable and identified in Report No CAB/FH/16/021.

Joint Committees: Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee

4. That the Interim Service Manager (Legal and Democratic Services) be given delegated authority to re-appoint or appoint as applicable, one full Cabinet Member and two substitute Cabinet Members to the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee for 2016/2017, on the nomination of the Leader of the Council.

Other Informal Working Groups

5. That:

- (a) The Cabinet's existing informal Working Groups be retained or disbanded as indicated in Section 1.6.2 of Report No CAB/FH/16/021.
- (b) Provided that resources are available to support them, further informal task-and-finish working groups continue to be established to consider specific issues as required throughout 2016/2017.

Re-appointment of Representatives to Outside Bodies

6. The Members stated in Section 1.7.2 of Report No CAB/FH/16/021 (Addendum) be re-appointed as 'Observers' to the respective outside bodies listed and that the Leader or ex-officio appointments to the project or partnership groups listed in Sections 1.7.3 and 1.7.4, be noted.

**194. Decisions Plan: May 2016 to May 2017 (Report No CAB/FH/16/022)**

The Cabinet considered Report No CAB/FH/16/022, which was the Cabinet Decisions Plan covering the period May 2016 to May 2017.

Members took the opportunity to review the intended forthcoming decisions of the Cabinet. However, no further information or amendments were requested on this occasion.

**195. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

See Minute 196. below.

**196. Exempt Appendix A: Report of the Anglia Revenues and Benefit Partnership Joint Committee : 22 March 2016 (para 3) (Report No CAB/FH/16/017)**

The Cabinet received and noted Exempt Appendix A to Report No CAB/FH/16/017. However, as no reference was made to specific detail, this item was not discussed in private session.

The Meeting concluded at 6.18 pm

**Signed by:**

**Chairman**

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# (Informal Joint) Cabinet



<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>West Suffolk Operational Hub</b>	
<b>Report No:</b>	<b>CAB/FH/16/023</b>	
<b>Report to and dates:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	14 June 2016
	<b>Council</b>	29 June 2016
<b>Portfolio holder:</b>	David Bowman Portfolio Holder for Operations <b>Tel:</b> 07711 593737 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:david.bowman@forest-heath.gov.uk">david.bowman@forest-heath.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Lead officer:</b>	Mark Walsh Head of Operations <b>Tel:</b> 01284 757300 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:mark.walsh@westsuffolk.gov.uk">mark.walsh@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To review feedback from the second round of public consultation concerning the establishment of a West Suffolk Operational Hub (WSOH) close to Bury St Edmunds and set out the councils' response;</li> <li>• To seek approval for the development of a WSOH that co-locates the councils waste and street scene services infrastructure on a single site at Hollow Road Farm near Bury St Edmunds in a partnership between Forest Heath District Council, St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Suffolk County Council;</li> <li>• To seek approval for the preparation and submission of a detailed planning application for the site;</li> <li>• To seek approval for the allocation of capital funding for the project; and</li> <li>• To note the project risks and outline timing of the programme.</li> </ul>	
<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that Members of Cabinet:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Note this report and its appendices;</b></li> <li><b>2. Approve the progression of a project to deliver a West Suffolk Operational Hub (option 4);</b></li> <li><b>3. Approve the preparation and submission of a detailed planning application for a West</b></li> </ol>	

	<p><b>Suffolk Operational Hub on land at Hollow Road Farm;</b></p> <p><b>4. Subject to the approval of Full Council, approve a gross capital budget of £3.5m (after the St Edmundsbury Borough Council contribution) to the Council's Capital Programme for 2016/17, funded in line with paragraphs 6.10 to 6.21 of this report; and</b></p> <p><b>5. Subject to the approval of Full Council, agree for the Council's Section 151 Officer to make the necessary changes to the council's 2015/16 prudential indicators as a result of recommendation (4).</b></p>
<p><b>Key Decision:</b></p> <p><i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that <b>do not</b> 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>
<b>Consultation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two public consultations have taken place relating to these proposals on 6 March 2015 to 20 April 2015 and 8 January 2016 to 19 February 2016.</li> </ul>
<b>Alternative option(s):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed in IAPOS report in appendix B</li> </ul>
<b>Implications:</b>	
Are there any <b>financial</b> implications? If yes, please give details	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See report section 6</li> </ul>
Are there any <b>staffing</b> implications? If yes, please give details	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See report paragraph 5.13</li> </ul>
Are there any <b>ICT</b> implications? If yes, please give details	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
Are there any <b>legal and/or policy</b> implications? If yes, please give details	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legally the project must comply with planning law and guidelines (including Secretary of State approval) and procurement must comply with EU Procurement Directives.</li> <li>Policy factors are outlined from paragraph 2.9 of the report.</li> </ul>
Are there any <b>equality</b> implications? If yes, please give details	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

<b>Risk/opportunity assessment:</b>		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
<b>Risk area</b>	<b>Inherent level of risk (before controls)</b>	<b>Controls</b>	<b>Residual risk (after controls)</b>
Planning consent or environmental permitting for the chosen site is refused or leads to high mitigation costs and delay.	Medium	Develop a detailed planning strategy with supporting evidence. Engage early with stakeholders through consultations.	Medium
Archaeology, ground condition surveys and design development could result in increased costs and delay.	Medium	Undertake necessary surveys as early as possible. Engage with appropriate experts to manage risk.	Medium
Delay in project programme results in additional cost, for example, through tender inflation and longer engagement of project consultants.	Medium	Develop a detailed project programme and resource plan and manage throughout the project lifecycle	Medium
The current split of costs and benefits between the three partner councils is based upon the current site design. Development of the site design and assumptions may change the balance of these costs between the partners	Medium	The current split of costs is based upon sound assumptions and estimates provided by the project Quantity Surveyor. These will be tracked, monitored and reported as the project progresses	Medium
Savings and income targets may not be achieved.	Medium	Estimates based upon identified opportunities which have been valued realistically.	Low
Cost of borrowing may increase when borrowing is required.	Medium	Linked to PWLB rates. Monitor as part of treasury management activities.	Low
Lack of resources, skills and capacity to deliver project	Medium	External support engaged and further support will be called upon as required. Sharing officer resources with SCC.	Low
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>		All Wards	
<b>Background papers:</b> <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		St Edmundsbury Borough Council ( <a href="#">report F51 dated 30 June 2014</a> ) St Edmundsbury Borough Council ( <a href="#">Report CAB/SE/15/015 dated 10 February 2015</a> ) Forest Heath District Council ( <a href="#">Report CAB/FH/015/001 dated 17 February 2015</a> ) Suffolk County Council ( <a href="#">report to Cabinet dated 24 February 2015 agenda item 8</a> )	

	St Edmundsbury Borough Council ( <a href="#">report CAB/SE/15/040 dated 23 June 2015</a> ) Forest Heath District Council ( <a href="#">report CAB/FH/15/030 dated 14 July 2015</a> ) St Edmundsbury Borough Council ( <a href="#">report CAB/SE/15/050 dated 8 September 2015</a> ) Forest Heath District Council ( <a href="#">report CAB/FH/15/040 dated 15 September 2016</a> )
<b>Documents attached:</b>	<i>(Please list any appendices.)</i> Appendix A – Consultation Report Appendix B – Identification and Assessment of Potential Options and Sites (updated) Appendix C – Sustainability Appraisal (updated)

## Glossary of Abbreviations

EfW	Energy from Waste (facility at Great Blakenham, near Ipswich)
FHDC	Forest Heath District Council
GPU	Government Property Unit
HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle
HWRC	Household Waste Recycling Centre
IAPOS	Identification and Assessment of Potential Options and Sites (report)
LGA	Local Government Association
MoT	Ministry of Transport (vehicle safety test)
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
OPE	One Public Estate
PSV	Public Service Village
QS	Quantity Surveyor
RCV	Refuse Collection Vehicle
RPI	Retail Prices Index
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SCC	Suffolk County Council
SEBC	St Edmundsbury Borough Council
SWP	Suffolk Waste Partnership
TCA	Transformation Challenge Award
WCA	Waste Collection Authorities (FHDC / SEBC)
WDA	Waste Disposal Authority (SCC)
WSOH	West Suffolk Operational Hub
WTS	Waste Transfer Station

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **Dealing with our waste**

- 1.1 Waste in Suffolk is reused, recycled, composted or turned into energy. After taking into account the income received from these activities, it costs Suffolk's taxpayers around £35 million a year to collect and dispose of their waste. While we encourage people to reduce their waste, these costs will grow as the number of homes in Suffolk grows.
- 1.2 Waste is an issue which affects every household every week. Alongside looking after our streets, green and open spaces it is one of our most visible services. It also changes regularly – energy from waste has replaced landfill, the emphasis now is more on reduction than recycling and our composting contract is different, for example. More changes will come and this project aims to put us in the best place to future-proof our services so we continue to deliver the best value we can to our residents.
- 1.3 Residual (black bin) waste now goes to a new facility in Great Blakenham, near Ipswich, where it is burnt and turned into energy. This change requires a new network of strategically located waste transfer stations across Suffolk. These allow waste to be efficiently transferred from Refuse Collection Vehicles and bulked into fewer, larger trucks ('bulkiers') which then take it to Great Blakenham for processing. The current arrangement of transfer stations in West Suffolk is based on previous landfill requirements and so is inefficient and unsustainable. Much of our waste is taken to the western fringes of Suffolk for bulking only to be transported to the east of Suffolk which results in costly, inefficient and environmentally unwanted 'waste miles'.
- 1.4 Through its business case for the Energy from Waste facility, Suffolk County Council is reducing the cost to taxpayers of disposing of our waste by £8.5 million each year. Part of this saving will come from building a waste transfer station close to Bury St Edmunds which would create the greatest efficiency and reduction in waste miles on Suffolk's roads. It is also important that the waste transfer station is near the strategic lorry network to avoid unnecessary lorry movements on Suffolk's rural roads.
- 1.5 Our depots deliver a wide range of frontline services to residents and businesses in West Suffolk. Many of these services, such as waste collection and street cleansing, are statutory (we have to provide them). These are supported and augmented by other depot-based services such as grounds maintenance, tree maintenance, fleet, commercial services (like trade waste) along with technical and administrative support. These services are delivered on our streets and in our communities and therefore require a large and complex fleet of vehicles, staff, support equipment and consumables all of which need a place to operate from, be maintained and safely and securely stored. This therefore requires a significant and growing need for space.
- 1.6 Being in a strong position to deal with certain growth, certain change and uncertain costs are the main reasons behind the West Suffolk Operational Hub project. If we were to locate the WSOH facilities away from Bury, future growth in the area would continually drive up the service cost to the taxpayer.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

### **What is the West Suffolk Operational Hub project?**

- 2.1 The West Suffolk Operational Hub is a partnership project that proposes combining the facilities needed for waste and street services on a single site near to Bury St Edmunds. The partner councils are those involved in collecting waste, Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council, and disposing of it, Suffolk County Council. The proposal is that FHDC and SEBC vacate their depots at Holborn Avenue in Mildenhall and Olding Road in Bury St Edmunds and relocate to a single site shared with a new SCC waste transfer station and a relocated Household Waste Recycling Centre which is currently at Rougham Hill, on the edge of Bury St Edmunds. The project does not include the closure or relocation of the existing SEBC depot in Haverhill nor the closure / relocation of any other HWRCs.
- 2.2 Further information on the development of this project can be found in the 'background papers' section above.

### **Why is a West Suffolk Operational Hub needed?**

- 2.3 There will be significant housing growth in West Suffolk over the next 20 years or so with an estimated increase of more than 22% (from around 75,000 to 92,000 households) which will place increased demand on waste and street services. The current infrastructure that we use to deliver these services in West Suffolk will not be fit for purpose given this changing demand. We must ensure that we have the facilities needed to deliver these services as cost-effectively and efficiently as possible.
- 2.4 There is currently no space to expand to cope with this growth at the depot in Olding Road, Bury St Edmunds. The revised Western Way Masterplan (approved by St Edmundsbury Borough Council on 19 April 2016) recognises this and includes the current depot as a future potential development site. This recently revised masterplan builds on the original 2006 masterplan for the site which also proposed the relocation of the depot.
- 2.5 The ageing SEBC depot and associated buildings at Olding Road would require significant investment, estimated at around £2.25 million, over the next five years if it continues to be used, although pressure on space would lead to eventual relocation despite the investment.
- 2.6 Since 2012 FHDC and SEBC have been working under a formal shared services arrangement with a single staffing structure serving the two councils. While this has delivered considerable savings, further reductions in property and staff costs would be achieved through location to a single depot. Increased efficiency would also be gained through sharing facilities with SCC's waste transfer station. Including the HWRC, which also has a waste transfer element, on the same site would further increase opportunities for savings and efficiencies.
- 2.7 With a WSOH in an optimal location close to Bury St Edmunds further savings would come from reducing waste miles, more efficient collection rounds, fewer staff and vehicles (or increased capacity needed for future growth). Parking and

maintaining the bin collection vehicles next to the place where they tip their waste for onward transfer would also significantly reduce waste miles. Allowing for changes to collection rounds which would be needed when a new waste transfer station is built, we calculate a reduction of around 45,000 HGV miles or 832 fewer HGV trips on Suffolk's roads each year just for the domestic waste collection compared to our current operations.

- 2.8 As the financial support received from Government to councils is cut, the West Suffolk councils are increasing income through working more commercially to bridge the gap in funding. This income includes collecting commercial trade waste, mechanical sweeping and gulley emptying as well as grounds and tree maintenance. Income also comes from providing vehicle servicing, inspections and MoTs at our fleet workshops. Better facilities, and the flexibility to reconfigure them to deal with future demand, would bring significant opportunities to increase that commercial income to the benefit of taxpayers.

### **Political and policy factors**

- 2.9 The project is part of phase 2 of the Government's One Public Estate (OPE) programme. This is an initiative supported by the Cabinet Office Government Property Unit (GPU) and the Local Government Association (LGA). In effect, OPE is about reducing the amount of public sector-owned land or buildings and bringing organisations together. It has four stated aims:

- create economic growth – enabling land and property to be released to stimulate economic growth, regeneration, housing and jobs;
- deliver more integrated, customer-focused services – encouraging public funded services to co-locate, to demonstrate service efficiencies and work towards more customer-focused delivery;
- create capital receipts – through the release of land and property; and
- reduce running costs – of central and local government assets.

The proposed WSOH project supports each of the OPE's aims and has supported a robust analysis of all the options. However, our involvement in it did not determine the outcome and the proposed solution in this report is as a result of local evidence and public consultation with West Suffolk's communities.

- 2.10 The project supports both national and local waste policy. The Waste Management Plan for England (December 2013) talks of managing waste as a resource further up the waste hierarchy and the need for tiers of local government to work more effectively together to achieve this. The waste hierarchy is shown in the figure below.



Figure 1. Waste Hierarchy

- 2.11 The National Planning Policy for Waste (October 2014) outlines the need for effective waste planning as part of local development and opportunities for co-location (sharing facilities).
- 2.12 A research study looking into 'Planning for Waste Management Facilities' (August 2004) talks about the importance of decisions on waste collection and transport systems all the way to the final disposal point. It also says that there is a growing trend for integrated waste facilities which combine a number of processes on one site – particularly with regard to transport and proximity.
- 2.13 Our local Suffolk Waste Partnership Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Suffolk 2013 – 2020 (addendum 2013) outlines a number of policies for the management of waste in Suffolk. The proposals for a WSOH fully match these, including:
- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Policy 1  | Enhancing joint working between authorities;   |
| Policy 8  | Providing a network of HWRCs to maximise recycling and reuse;                        |
| Policy 9  | Energy recovery from residual waste (which requires a network of transfer stations); |
| Policy 11 | Best value through binding together waste collection and disposal; and               |
| Policy 14 | Maximising the recycling of municipal trade waste.                                   |
- 2.14 Suffolk County Council and the West Suffolk councils (and others) were successful in securing Transformation Challenge Award funding from central government to promote closer working, usually by breaking down organisational barriers and joining up systems. Objectives include agile (flexible) working, co-location of service providers and maximising local assets by having staff working across the public sector more effectively. The proposed WSOH project fully supports these objectives through co-locating different operations which also provides greater potential for our staff to work more effectively. The TCA funding has been helpful but it has not influenced the conclusions we have come to in Suffolk. The conclusions in this report are a result of the evidence we have gathered.
- 2.15 More detail outlining the political and policy factors that underpin this proposed project can be found in the Identification and Assessment of Potential Options and Sites (Amended May 2016) document attached at appendix B (page 20)



## **Chronology of events to date**

- 2.16 In spring 2010 the Suffolk Waste Partnership were discussing the need for a network of transfer stations across Suffolk to support the new EfW facility being planned for a site at Great Blakenham. Part of the discussion included whether there was an opportunity to co-locate transfer station and depot facilities in West Suffolk. This was before FHDC and SEBC had entered into a formal shared service arrangement and a combined depot for both councils at this juncture would not have been deliverable. There was no imminent pressure at that time to move the depot as there were no further development plans for the site at that stage (the Public Sector Village Masterplan having been adopted in 2006 and stage 1 of that plan having been completed in 2010).
- 2.17 Between 2011 and 2013, following a period of research, officers advised that a waste transfer station needed to be located in or close to Bury St Edmunds. A thorough search of sites in the Bury area was then undertaken by SCC in 2012 which concluded that the only suitable location for their needs was the existing HWRC site at Rougham Hill (including some adjoining land owned by SEBC). A planning application for the redevelopment of the site to include a waste transfer station and repositioned HWRC was submitted and gained approval in October 2013.
- 2.18 In late 2011, FHDC and SEBC decided to adopt a shared services structure whereby a combined team of officers would deliver services on behalf of both councils. A joint chief executive was appointed in April 2012 and a joint senior management team was in place by November 2012. This significant change streamlined decision-making between the two councils and allowed options for further integrated working to be considered.
- 2.19 In July 2014 council members at FHDC and SEBC proposed that co-locating facilities on an alternative site might be a better solution. The West Suffolk councils were working more collaboratively, the OPE and TCA initiatives had been launched and the sale of the DHL / NHS logistics facility adjacent to West Suffolk House was ushering forward the next phase of development at Western Way.
- 2.20 The West Suffolk councils therefore began to look at relocating together their Holborn Avenue and Olding Road depot facilities along with the potential to co-locate with other public sector partners including the SCC waste facilities. Building on the site selection work undertaken by SCC for their transfer station, the West Suffolk councils investigated further options for a larger combined facility. Following conclusion of the Rougham Hill planning permission challenge, SCC joined with this work to investigate and evaluate other potential options with the West Suffolk council team.
- 2.21 In the autumn of 2014 West Suffolk and SCC officers commenced work on the assessment of options which by February 2015 had arrived at a proposal for councillors to consider. The outcome of the work was a proposal that a WSOH was the optimal solution and that there were no suitable or available allocated (through the local plan) or previously developed (brownfield) sites in the search area of sufficient size on which to locate it. Following sequential planning policy requirements the councils had to consider greenfield sites with three possible options being identified. Land at Hollow Road Farm emerged as the site the

councils considered to be the most suitable, available and deliverable for the facilities required.

- 2.22 The National Planning Policy Framework places particular emphasis on developers and prospective applicants engaging with the communities who lie close to or may be affected by their development proposals. Used in this way community engagement usually takes place at some point prior to the submission of a planning application. Once work on a planning process started, a pre-application public consultation was organised to help develop it through further engagement with those living nearest to the site. It took place from 6 March 2015 to 20 April 2015.
- 2.23 Whilst not a statutory requirement, there were good reasons for undertaking that pre-application public consultation, including to:
- inform people about a proposed development prior to a planning application being submitted;
  - engage communities and stakeholders in the planning process;
  - give interested parties the chance to express their views on the proposed development;
  - gain particular insight or detailed information which is relevant to the scheme;
  - gauge local opinion; and
  - identify ways in which a proposed development could be improved.
- 2.24 This phase of pre-application public consultation generated a significant number of concerns and objections. Key concerns and options expressed included:
- Hollow Road Farm was the wrong location;
  - loss of agricultural land;
  - highways and traffic impact;
  - noise, odour, landscape and visual impact;
  - planning policy;
  - justification for a single site option;
  - site selection criteria; and
  - process of site selection.
- 2.25 In response to this feedback the councils agreed to put the planning application for Hollow Road Farm on hold, discontinue considering it as their 'preferred site' and undertake a second phase of public consultation.
- 2.26 This second round of consultation is not usually required prior to a proposal of this type. However, the councils wanted to ensure everyone with an interest in the project across West Suffolk had the opportunity to scrutinise the process that the councils had gone through so far, and the research they had carried out, so that the most suitable site for a WSOH could be identified. In effect the councils were asking people whether their research could have led to a different conclusion and, in addition, wanted to offer everyone an opportunity to suggest alternative sites for consideration.

### 3. Second public consultation

- 3.1 The full Consultation Report can be found at appendix A.
- 3.2 A second six-week public consultation took place between 8 January 2016 and 19 February 2016. The main elements of the consultation that the public were asked to consider were:
- a. **The need for a single site** (a WSOH) including the process used to establish the need for a joint operational facility including a depot, waste transfer station and a HWRC on a single site;
  - b. **The site selection criteria** and the way in which they were applied, including details about the 19 identified sites and the criteria used to evaluate them. Also, an opportunity for members of the public to suggest alternative sites or to give reasons why one of the rejected sites should be reconsidered; and
  - c. **A Sustainability Appraisal** undertaken to test if a single site approach is the most suitable and the sustainability of the most suitable site identified previously (Hollow Road Farm).
- 3.3 A web page for the project had been established for the first consultation and this was continually updated with information before, during and after the second period of consultation. The website can be found at the following link – [www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/wsoh](http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/wsoh).
- 3.4 Consultation information included the following:
- a. **Consultation summary booklet** which provided a summary of the WSOH project and the two technical documents referred to below. Designed to be a non-technical overview of the information as well as directing people to where they could find more specific information.
  - b. **Identification and Assessment of Potential Options and Sites (IAPOS)** report which included the background to the project, a chronology of events to date, the criteria and assessments used to determine whether co-locating services to a single site was the optimal course to take and the most suitable site for that co-location.
  - c. **Sustainability Appraisal (SA)** undertaken to test if a single site approach was the most suitable and the sustainability of the most suitable site identified previously (Hollow Road Farm).
  - d. **An invitation to scrutinise the documents** published, make comments and suggest any alternative sites for consideration.
- 3.5 The consultation covered the whole of the West Suffolk area (75,000 households) and was promoted through flyers delivered by bin crews over a two-week period from 4 to 15 January 2016, local newspaper advertising, press releases, social media (Facebook and Twitter) and through elected representatives at parish, town, borough, district and county level.

- 3.6 Three separate drop-in events took place at different locations in Bury St Edmunds on 15, 16 and 19 January 2016 and were attended by 220 people.
- 3.7 A public meeting, with an independent chair, took place in Bury St Edmunds on 29 January 2016. This event was attended by over 200 members of the public and involved a presentation on the project with the opportunity to ask questions afterwards. Minutes of the meeting were made public on [www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/wsoh](http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/wsoh).
- 3.8 The information outlined in 3.3 above was made available online at the WSOH web page, hard copies and CD ROMs were deposited at information points across West Suffolk (council offices, libraries, public buildings) and were also made available at the drop-in sessions and the public meeting. Information was also issued on request via a CD ROM or in hard copy for a modest charge to cover printing costs. Copies of consultation materials were offered in alternative formats on request.
- 3.9 Separate consultation was undertaken with 12 statutory organisations in order to get their opinion on the options and sites assessment process. Two responses were received and details of these, along with the organisations contacted, can be found from page 154 of the Consultation Report (appendix A).

#### **4. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK**

- 4.1 Full details of the public feedback can be found in section 5 from page 12 of the Consultation Report at appendix A. The councils also hold files containing redacted copies (removing personal details) of each of the individual items of feedback we have received which can be made available for inspection.

##### **How did people feedback comments and how many?**

- 4.2 Feedback was collected through a number of different channels including an online feedback form, dedicated email address, paper feedback forms and letters. Based upon the number of responses, number of attendees at the events, the amount of time spent completing the feedback form and the number of issues raised – there was a good level of response to the consultation, outlined in figure 2 below.

<b>Format</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Online – PC / Laptop	243	44%
Online – Tablet	61	11%
Online - Smartphone	15	3%
Paper feedback forms	117	21%
Paper letters	56	10%
Emails	65	12%
	557	(Figures rounded)

Figure 2 – Feedback method

- 4.3 The level of information and detail in the feedback received clearly demonstrates that the majority of those who chose to engage with the

consultation spent considerable time and effort in scrutinising the material available and in developing their responses.

- 4.4 Of the 557 responses, four were duplicates and two were blank leaving a total of 551 unique responses (this represents just under a third of one percent of West Suffolk's total population). Further analysis revealed that there were 382 individual issues raised and these are referenced in the appendices of the Consultation Report (appendix A).

#### **Where did the feedback come from?**

- 4.5 The map on page 14 of the Consultation Report (appendix A) shows the approximate geographical distribution of responses. A large number of responses came from the Great Barton and Fornham areas (113 and 97 respectively) which are closest to the Hollow Road Farm site. Responses from the central, western and Moreton Hall areas of Bury St Edmunds were the next highest at 71, 62 and 23 respectively.

#### **Options assessment**

- 4.6 Question 1 of the consultation asked whether the respondent agreed or disagreed with the proposal to co-locate all waste facilities on a single site (option 4). For reference the five options being considered by the partner councils are:

Option 1 – do nothing (status quo)

Option 2 – implement Rougham Hill (SCC WTS and HWRC), otherwise do nothing

Option 3 – implement Rougham Hill and merge Bury and Mildenhall depots

Option 4 – co-locate all facilities

Option 5 – co-locate a WTS and depots (leave HWRC at Rougham Hill)

In terms of option 4 (a West Suffolk Operational Hub), 194 (35%) agreed, 266 (48%) disagreed, with 91 (17%) either not knowing or not answering.

- 4.7 The map on page 15 of the Consultation Report (appendix A) shows the geographical distribution for those that agreed and disagreed with question 1. This indicates an inclination for disagreement from the Great Barton and Fornham areas and an inclination for agreement from the central and western areas of Bury St Edmunds and other parts of West Suffolk.
- 4.8 Comments and issues raised in response to the options assessment indicated support for Rougham Hill (either for an expanded HWRC or WSOH) and for retaining the HWRC at the location. There was opposition for a WSOH but also support for the proposal too. There were a number of specific comments relating to the criteria and their assessment. Feedback tables with detailed responses to the assessment of options (section one) can be found from page 18 of the Consultation Report (appendix A).

#### **Sites assessment**

- 4.9 The assessment of sites section of the consultation asked about the criteria and assessments of potential sites based upon a fully co-located WSOH (option 4). The issues, criteria and assessments used in the assessment of sites were set out in the IAPOS Report. A dedicated page was also provided within the feedback form for people to suggest potential alternative sites, which could be investigated further by the partner councils. Feedback tables with detailed responses to the assessment of sites (section two) can be found from page 40 of the Consultation Report (appendix A).
- 4.10 Although this public consultation was not specific to a single site, there were a large number of responses relating to Hollow Road Farm alone. This is understandable given the previous pre-application consultation on that specific site and that the consultation documentation set out the reasons why the council had considered that site to be the most suitable. Comments included concerns regarding the capacity of transport infrastructure near the site and its impact on local communities, general opposition to the loss of greenfield / agricultural land and contravention of various council policies. There were also a number of non-site specific concerns regarding transport impacts.

### **Site suggestions**

- 4.11 There were 20 alternative sites suggested in response to the consultation that were eligible for assessment and these can be found in the feedback tables with details of the suggested sites (section three) from page 109 of the Consultation Report (appendix A) and in paragraph 5.4 below.

### **Sustainability Appraisal (SA)**

- 4.12 The consultation asked for comments on the Sustainability Appraisal that was carried out on both the assessment of the five options and the sites for delivering a fully co-located WSOH (option 4). The most frequent responses included criticism of the appraisal including its criteria and application, querying the difference in various environmental criteria scores for Tut Hill and Hollow Road Farm, support for the appraisal, requests that future proofing is considered and querying what environmental benefits Hollow Road Farm provides over Rougham Hill. Feedback tables with detailed responses to the sustainability assessment (section four) can be found from page 131 of the Consultation Report (appendix A).

### **Comments regarding the consultation and other general comments**

- 4.13 There were a number of comments about the consultation process and some other general comments as well. Feedback tables with these comments can be found from page 140 of the Consultation Report (appendix A).

## **5. REVIEW AND RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION FEEDBACK**

- 5.1 Since the consultation closed in February 2016, considerable time has been taken to collate and review the comments made in the responses provided. This has been documented in the Consultation Report (appendix A) and in revisions to the IAPOS (appendix B) and SA (appendix C) documents. New sites that have been suggested have also been assessed and for a number of sites that

met the exclusionary criteria (for example, whether they are large enough), work was undertaken to assess and score them against the qualitative criteria (for example, how close they were to houses).

## **Identification and Assessment of Potential Options and Sites (IAPOS)**

5.2 As a result of the consultation with various stakeholders a number of changes have been made to the IAPOS and further actions taken:

- one new options assessment criterion has been added (traffic);
- all financial related criteria and commercial opportunities / income generation criteria have been rechecked in view of comments received; and
- no new site assessment criteria (exclusionary or qualitative) have been added.

### **Options assessment**

5.3 As stated in paragraphs 4.6 to 4.8 above, a range of comments were made concerning the co-location of all facilities to a single site (option 4). The financial summary that compares options 4 and 5 is set out in figure 4 in section 6 below and this demonstrates that over the medium to long term, there is a financial advantage in co-locating facilities based upon savings to the annual revenue costs. We believe there are also a number of other advantages through combining these facilities:

- given future uncertainties, greater potential to meet changing demand through combining resources;
- more efficient use of land with the flexibility for future expansion within the site if required;
- more opportunities in the future for joint operations and management;
- for the Bury St Edmunds area to have a new HWRC with better public facilities (level access and with a reuse shop);
- the potential for co-located operations to work more effectively and efficiently out of usual working hours (for example, double shift, weekends) through the site being open longer to service the HWRC;
- access to a weighbridge on site; and
- improved administrative and operational support to the HWRC on site.

### **Review of suggested sites**

5.4 Of the sites suggested there were 20 new sites eligible for consideration. These are listed in section 6.17a on page 64 of the IAPOS (amended May 2016) report (appendix B).

5.5 Six other suggested sites were discarded on the basis that they were duplicates of other suggestions, were immediately identified as unsuitable (such as the Abbey Gardens and Charter Square) or were too imprecise to enable assessment. Seven sites that we had already assessed were also suggested and these have been re-checked against the site selection criteria.

- 5.6 Details of the exclusionary criteria against which all sites were assessed can be found in section 6.28 from page 68 of the IAPOS (amended May 2016) report (appendix B). Briefly, the criteria are as follows:
- physical (site size and shape, flood risk);
  - access (access to and from the primary highway network); and
  - location (proximity and relationship to Bury St Edmunds; relationship to the Suffolk Lorry Route Network and impact on sites of international or national landscape, biodiversity or heritage importance).
- 5.7 The physical and access characteristics of most of the suggested sites did not meet the exclusionary criteria. Of the 20 sites, three passed the exclusionary criteria and have been assessed against qualitative criteria, these sites being:
- McRae Estates land between River Lark and A14 (opposite side of A134 to existing HWRC);
  - land between Rougham Hill, A14 and Rushbrooke Lane, BSE (including formerly proposed BSE Hockey Club site); and
  - land south of West Suffolk Crematorium, near Risby.
- 5.8 Details of the qualitative criteria against which the three sites that passed the exclusionary criteria were assessed can be found in section 6.29 from page 71 of the IAPOS (amended May 2016) report (appendix B).
- 5.9 Details and scores for the three new sites assessed against the qualitative criteria can be found at the table in figure 7 on page 83/84 of the IAPOS (amended May 2016) report (appendix B). Assessment against the qualitative criteria indicates that Hollow Road Farm is still the most suitable and deliverable site. The closest potential alternative is now the field south of Risby Crematorium (previously it was Tut Hill).
- 5.10 The difference between Hollow Road Farm and the closest two competitors is considered significant and is sufficient to form robust conclusions about the most suitable and deliverable site. The scores are:

Hollow Road Farm	+7
Tut Hill	-7
McRae Estates land	-14
Land at Rougham Hill	-10
Land south of West Suffolk Crematorium	+1

### **Traffic and transport**

- 5.11 Concerns have been raised about the local impact from traffic that would come from a WSOH. In response to this 'traffic' has been added as a criterion to the options assessment at appendix A of the IAPOS (amended May 2016) report (appendix B). A chosen site would be subject to more detailed design and a comprehensive Transport Assessment as part of any planning application. Additional sites suggested through the consultation have also been subject to review and comment from our technical advisors on highways as well as the Local Highway Authority.



- 5.12 Concerns regarding the access and egress to the chosen site, including traffic safety, would be addressed as part of more detailed design and any planning application through the comprehensive Transport Assessment.

### **Impact on our staff**

- 5.13 Under the proposals our operational staff based at the current Bury and Mildenhall depots would relocate to the new WSOH in Bury St Edmunds. Contractor staff working at the current HWRC facility at Rougham Hill would also relocate to the new facility. The greatest potential impact is likely to be on those staff that are currently based in Mildenhall for whom appropriate arrangements would be made in line with their contracts of employment. There may be some slight reduction in staff numbers but given the notice and time durations involved, it is anticipated that there is an excellent chance that these can be managed through staff turnover. Staff have been fully briefed throughout the course of the project to date and this would continue if it progresses.

### **Sustainability Appraisal (SA)**

- 5.14 As a result of the consultation with various stakeholders changes have been made to the original SA report – now titled the Final Sustainability Appraisal (amended May 2016) to reflect the consultation responses. The new sites identified during the consultation have been added into the report. A number of comments were received regarding the SA process and the SA report. The main concerns were associated with finding the right balance between environmental and economic considerations of the proposed WSOH; noise impacts during the 12 months construction phase of the project; impact on air quality and odour; and potential impacts as a result of the increase in traffic movements.
- 5.15 Following the consultation exercise, minor amendments have been carried out throughout the Final SA (amended May 2016) document for further clarification and to reflect consultation feedback. The consultation responses prompted the need to revisit some scores given during the initial SA assessment. However, this did not lead to any changes to scores and conclusions in the Final SA (amended May 2016) document.

## **6. FINANCIAL SUMMARY**

- 6.1 This section of the report sets out the finances for the project in terms of its anticipated capital cost, the project financing and the impact on annual revenue budgets for the public purse as a whole and specifically for FHDC. In considering the financial implications of the project it is important to contextualise the position. Many of the services provided from the proposed WSOH are statutory, in other words we have a legal obligation to provide them and therefore must invest in the appropriate plant, equipment and facilities to support their delivery. We also know the cost of that statutory obligation is going to increase significantly due to the growth of housing (and with it bins to empty, streets to clean and grass to cut) of more than 20%.

- 6.2 Normal return on investment thinking is therefore not appropriate in this case. Our facilities need modernisation at considerable cost in the short term and faced with inevitable growth and increased demand for our services these facilities will not provide the required capacity we need for the medium to long term. The council therefore has to invest now to meet these future challenges and to avoid unnecessary costs.
- 6.3 Projected savings and income from operating at a combined WSOH amount to £243,100 each year for FHDC. Even if it had to borrow capital to build its share of the WSOH (which would be unlikely in the short term for this project), the council would still be better off by £45,000 each year compared to now as well as having the modern facilities it would need to secure the future. The alternative risks losing the support of partners and their funding and having to spend considerable sums maintaining a depot that we would have to vacate at some point in any event. The opportunity to develop SEBC-owned land at Rougham Hill and Western Way would also be put at risk.
- 6.4 The project has long term implications for the collection and disposal of waste, the delivery of other street and grounds services and fleet management in West Suffolk and beyond. The financial case therefore needs to be considered alongside other factors and drivers for the project, which include:
- our statutory obligations in terms of the services we have to deliver;
  - future housing, population and business growth in the area and the pressure this will place on the existing Bury depot (which provides services such as fleet maintenance for all of West Suffolk);
  - the development opportunity on the Bury depot site following its relocation;
  - the release of the depot site, Holborn Avenue, Mildenhall for a commercial letting;
  - the changing nature of waste collection and disposal; and
  - the benefits of co-locating and operating waste facilities currently controlled by separate tiers of local government.
- 6.5 Given the various drivers for the project and referring to the options set out in paragraph 4.6 of this report, options 1 and 2 are clearly neither viable nor sustainable for the medium to long term. Option 3 does not deliver many of the advantages outlined in this and previous reports but it is effectively a fall-back option. In considering the financial business case we have therefore compared options 4 and 5 (complete co-located WSOH or co-locating depots and WTS whilst leaving the HWRC at Rougham Hill, respectively).
- 6.6 Option 4 is the best option for the public purse. In terms of our financial modelling, the total estimated difference in annual revenue savings and additional income for option 4 amount to £1,106,000 each year compared to £1,007,000 for option 5 (a difference of £99,000 from year 1). The estimated capital cost to SCC for option 4 is £11,535,000 compared to an estimated capital cost of £9,369,000 for option 5 (a difference of around £2,167,000). Taking into account the cumulative effect of inflation, the cost of option 4 breaks even with option 5 in around 19 years based upon the estimated financial benefits we know now. This is represented graphically in figure 3

below. Taking a view in the round which combines the financial benefits, the substantial list of non-financial benefits (see paragraph 5.3) and the options assessment scores against 24 criteria (see IAPOS appendix B page 57/58) over the medium to long term, option 4 has significant benefits compared to option 5.

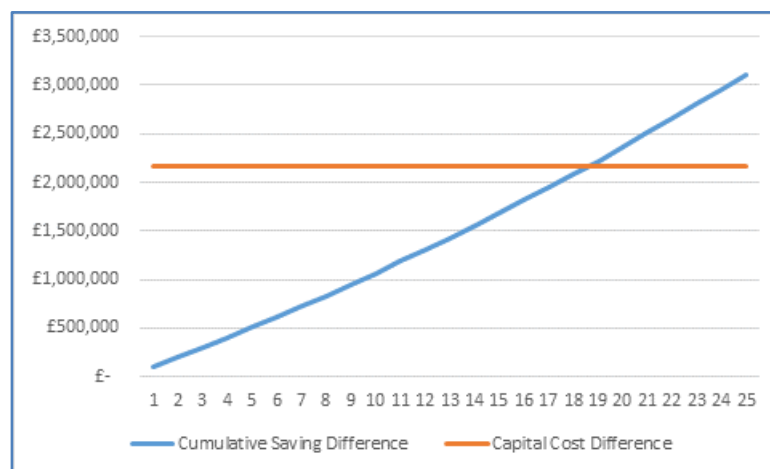


Figure 3 – Graph showing the estimated breakeven point for option 4

### Expenditure on the project to date

- 6.7 Work has been ongoing on this project for two years. This has included significant external support on technical design and professional services. The nature of this work has changed throughout this period as the project has moved from options appraisal, site review, securing a land option, developing specific site designs, public consultation, review, further public consultation and review. Funding for the early part of this work was initially approved by SEBC on 30 June 2014 with £100,000 being allocated. At their Cabinet on 24 February 2015, SCC match funded the project with a further £100,000. On 22 September 2015 and 14 October 2015 SEBC and FHDC respectively approved further funding to the project of £220,000 and agreed a split of all the project costs to date between the two West Suffolk councils. This was further match funded by SCC.
- 6.8 To date, the total approved funding for the project from the three partner councils therefore amounts to £640,000. There is an additional £20,000 funding allocated as part of the LGA / Cabinet Office OPE programme bringing total approved funding to £660,000. The current notional split of funding between the three partner councils is on a ratio of 50:32.5:17.5 for SCC:SEBC:FHDC respectively. As the project progresses with design and costs being further defined, costs (and benefits) would be allocated equitably based upon the actual share of assets.
- 6.9 The actual expenditure on the project to date across the three councils amounts to £320,000.

### Capital costs

- 6.10 A table outlining the costs and savings relating to the WSOH (comparing options 4 and 5) is shown below in figure 4.

- 6.11 Capital costs are largely based upon estimates provided by a Quantity Surveyor engaged to support the project. These estimates have been calculated using a site design for Hollow Road Farm dating from April 2015. Land costs are assumed as those fixed through the Hollow Road Farm land option agreement that the councils have in place and estimates have been obtained for specialised fit-out. Costs have been apportioned on the basis of a transfer station and HWRC (SCC) and the depot (West Suffolk) and the associated land take for these elements.
- 6.12 Estimates take account of the current anticipated project timing and have costs allocated for construction inflation which is currently running well ahead of general Retail Price Index (RPI) inflation. Further appropriate contingencies have been made within the construction estimates.

### **The estimated impact on annual revenue budgets**

- 6.13 Annual revenue cost savings and income include:
- premises savings
  - management savings
  - staff savings
  - remodelled collection rounds (vehicle, staff and fuel savings)
  - additional income from commercial services (including fleet)
  - shared site supervision and administration
  - haulage cost savings
  - equipment savings
  - WDA recharges to WCA
- 6.14 Premises savings include a reduction in building maintenance costs through having fewer sites and sharing assets. They also include energy savings through building to the latest environmental standards and utilising green technology like roof-mounted photovoltaic cells. Premises savings also include negating the running costs for the Mildenhall depot and realising an annual income from leasing the building.
- 6.15 As well as reducing waste miles through co-location, currently our separate depots and HWRC have elements of waste transfer. By combining two depots and the HWRC with a transfer station on a single site the transfer element of each operation is shared in terms of both labour and equipment.
- 6.16 Ownership and running costs would be dealt with in a similar way as for West Suffolk House. The facility would be owned between the West Suffolk councils and SCC and revenue costs apportioned on an equitable basis.
- 6.17 Subject to detailed design and planning, the cost of any excess land at the site would be met by FHDC and SEBC and would remain in those organisations' ownership.

Bury depot Mildenhall depot Transfer station HWRC	<b>Option 4</b> Single site Closed Single site Single site			<b>Option 5</b> Single site Closed Single site Rougham Hill		
<b>REVENUE</b>	<b>TOTAL £,000</b>	<b>FHDC £,000</b>	<b>SEBC £,000</b>	<b>TOTAL £,000</b>	<b>FHDC £,000</b>	<b>SEBC £,000</b>
West Suffolk savings	371	143	227	328	128	200
West Suffolk income	285	100	185	285	100	185
<b>West Suffolk Sub-Total</b>	<b>656</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>385</b>
Suffolk CC net savings	450			394		
<b>Suffolk Total</b>	<b>1,106</b>			<b>1,007</b>		
<b>CAPITAL COSTS</b>						
West Suffolk capital cost	16,116			16,116		
Unallocated capital receipt	-6,250			-6,250		
<b>Notional West Suffolk capital borrowing requirement for illustrative purposes</b>	<b>9,866</b>	<b>3,453</b>	<b>6,413</b>	<b>9,866</b>	<b>3,453</b>	<b>6,413</b>

Figure 4 – Table outlining the financial case (comparing options 4 and 5)

## Financing the project

- 6.18 This section sets out the proposed project financing for FHDC only. In line with the council's Investment Framework, this project has been assessed on the basis of prudential borrowing (for the life of project) for the residual borrowing requirement of £3.5 million.
- 6.19 It should be noted that although this section looks at this project on the basis of investment principles to cover borrowing requirements, the project's drivers and factors (set out at paragraph 6.1) are primarily linked to the councils' statutory service delivery obligations and to address the medium to long term pressure on the current Bury depot location from future housing, population and business growth. This project also removes the risk to the West Suffolk councils of a reliance on a 'tipping away payment' from SCC (initially estimated at £240,000 per year).
- 6.20 The table in figure 5 below includes the full cost of prudential borrowing, however actual borrowing would only take place when the council's treasury management activities identify such a need. For example, this could be when the council's cash flow management activities anticipate that an external cash injection is required to maintain the appropriate level of cash balances for the council to operate and fulfil its budget and service delivery requirements.

<b>Borrowing Costs</b>	<b>£</b>
Interest @ 3.25% (40 year PWLB rate)	<b>112,000</b>
Minimum Revenue Provision (over 40 year - 2.50%)	<b>86,000</b>
<b>Total FHDC Borrowing Costs</b>	<b>198,000</b>
<b>Total FHDC Savings/Income share</b>	<b>243,000</b>
<b>Net financial benefit</b>	<b>45,000</b>

Figure 5 – Table outlining the project borrowing costs

- 6.21 The council currently manages funds in excess of this and therefore external borrowing is not expected during the short to medium term for this project in isolation, releasing further savings into the council's revenue budget.

## 7. PROJECT TIMING

- 7.1 An outline timing programme for the project is shown below in figure 6. This is considered tight but achievable and is subject to the project risks identified in the appropriate section at the beginning of this report.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>
Consultation	Jan-16	Feb-16
Consultation feedback / decision to proceed	Feb-16	Jun-16
Establish design / construction project team	Jul-16	Aug-16
Design development / prepare planning application	Aug-16	Nov-16
Planning decision (inc stat consultation and referral to Sec of State)	Nov-16	Feb-17
Procurement and mobilisation	Feb-17	Jul-17
Construction period	Jul-17	Jul-18

Figure 6 – Outline project timing programme

## 8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 There is a clear need to urgently invest in new waste and street scene services infrastructure in West Suffolk. Current arrangements for the transfer and haulage of waste are unsustainable and costly to the taxpayer. Significant growth is planned for West Suffolk which will see a considerable increase in housing and business activity over the next 10 to 20 years. This will result in increased demand for our frontline services. The current facilities from which these services are delivered are at capacity and we are already facing the need to relocate. The condition of the SEBC depot and workshops in particular is such that they are costly to run and will require significant investment in the short term to maintain existing service levels. With the reduction in funding from central government, the councils are more dependent on locally derived income. Modern facilities and further capacity will be required to maximise income growth potential.

- 8.2 A combination of circumstances has come about which enables us to address these issues and demands both in the short term and for many years to come. The requirement for a waste transfer station in Bury, the success of shared services between FHDC and SEBC, the potential for wider development at Western Way, efficiencies from co-location and a willingness for the three councils to work together for the best long term solution for taxpayers are presenting a once in a generation opportunity.
- 8.3 The work we have undertaken to date clearly demonstrates that, providing it is in the right location, a WSOH is the best solution for addressing these demands. Our research and the work reflected in this report and its appendices demonstrates that there will be significant advantages from co-locating depots, fleet facilities, the transfer station and the HWRC to a single site.
- 8.4 The original work that was undertaken by the councils to assess potential sites for a WSOH culminated in Hollow Road Farm being preferred. This proposal met with significant local concern during the first pre-application consultation. In order to ensure that the best overall decision is made, the councils agreed to take a step back and re-consult more widely on the proposals. This second round of consultation was not a statutory requirement. However, in making a commitment to be open and provide as much information for public scrutiny and comment as possible, even though the additional consultation would result in some further delay and cost to the taxpayer, the councils collectively wanted to ensure they were following the right course of action at the best overall location.
- 8.5 Public engagement with this second round of public consultation has been impressive. Large numbers have responded offering a range of comments and views on the information provided along with alternative site suggestions and proposals to be considered. The quality of the responses, including the time taken to read the information provided and submit a written reply is notable and the councils are extremely grateful for this level of feedback. A range of views, both for and against the proposals, have been expressed. There was a high level of response from areas relatively close to Hollow Road Farm and these were generally more opposed to the WSOH proposal. Responses from other areas tended to be more in favour or mixed.
- 8.6 In terms of the options assessment, analysis of the responses and a subsequent review has led to some minor changes in our approach. However, these changes have not been substantive enough to alter the original position that a WSOH (option 4) on land at Hollow Road Farm is the best overall approach.

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# (Informal Joint) Cabinet



Title of Report:	Draft West Suffolk Annual Report 2015/2016	
Report No:	CAB/FH/16/024	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	14 June 2016
Portfolio holder:	James Waters Leader of the Council Tel: 07771 621038 Email: <a href="mailto:james.waters@forest-heath.gov.uk">james.waters@forest-heath.gov.uk</a>	
Lead officer:	Davina Howes Head of Families and Communities Tel: 01284 757070 Email: <a href="mailto:davina.howes@westsuffolk.gov.uk">davina.howes@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	
Purpose of report:	The draft West Suffolk Annual Report highlights the key activities and developments that have been achieved over the financial year 2015-16, with regard to the priorities set out in the West Suffolk Strategic Plan 2014-16.	
Recommendation:	It is <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the draft West Suffolk Annual Report 2015/2016, attached as Appendix A to Report No CAB/FH/16/024, be approved.	
Key Decision:	<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>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that <b>do not</b> apply.)</i>	
The decisions made as a result of this report will usually be published within <b>48 hours</b> and cannot be actioned until <b>five clear working days of the publication of the decision</b> have elapsed. This item is included on the Decisions Plan.		
Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The draft Annual Report summarises progress in achieving the priorities set out in the 2014-16 West Suffolk Strategic Plan which was informed by feedback from residents, business and stakeholders.</li></ul>	

<b>Alternative option(s):</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is good practice for councils to report on progress against their priorities in this way and ensures transparency on how they spend public money. Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury could report separately on their work to achieve their priorities. However, this would not reflect some of the excellent work which has been delivered jointly across the whole of West Suffolk. Also, it would not show the continued joint working between Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury.</li> </ul>	
<b>Implications:</b>			
Are there any <b>financial</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any <b>staffing</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any <b>ICT</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any <b>legal and/or policy</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any <b>equality</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The draft Annual Report covers evidence to support the achievement of the equality objectives from the Strategic Plan.</li> </ul>	
<b>Risk/opportunity assessment:</b>		None	
<b>Risk area</b>	<b>Inherent level of risk</b> (before controls)	<b>Controls</b>	<b>Residual risk</b> (after controls)
Misunderstanding of the role of the report (i.e. it can only give highlights of W Suffolk's activities, not every action taken).	very low	Develop a communications plan to clearly explain the role of the report	Negligible
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>		All wards	
<b>Background papers:</b> <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		<a href="#">West Suffolk Strategic Plan 2014-2016</a>	
<b>Documents attached:</b>		Appendix A: Draft West Suffolk Annual Report 2015/2016	

**1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)**

**1.1 Draft West Suffolk Annual Report 2015-2016**

- 1.1.1 The draft West Suffolk Annual Report highlights the key activities and developments that have been achieved over the financial year 2015-2016, with regard to the priorities set out in the West Suffolk Strategic Plan 2014-16.
- 1.1.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider the draft West Suffolk Annual Report on Thursday 9 June 2016. This meeting is after the Cabinet papers are issued for consideration at the Cabinet meeting on 14 June 2016. Therefore, any amendments recommended by Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be reported at the Cabinet meeting on 14 June 2016.
- 1.1.3 This report has been designed and contains photographs. The report also contains a number of case studies and examples from West Suffolk to illustrate the achievements described. These have been carefully drawn from a range of localities, urban vs rural locations, and service areas, in order to demonstrate the range of activities undertaken by the councils. In some cases, initiatives were only focused on one specific area, however, so examples are necessarily drawn from these localities.

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# Draft West Suffolk Annual Report 2015/2016

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

Email: [policy@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:policy@westsuffolk.gov.uk)  
Telephone: 01284 757633

## Foreword from the Leaders

Our third joint annual report shows we've really got to grips with the opportunities that come through sharing services across Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury. We're making real progress in West Suffolk on our shared priorities, which allows us to focus our resources on jobs, homes and resilient communities, and respond to the financial challenges that continually come our way.

It's not easy, of course. There are times when we have had to take difficult decisions (for example introducing a charge to users of a garden waste collection service) but as councillors we are expected, and have a responsibility, to weigh up everything which has a potential impact on our communities and do what is in the best interest overall. We balance that 'best interest' which needs to take into account the whole of West Suffolk with a strong focus on working at very local levels to help communities support themselves. That is a resilience which is becoming more and more important as public resources continue to be inadequate to help everyone as much as we would like.

This annual report highlights just some of that work with our families and communities, such as supporting the new Kentford Parish Council with a range of projects or helping to bring together various local agencies and charities to provide services for homeless people at the Bury Drop In. We have changed the way we fund community groups as well, with our Community Chest making it simpler to apply for support. On the ground our councillors' own locality budgets are injecting money directly and carefully into local communities and the projects residents have identified as important.

To have strong and resilient communities we need to ensure the people living in them have good jobs and homes, which is why these continue to be our priorities. While we can't create jobs or build enough homes for everyone, we can help create the right conditions for them. So it was with a great sense of 'job well done' that this year we finally achieved the legal agreements which will see an eastern relief road built which in turn will deliver access to the Suffolk Business Park on the edge of Bury St Edmunds . . . which in turn will deliver hundreds of homes for the families of people who will fill thousands of new jobs over the next couple of decades. And it is with a great deal of determination that we are making sure the Government works with us to secure the best future at the RAF Mildenhall site for our communities when the USAF leaves. Meanwhile, on the homes front we now have the opportunity to have a direct impact on the number, type and location of local housing through our own innovative housing company, Barley Homes Group Ltd.

This report also looks at our wider work with partners across Suffolk, and indeed East Anglia, on issues such as devolution and transforming the way the public sector works together to deliver services. Last year we said the time when a council could work alone, or in the same old way, was long gone. Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury continue to prove that, in such financially challenging times, working together to deliver shared services in West Suffolk was the right decision in the best interests of people who live and work here. Next year could see even more fundamental changes for West Suffolk as we continue to lead the councils in creating a better place for our communities.



Councillor James Waters  
Leader  
Forest Heath District Council



Councillor John Griffiths  
Leader  
St Edmundsbury Borough Council

# Introduction

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Since 2012, when our first Joint Chief Executive joined us, there have been many changes to the ways in which each council works, either individually or – more usually – together. The past year has seen further changes, which are outlined in this report along with the progress that the West Suffolk partnership of councils has made in delivering our shared vision and priorities.

The vision and priorities set out in the West Suffolk Strategic Plan are shown on the next page and a set of more specific actions is contained in the document itself, available at: **[www.westsuffolk/strategicplan](http://www.westsuffolk/strategicplan)**



# A vision and priorities for West Suffolk 2014-2016

Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Councils have a joint Strategic Plan which sets out our vision, priorities and key actions for West Suffolk in 2014 -16

## Our vision:

**“Working together, Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils will support communities to create the best possible future for people in West Suffolk.”**

## Our priorities:

To help us deliver our vision we have developed priorities. They provide direction for focusing our efforts and resources in those areas which are the biggest priorities for West Suffolk over the next two years.

### **Priority 1 Increased opportunities for economic growth**

We want to see:

1. beneficial growth that enhances prosperity and quality of life;
2. existing businesses that are thriving and new businesses brought to the area;
3. people with the educational attainment and skills needed in our local economy; and
4. vibrant, attractive and clean high streets, village centres and markets.

### **Priority 2 Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active.**

We want to see:

1. a thriving voluntary sector and active communities who take the initiative to help the most vulnerable;
2. people playing a greater role in determining the future of their communities;
3. improved wellbeing, physical and mental health; and
4. accessible countryside and green spaces.

### **Priority 3 Homes for our communities**

We want to see:

1. sufficient housing for current and future generations, including:
  - more affordable homes;
  - improvements to existing housing;
2. new developments that are fit for the future, properly supported by infrastructure, and that build communities, not just housing; and
3. homes that are flexible for people's changing needs.

Find out more at [www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/strategicplan](http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/strategicplan)

## Priority 1: Increased opportunities for economic growth

### We want to see:

- beneficial growth that enhances prosperity and quality of life;
- existing businesses that are thriving and new businesses brought to the area;
- people with the educational attainment and skills needed in our local economy; and
- vibrant, attractive and clean high streets, village centres and markets.

### 35 of 53

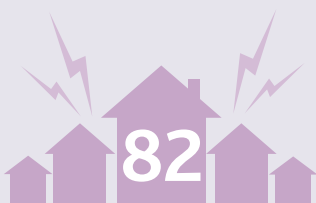
new apprentices over the last 5 years have gone on to secure full employment with the councils.



### 338,460KWh

of renewable energy were generated on council properties in 2015/16.

This is equivalent to the amount of energy needed to power 82 average households.



### 75% of the 300 stalls

at the 2015 Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre were local businesses based in the East of England.



We have invested

### £96,900

in small businesses across West Suffolk since our **Small Business Grant** schemes began.



### We delivered 16

solar rent-a-roof schemes through our

**Solar for Business** scheme during 2015/16.

### Why was this a priority for 2015/16?

To achieve our ambitions and improve the quality of life of our residents, we depend on a thriving local economy. Though the economy in West Suffolk is strong we must continue to ensure that the infrastructure, homes, and skills are in place to enable the economic growth we need. Importantly, we must also consider the impact of economic growth on the essential services that we provide. By doing this we can prepare our services for future demand.

We can bring new business to the area, support the businesses already located here, expand into new sectors and ensure that there are employment opportunities for all our residents.

### What we have done to support this priority

#### 1. Creating the right conditions for growth

Councils have an important role in making sure that the conditions are right for economic growth in the local area, even though growth is always subject to national and international influences. At West Suffolk, we create the conditions for growth through many means, including planning to ensure there is enough suitable land available for development, making strategic investments in commercial property, making grants available for the benefit of local businesses, and organising activities and events to foster connections in our thriving business communities.

On the following pages are a selection of the actions that we have taken to create the right conditions for growth in 2015/16:

## Case Study: Suffolk Business Park and the Eastern Relief Road

In February 2016, St Edmundsbury Borough Council successfully completed a series of complex negotiations to enable the Eastern Relief Road to be built on the outskirts of Bury St Edmunds. This was a great example of partnership-working in action, with the £15 million funding needed for the project being provided by the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (£10 million), St Edmundsbury Borough Council (£3 million) and Suffolk County Council (£2 million) funding the project together.

Building the road enables us to achieve our longstanding ambitions to bring jobs, housing, education and new leisure facilities to Bury St Edmunds and West Suffolk.

The road enables 500 new homes to be built and provides access to employment land allocated for Suffolk Business Park. The Suffolk Business Park has the potential to become one of the most significant employment areas in the Eastern Region and is expected to deliver an estimated 14,000 new jobs as well as £275 million of inward investment to the local area.

Delivering this substantial number of jobs and homes is going to take 25 years. However, we have taken a huge step towards achieving this by completing the necessary land negotiations so that work could start on the road in early March 2016.

### Enterprise Zones

In the Government's 2015 Autumn Statement it was announced that the Enterprise Zone programme would be extended so that it covers two sites in West Suffolk: Suffolk Business Park and Haverhill Research Park.

*St Edmundsbury Leader, Councillor John Griffiths and Portfolio Holder for Housing, Councillor Mrs Sara Mildmay-White at the site of the Eastern Relief Road*





Enterprise Zones will help to grow the local economy by attracting businesses by offering benefits including substantial business rates discounts. Local authorities have also been encouraged by the Government to explore how to simplify planning within specified areas, which we are currently exploring.

### Investing in our commercial property

In September 2015 Forest Heath voted to invest £537,000 in our commercial property portfolio in Brandon.

In 2012 the council bought the London Road site in Brandon to support Omar Park Homes Ltd who needed to secure the site following the previous landlord going into administration. This helped to protect 130 jobs, with the council renting the site to Omar on a 10-year lease which has resulted in stability for the company and a healthy return for the council.

Omar has enjoyed huge success with a 49 per cent sales growth in 2014/15 and it now employs 330 full time staff. The company has ambitious plans for the future which would see a further increase in sales and the creation of 100 new jobs in Brandon.

Our new investment in Omar this year is a 50 per cent contribution in the site's expansion which will support their growth as a business and a local employer.

### Small business grants

Since its introduction in 2011, the Forest Heath small business grant scheme has supported 64 start-up or new businesses. Since the launch of the scheme, a total of £61,000 has been invested in Forest Heath, helping support businesses with a collective turnover of around £2.1 million a year.

Building on this success the scheme was introduced in St Edmundsbury in 2014, using funding from developer contributions. The scheme enables new businesses, or those still within their first year, subject to criteria, to apply for a grant of up to £1500. So far in 2015/16, 13 grants totalling £19,450 have been awarded across West Suffolk. We have supported a wide variety of businesses including a record shop in Bury St Edmunds, a graphic designer in Haverhill, an engineering consultancy in Newmarket and a jewellery workshop in Lakenheath.



*Forest Heath Leader, Councillor James Waters, and Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor Stephen Edwards, with representatives from Omar Homes.*

### Solar for Business

In June 2015 we launched our Solar for Business service which installs solar panels on local businesses, reducing their electricity bills and supplying the electricity grid with more energy from renewable sources.

Energy sales contracts have been signed with the host businesses so they receive discounted electricity, typically 30% cheaper than existing grid tariffs. This is projected to save the host businesses around £15,500 in year one and over the 20 year life of the project the saving is projected to be around £315,000.

This scheme also has an impact on our finances; during 2015/16 we invested £643,000 in solar panels for businesses which are projected to return an average annual income for the councils of £82,900. This represents an annual return on investment of more than 10%.



*The West Suffolk Business Festival*

### Bury St Edmunds and West Suffolk Business Festival

The West Suffolk councils jointly organise an annual business festival, which is in its sixth year. This year the festival was attended by around 1500



*Risbygate Sports Club in Bury St Edmunds is generating its own electricity from solar panels we installed. The solar panel installer here pictured with Pat Lewis, General Manager of the Club, Andrew Oswald, Environment Manager and Club President, Kelvin Morton.*



delegates who came to events across West Suffolk over ten days.

The festival was kicked off this year with the Menta trade fair at the Apex in Bury St Edmunds. Twenty-three events were hosted by a diverse group of organisations including New Anglia LEP, UK Trade and Investment and the Chartered Institute of Marketing. To celebrate the achievements of local businesses over the year the festival was capped off by the Bury Free Press Business Awards.

## 2. Skills and education

### Doing our bit as an employer

We are committed to doing our bit to ensure that everyone receives the training they need to make a success of their career. We employed eight new apprentices in 2015/16 and are proud that over the last 5 years we have supported 53 new apprentices, mostly young school-leavers, into the world of work. 35 of these have secured full employment with the council. Others have taken their valuable experience, skills and qualifications forward to the next stage in their career.

In addition to valuable on-the-job experience, our apprentices bring enthusiasm, talent, loyalty and new skills into our workforce and often turn into true ambassadors for the council. We work closely with Unison in supporting the apprenticeships, with Unison representatives acting as mentors and buddies to young people entering the workplace for the first time. They all also earn specialist professional qualifications, for example from AAT, a professional body for accounting technicians; Level 3 NVQs in Business Administration; or Level 3 Environmental Services.

We partner with West Suffolk College to support our apprenticeships in Business, Finance and Environmental Services. In addition we are working with Otley and Easton College to deliver an Advanced Apprenticeship in Horticulture. Through this work we are contributing towards one of our 2014-16 equality objectives to ensure West Suffolk has 'people with the educational attainment and skills needed in our local economy'.

Following the continuing success of our apprentices we will carry on developing innovative and valuable

apprenticeships again for 2016/17. We will recruit for seven apprentices in our Waste and Street Scene team and we are likely to recruit apprentices in Economic Development, Housing, ICT and Planning over the course of the year.

We are proud to hear, for example, from one of our apprentices:

**The apprenticeship gave me the opportunity to restart my career and focus on what I really wanted to do with my life. Working as an apprentice in Planning gave me a real understanding of what the councils do, who does what and how the organisation works.**

**Working in Property Services now I am really using my administrative skills, managing finances and dealing with utilities. Next week I am learning the new GIS system to do mapping – it's very new, but I am looking forward to it.**

*Suzanne Hunter, Administrative Assistant*

We have also been one of the leading partners in the Suffolk Internship Programme and offered paid internship opportunities to nine undergraduates last summer in areas as diverse as Policy, Housing, Families and Communities, Democratic Services, Legal and Economic Development. Some interns are subsequently employed by the council after graduation, which provides an excellent start to their careers.

We regularly support careers events and have launched our new apprentice webpages to showcase our successes and employer brand whilst attracting new recruits.

### 3. Thriving town centres

#### Market development

Throughout the year we organised a variety of special events to complement the regular markets in our thriving towns of Brandon, Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill, Mildenhall and Newmarket.

We work hard to encourage new businesses and entrepreneurs to try market trading and ensure a rich variety of traders for our towns into the future. For example, in April 2015 we introduced special pricing deals, so that businesses new to market trading could hire a pitch for as little as £10 a market day for four weeks.

We also incentivised new traders further by acquiring a market insurance policy that for the first time allowed us to cover new market traders. This reduced the cost of entry for new traders by removing the need for them to acquire their own insurance in the early stages of their trading career. This year we provided this type of cover to more than 20 traders.

We promoted the benefits of market trading to potential entrepreneurs through our links with external organisations such as West Suffolk College and Job Centre Plus.



*A shopping street  
in Mildenhall*



## Case study

One example of a young entrepreneur who we have helped to make a success of market trading is Charlie Cook. After winning the 'best stall' award at a Haverhill Youth Market, Charlie took advantage of our special pricing offers. He now continues to trade regularly at Haverhill market where he sells his handmade bags, cushions and purses. Charlie says: 'The market traders have been really friendly and helpful to me over the last year and I really enjoy trading on the market, although sometimes the weather does put me off!'



*Charlie Cook  
trading in Haverhill*

We organised special events including craft markets on five occasions in Haverhill and three occasions in Newmarket. The craft markets attracted between 12 and 18 local crafts providers in addition to the regular traders on market days. By introducing new traders the events extend the appeal of markets beyond the regular customer base.

We partnered with Market Square Group to provide beer festivals alongside regular markets in Brandon and Haverhill over the summer. We intend to repeat the beer festivals in 2016/17 due to their success.

To support the Newmarket Music Festival we arranged for young people to perform alongside

our regular street market. The festival is held every year in July, and is organised by local organisations including the town council and Newmarket Vision, which is a partnership of councils and local organisations.

We organised additional Sunday markets in Bury St Edmunds in December in the run-up to Christmas. The additional Sunday markets each attracted between 30 and 40 stalls with a mix of new and regular traders.

We participated in Love Your Market fortnight, and arranged offers and giveaways at our markets in May. Using promotions in the local press we made



sure the spotlight was on our local markets for a successful and busy two weeks, which included special youth markets, craft markets and treasure hunts.

Following on from our successes in 2015/16 we are looking to continue to deepen our partnerships to support our local markets. Plans have been made for business students from West Suffolk College to study the markets in Bury St Edmunds as part of their coursework next year. Conducting market research to better understand the impact that different stakeholder groups have on each other will provide an opportunity for the students to gain valuable experience, as well as providing useful insight for the council. This research will help us to make sure that our markets have a sustainable future.

### **Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre**

The Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre has developed from a modest event in 2004 to one of the largest and most successful Christmas Fayres in the country with over 120,000 people visiting the four-day event.

Visitors were attracted by around 300 stalls booked by the council, and another 40 stalls from around the world booked by an external provider. Over three-quarters of the council-booked stalls were local businesses based in the east of England. The nationally-famous fayre was also supported by local groups, including West Suffolk College and Community Action Suffolk, who collectively provided around 50 volunteers to help with the event.

The council committed in 2016 to providing the Fayre for at least the next three years, while looking at ways to measure its economic impact on the local area. The Fayre aims to provide a range of entertainments and shopping opportunities for our local communities as well as visitors to Bury St Edmunds and provides a boost for many local businesses.

### **Review of car parking**

In November 2015 the St Edmundsbury Overview and Scrutiny Committee received the final report of the car parking review group. The group made several key recommendations which were approved

by the Cabinet, including:

- that tariffs should remain competitive with similar towns;
- that the council should install two new electric car charging points in Haverhill, as well as two additional points in Bury St Edmunds;
- a shared introduction of new car parking machines with card readers and contactless payment facilities;
- to improve peak capacity in Bury St Edmunds town centre car parks by transferring some long stay provision to Ram Meadow from the town centre car parks at the weekend; and
- to identify additional car parking provision in Bury St Edmunds.

The group undertook extensive consultation with car parks users, key stakeholders and local businesses. In addition, specialist advice was sought from an independent consultant on existing and future capacity for the car parks across Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill.

In December 2015 the Forest Heath Cabinet also considered a review of car parking for the district. The review was undertaken because since the last one, in 2012, the profile of car parking had changed and future developments, particularly in Newmarket town centre which will include increased visitor numbers due to the opening of the Home of Horseracing, are on the horizon.

The review focused on helping to ensure that the district's car parks are managed so they have sufficient capacity for people's parking requirements, are equipped to meet future demand, provide a high quality service and are affordable. Cabinet approved a number of recommendations relating to charging in Newmarket and that a revised Traffic Regulation Order be prepared for public consultation. There were no proposals to introduce tariffs in Brandon, Lakenheath and Mildenhall.

It was noted that in future, regular reviews of capacity would be needed to monitor the impact of the Home of Horseracing, changes in the local economy of our market towns and housing growth across the district.

## 4. Vibrant and attractive high streets

### Shop front painting scheme

Since 2009 we have awarded over £19,000 to 38 shop owners to support them in revitalising their shop fronts across Brandon, Lakenheath, Mildenhall and Newmarket, helping to maintain and improve the vitality and vibrancy of those locations.

We have expanded the scheme across West Suffolk with St Edmundsbury offering the scheme for the first time in 2015. In 2015/16 alone we granted over £4800 to 12 independent local businesses across West Suffolk.

Since starting in the St Edmundsbury area the scheme has helped give a new lease of life to the shopfronts of popular local businesses such as Clare Farm Shop. Leanne Morris and Shara Browning, the business partners who own the Market Hill shop, love the difference their new shopfront has made.

**"This has made such a difference. The front is the first bit of the shop that our customers see and it is quite important that it looks good. We have recently invested in refurbishing the inside of the shop, and the new look shop front really completes the job. We have been here 16 years and have built up a good customer base during that time – and a lot of them have been commenting about how amazing the new shop front looks. They love it."**

*Leanne Morris, Co-owner, Clare Farm Shop*

### Newmarket Business Improvement District

Forest Heath has been supporting businesses in Newmarket to realise their ambition of establishing a Business Improvement District (BID). Throughout March 2016 businesses voted on whether to set up a BID. In April it was announced that the town's businesses had voted in favour of the proposal.

A BID is a mechanism which enables businesses in an area to get together to carry out projects and improvements in the town by using money raised themselves from a levy on their business rates. The Newmarket BID's five-year business plan sets out to raise £240,000 per year from levy payers in the BID area to be spent on marketing, events, business support and street scene improvements.

We provided support for this initiative by engaging with local businesses and contributing around £20,000 towards marketing costs to promote the initiative. We also provided practical support by taking responsibility for the ballot, we will be administering the collection of revenue through the Anglia Revenues Partnership and supporting the BID through its formation. Forest Heath will also be contributing to the BID through a levy on our own business rates for our properties within its boundary.

Now that businesses in the Newmarket BID area have voted in favour of the business plan, the BID will be established as an independent organisation which is governed by, and accountable to, the local businesses. It is expected that the BID will begin its work in June 2016.

### Bury St Edmunds Business Improvement District

The Our Bury St Edmunds BID was re-elected by local businesses for a second term commencing in April 2015. Known as 'Our Bury St Edmunds' it includes 446 businesses from across the town and a further 23 businesses that, although under no obligation, have chosen to contribute for the benefits of membership.

St Edmundsbury supported the BID by overseeing its ballot in its first term in 2009, and since 2010 the council has been represented on the board of the BID, where we work closely with local businesses on issues that are important to them. The BID does vital work to promote the town centre offer through marketing direct to the public through a visitor website and app. It also organises events such as the Bury St Edmunds Food and Drink Festival, the Christmas lights switch-on event, and the Whitsun Fayre.

This year the BID also organised the Bury St Edmunds Wolf Trail which involved commissioning 18 local artists to create 26 life-sized wolves. The trail generated a huge amount of interest and attracted people to the town centre. A number of the wolves were auctioned at a St Edmunds Day Dinner which was held at the Athenaeum in November and raised £10,000 for charities. The remaining wolves were auctioned at a separate auction which raised another £2,000 for charity.

### Haverhill town centre masterplan

St Edmundsbury worked together with ONE Haverhill to develop a masterplan for the Haverhill town centre. The masterplan was driven by a commitment from ourselves and ONE Haverhill to meet the current and future needs of the town and to ensure it is developed in an appropriate way. The masterplan was adopted in September 2015 following extensive consultation and engagement with local people.

Our future work to support delivery of the masterplan will be based on three key themes:

- how to travel around Haverhill, whether that be walking, cycling or by car;
- ensuring the appropriate development of the key strategic sites that have been identified around the town; and
- improving the appearance of the public realm, the area design quality and linkages around the area.

We demonstrated a proactive approach to realising the masterplan vision this year when we negotiated to take control of the former Co-op site on Jubilee Walk. This site is a key component of the major Jubilee Place development opportunity to better integrate different parts of the town centre. In the meantime the council found a short-term retail tenant to occupy the site until the plans for comprehensive redevelopment are ready to be implemented. In early 2016 Poundstretcher moved into the building, which had been empty since 2011.



*Haverhill Town Centre Masterplan: prepared on behalf of One Haverhill by David Lock Associates, September 2015*

### Street scene

Our local environment is important because it shapes and influences daily lives. Many of our areas are vibrant, clean and safe and we work hard alongside our communities to keep them this way. We know that in some cases the actions of a few people impact on the quality of the daily lives of many. From inconsiderate dog owners to those who drop litter or fly tip, our staff work hard to protect our environment but equally important our focus is on education, prevention and, if necessary, prosecution.

In 2015 we produced new dog fouling prevention signs which are now available for local communities to download from our website. In addition to this, more than 30 new combined litter and dog bins have been installed in Haverhill and Bury St Edmunds. A new dog fouling trial campaign in Wickhambrook successfully reduced the number of fouling incidents in the village.

In Kentford, we have been working with the local community and supported them with keeping their village an attractive place. This has involved helping ensuring that the community knows what they can do in terms of cutting back vegetation, cleaning signs, and clearing litter and flytipping. We have also supported them by collecting and disposing of the waste they have tidied up. Later this report describes how Kentford has embraced the Love Where You Live initiative.

We take seriously the problems caused by fly tipping, which is why we worked to secure three prosecutions for fly tipping offences, with penalties totalling £2327 in fines and costs. Additionally we removed 32 abandoned vehicles in West Suffolk.

## 5. Waste and recycling

Our waste and recycling services are relied on by residents and businesses and must be prepared to meet growth in future demand caused by the increased opportunities for economic growth that we are delivering. Our work to create sustainable and efficient services is evidenced by our initiatives to change services to meet new financial pressures, create more commercial opportunities (which are detailed below), and our work to create a new

operational hub for West Suffolk which is detailed in our ways of working section.

### Organic Waste

During 2015/16, we had to make a difficult decision about our organic waste service. Due to changes in funding arrangements we had to remove the free service and offer a new subscription for a garden waste collection service to those households. The combined impact of the funding removal was a potential increase in cost to the authorities of £498,000 a year to provide the organic waste scheme across West Suffolk from 2016/17.

After detailed debate and consideration, both councils decided that the most appropriate thing to do in terms of financial responsibility and quality of service to customers would be to charge for a garden waste service and provide it only to residents who chose to opt in to the scheme.

A full communications and marketing plan was created to publicise the scheme and explain how customers could opt in to the service. All residents were sent letters and by April 2016 our customer services team had handled almost 20,000 subscriptions for the service, with many more residents expected to subscribe over the coming months.

We set ourselves the target of reaching 30% take up of the new garden waste service across West Suffolk which we have now achieved.

### Commercial waste and street scene services

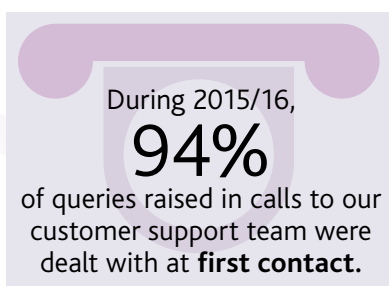
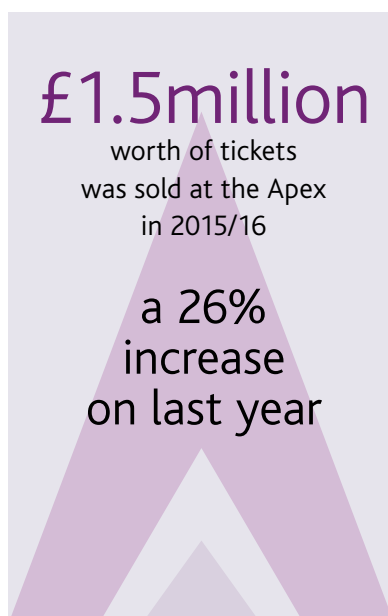
Our commercial services have had a successful year. We have seen growth in income generated from fleet services and waste collection due to increasing customer numbers and healthy repeat business. As part of our efforts to increase sustainability, around 2,000 tonnes of trade waste was recycled. As well as expanding our waste services, we have also taken a commercial approach by creating a tree service.



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

### We want to see:

- a thriving voluntary sector and active communities who take the initiative to help the most vulnerable;
- people playing a greater role in determining the future of their communities;
- improved wellbeing, physical and mental health; and
- accessible countryside and green spaces.



### Why was this a priority for 2015/16?

Supporting families and communities to be resilient is a key component of West Suffolk's Strategic Plan. Though West Suffolk is generally a prosperous and attractive place there are areas and times in people's lives where individuals and families can experience challenges caused by deprivation, social upheaval, or poor health.

Our approach is to build resilience in families and communities and catch problems early or stop them from happening in the first place. Prioritising this approach to resilience can create health and wellbeing benefits for everyone involved and, as a way to run public services, is more sustainable (by which we mean a better way to manage financial, social and environmental risks).

### What we have done to support this priority

#### 1. Making connections in the community

The West Suffolk approach to supporting families and communities puts residents and councillors at the heart of making positive change. The councils play an empowering and enabling role by focusing on the strengths of communities and how these can be improved. The approach identifies people who act as connectors – active local residents with connections across and deep within communities. These connections and networks are the blood vessels of communities within which ideas, concerns, passion and interests flow in everyday conversation. These are the places where local solutions for the community are generated and nurtured. They also

help inform the most effective delivery – rather than cutting across them or distorting them as sometimes systems and formal services can do unintentionally. Ward councillors are equipped and encouraged to engage with their communities and connectors, to understand key local issues and use their influence to support the communities to provide local solutions where appropriate and possible.

Below is just a small selection of the work that our councillors and staff have done over the year to help our communities become more resilient, able to help themselves and each other. Much of the work detailed in this section contributes to our equality objective to ensure we have 'a thriving voluntary sector who take the initiative to help the most vulnerable'.



*St Edmundsbury Mayor, Councillor Patrick Chung at the Bury Drop In centre*

### Bury Drop In

The Bury Drop In, based in the Garland Street Baptist Church's ELVEN Centre, is a great example of what can happen when community groups and agencies are connected and work together.

Since opening in September 2015 the Bury Drop In has supported homeless people by providing a hot meal and safe place for them to have friendly introductions to the services available from the community and from the agencies who participate, including the councils' housing team. Guests of Bury Drop In have been able to seek help with issues as varied as mental and physical health, housing and benefits advice. The ambition is for guests to be able to access help so they can:

- become settled in suitable accommodation;
- manage their health, lives and relationships; and
- become able to work.

The Bury Drop In is supported by West Suffolk staff who connected the community groups with agencies and charities who now work together more effectively than they could alone.

The Drop In service has recently broadened in scope to include providing guests with food parcels, warm clothes and shelter.

More information is available on the Bury Drop In website: [www.burydropin.org](http://www.burydropin.org)

### Horringer Court, Bury St Edmunds

Community groups raised funding during 2015/16 to explore the feasibility of building a new community venue in the Horringer Court area. This year they made progress towards their goal with the help of St Edmundsbury. Horringer Court Community Church, Horringer Court Middle School and Horringer Court Residents' Association constituted themselves as Horringer Court Community Hub with input and support from staff and local councillors.

The group completed Project Planning Training through Community Action Suffolk and they are now finalising the application to the Charity Commission to establish themselves as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

A feasibility study of the proposed site and building has been completed. Our input over the past year saw a more robust plan come to fruition for the group. The next steps will involve developing the website to incorporate all the existing channels of communication within the community and starting to progress a fundraising plan.

### Love where you live

Love Where You Live is about capturing residents' pride in their local area and strengthening community links around a place.

One way that we help communities is by supporting the valuable work undertaken by volunteers to keep their local areas clean and safe by picking litter. The

councils can provide litter picking equipment, help advertise events through social media and will arrange to collect the bags of rubbish. Already more than 40 volunteers have signed up under the 2016 initiative to receive litter picking equipment.

There are now more than 110 volunteer litter pickers supported across West Suffolk carrying out regular litter picking. Over 2015/16, 2364 people in total took part in special community group litter picking events. These groups managed to collect 591 sacks of litter in the past year.

As well as litter picking, there are other ways that people can support Love Where You Live throughout 2016 and beyond, such as volunteering, getting involved in community groups or simply supporting town or village businesses by shopping locally.

In 2015/16 Forest Heath assisted the newly-formed parish council in Kentford with various village projects, as well as working with them on getting the community involved with litter and environmental



initiatives, providing support with maintenance, drawing up plans for the Old Village Hall and liaising with Suffolk County Council's Highways department regarding signs and infrastructure. As a result of these discussions a deal was reached where the community has 'adopted' some of the Highways infrastructure, working to maintain the village's appearance while the county council provides

resources such as paint. Kentford has been a powerful example of what can happen when a community is inspired to Love Where You Live.

In 2015 school children in Brandon celebrated why they Love Where they Live. Children from local schools drew their favourite things about the town as part of a competition to design eight signs that are now on display.

#### Studland Park Residents' Association

A community lunch held in late 2014 saw more than 130 residents from an estate in Newmarket come together to discuss a wide range of issues on the estate they considered important: speeding, car crime, anti-social behaviour and parking. The event



*School children with Councillor Reg Silvester in Brandon showing their Love Where You Live posters*

was funded by Forest Heath District and attended by Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Police and Community Action Suffolk.

The event enabled residents to come together to identify local solutions to some of the issues raised as well as connect local people who may not have previously had the opportunity to meet and discuss their area.

A number of people attending the community lunch expressed an interest in establishing a Residents' Association. With a couple of false starts, and local councillors playing an active and supporting role, the association was then involved in several examples of positive community action on the estate during 2015/16. A clean-up day, combined with an Easter egg hunt, was well attended and the group successfully engaged with a property developer to keep open space on the estate tidy. A significant impact has also been made in reducing speeding by drivers around the estate. Working in partnership with agencies and, most importantly, residents the association (supported by Forest Heath) is helping to build a sense of community and pride in the estate.

### **Whirlwinds and Snowflakes**

With support, guidance, and contacts from Forest Heath a Newmarket resident's idea to support children with English as an Additional Language set up a social enterprise called 'Whirlwinds and Snowflakes'. The aim of the social enterprise is to create an innovative approach to improving standards and opportunities for pre-school children with English as an additional language (EAL). For example, the project has led to the production of Dual Language Talking Books for young children who speak no, or very little, English due to them having a different home language. This initiative is going from strength to strength, with interest from around and beyond the county, and is providing early years staff with a great resource to engage EAL children and ensure they are 'school ready'. With a small grant from Forest Heath, the project enabled the purchase of books for local schools and pre-schools in and around Newmarket as well as developing staff training and an online peer support forum.

### **Newmarket Connects**

Forest Heath came together with two local social enterprises during 2015/16 to encourage connections between businesses and the voluntary and community sector in Newmarket.

Informal monthly networking events gave attendees the opportunity to meet one another, build relationships and work together on projects. Bringing together business with community groups creates so many opportunities and benefits for both parties. At each meeting, people and organisations are encouraged to identify 'needs' and 'offers', helping businesses to match up with local community groups, including sharing skills and equipment.

Having run since May 2015, the events attract up to 50 people per month, are open to all and usually invite a guest speaker to talk on subjects such as business planning and use of social media.

### **Mildenhall Community Hot Steppers**

The skipping club at St John's Community Centre was established by a proactive parent from Mildenhall who wanted something positive for young people from the surrounding area to do. The club has more than 40 members and a number of volunteers from the town who meet on a weekly basis to provide skipping tuition, an opportunity to build relationships and provide a safe place for young people to meet. Support was given by Families and Communities staff, who gave advice with growing the club and making connections with agencies, and by local councillors who provided some funding through their locality budgets.

The club has continued to grow with the additional adult helpers now engaging with the young people. To showcase their talents the club have held a 'flash mob' session in Mildenhall town centre last summer and also a Christmas event in December, which also helped to raise funds for the club.

Not only are the young people gaining life skills and making new relationships, the adult volunteers are able to gain new skills and attend training for the club.



## Case study: Mildenhall Pirates Basketball Club

Over the last year the local basketball club grew beyond its focus on sport to involve and be part of their community. The club was able to achieve a huge amount with the help of only a very small grant of £1,200 from the Community Chest scheme. They are actively engaging young people from across the area and have made links with Suffolk Young Carers to provide support sessions for young people in Mildenhall.

Over the next 12 months the club hopes to establish basketball camps and work with more community groups.

### Rock Paper Scissors

This year Forest Heath worked in partnership with Dance East, the regional Dance Agency based in Ipswich, to support the annual large-scale community dance performance that offers opportunities to access high quality dance experience in rural Suffolk. The project seeks to increase engagement in dance by bringing people together, whilst contributing to physical, social and creative health, and supporting a healthy lifestyle.

Since January Newmarket Community Choir, Great Heath Primary School Mildenhall and St Christopher's Primary School, Red Lodge, have been working hard with a Dance East artist. They practised and produced a piece which was brought together with all the work from other districts to create an evening of dance, showcasing the talent of community groups and schools from across Suffolk.

**I've learnt how to do a rhythm in a flow and other people's dance moves. I've had a good time because I love dancing and I do it at home every day after school.**

*Joshua, age nine, St Christopher's School*

The workshops involved working with 11 community and school groups, around 180 participants, from the districts of Babergh, Mid Suffolk and Forest Heath which culminated in two public performances, at the Jerwood Dance House and then at the Apex in March 2016.

### Great Barton Good Neighbour scheme

The Good Neighbour scheme, which was launched in March 2016, was originally identified as an aspiration in the Great Barton Parish Plan. The Freedom church in Great Barton contacted the Families and Communities team to explore starting a Good Neighbour scheme in the village. The scheme exists to provide short-term practical support to any member of the community. The kind of help offered by the scheme is broad and among other things includes:

- befriending;
- form filling;
- help with pets;
- minor household repairs;
- occasional transport;
- one off garden tidying; and
- prescription collection.

Over the past year wider meetings have been held to recruit volunteers from the church and the Great Barton community and to advertise the scheme. Each volunteer will take turns to look after a bespoke mobile phone to which people can call if they need help. Their request will then be matched with the most suitable volunteer to provide that support.

Staff have supported the church group with project planning, consultation and recruitment meetings and provided standardised paperwork from Community Action Suffolk (CAS). After being connected with the Great Barton scheme, CAS assisted with putting them in contact with other Good Neighbour schemes to share good practice and advice about funding opportunities.

### Forest Heath Town and Parish Forum

The Forest Heath Town and Parish Forum continues to meet every two months and attendance continues to be high. Local communities, represented by their town and parish councils, set the agenda at these events; the forum is a key demonstration of the power of a community led approach. The forums give parish and town councils the opportunity to engage with the district as well as each other and to showcase what they are doing with their communities.

The forums continue to encourage lively debate and engage with a number of councillors, staff and agencies. This year the forums covered topics including planning, planning enforcement, talks by the police, education, pot holes, waste and the closure of RAF Mildenhall. As well as updates from public sector agencies there were a variety of community talks including from Music Builds Communities, local history clubs, Coffee Caravan and The Racing Centre.

### St Edmundsbury Parish Conference

The St Edmundsbury programme of parish events remains a useful and popular fixture for parish and town councils. St Edmundsbury's Parish Conference takes place twice a year and gives an opportunity to hear from councillors and staff, ask questions and network with other parish and town councils. A broad range of topics was covered in workshops this year which included the Love Where You Live initiative and Neighbourhood Planning.

In future, we will have a new format for the parish conferences. They will be replaced with a quarterly parish forum, following the same format as the Forest Heath parish forums. We will also hold an annual parish conference for the whole of West Suffolk.

### Sharing Parenting: Parenting Conference

Sharing Parenting is a local organisation which offers a range of parenting support programmes, training for professionals working with parents and creative resources.

Together with Forest Heath, and using Community Chest funding, the organisation held its first Parenting Conference in March 2016. The event brought more than 30 parents together to listen to guest speakers, take part in parenting workshops, engage with stakeholders and share/network with other parents. The event was very well received by attendees and they told us that the event was: 'excellent – great speakers', 'services like this are invaluable' the event has shown me 'how to be a better parent'.

## 2. Community funding

### Community Chest

Since April 2015 the West Suffolk Community Chest has been the main funding mechanism available to voluntary and community sector groups across West Suffolk.

The Community Chest simplified the councils' community funding mechanisms by replacing a range of different sources of available funding with one simple scheme. It means that now community groups are invited to apply for funding to do work that they think will bring benefits to local people and which help the councils achieve their priorities. Under this system the councils are also able to commission work that helps to meet the Families and Communities agenda.

Across both councils almost £90,000 was awarded to groups for 2015/16. Community Chest awards have so far included the following:

- £40,786 to Suffolk West Citizens Advice Bureau to:
  - i. support a six-month pilot scheme providing an outreach service to Lakenheath which will increase access to advice on benefits, debt and housing, as well as free access to an independent financial adviser;
  - i. expand the telephone service in St Edmundsbury and promote online services designed to help clients access information to

help themselves. This is particularly aimed at those who live in rural areas and can't access face-to-face services in local towns. The aim is that by offering telephone or online services, the CAB could provide earlier support in issues of debt, benefits, relationship breakdown and employment issues.

- £23,214 to Sharing Parenting to develop a comprehensive map of parenting support in Forest Heath, train parent support volunteers, run parenting workshops and a fathers' parenting course, and deliver a parenting conference. Overall the project aims to support the social, emotional and behavioural development of children in school.
- £5500 to the Suffolk Digital Cinema Network in Forest Heath to develop further, to attract new members and to run more family or cross-generational film events, all designed to help combat isolation and strengthen community bonds.
- £5000 to Unit Twenty Three to support the tour of a play in Forest Heath schools about social enterprise and workshops which will lead to the further development of the Young Carers network.
- £8902 to Catch 22, Suffolk Positive Futures for a project which will seek to reconnect young people to their local communities, while teaching them life skills and building their confidence – all through free weekly sport sessions in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill.
- £5000 to Home-Start which supports families struggling with a range of issues from post-natal illness, isolation, the demands of young children, bereavement, or the challenges of raising children from multiple births. Home-Start volunteers will work with families to try to help them turn things around before they reach a crisis point.
- £1500 to the Suffolk Accident and Rescue Service in St Edmundsbury which provides local specialist critical care response in Suffolk.

Following the success of the new scheme in 2015/16 the councils have awarded a total of £382,722 to 16 organisations for 2016/17. Money has already been awarded for 2016/17 to a range of organisations such as:

- The Voluntary Network, which will use its grant to help provide a befriending scheme and a community car service;
- Suffolk Rape Crisis, who provide vital counselling and information services for survivors of rape and sexual violence; and
- Relate, an organisation that provides support and counselling for relationship and family issues.

### Locality budgets

A key part of our locality-based approach to community development is our locality budget scheme, where councillors each have an annual budget of £2500 that they can allocate to community groups and activities in their ward.

Locality budgets are designed to enable residents to take ownership of issues that they care about and to help councillors ensure that funding gets to the heart of these issues.

From beekeeping in Hepworth to basketball in Mildenhall, our councillors have been using their locality budgets to support what's important to the communities in their area.

In 2015/16 Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councillors contributed more than £153,000 towards community initiatives and projects in their ward areas. A full list of projects funded by councillors can be found at: [www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/localitybudgets](http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/localitybudgets)

### Rural Initiatives Grants

St Edmundsbury offers the Rural Initiatives Grant to match fund organisations for one-off specific capital projects in rural areas.

Horringer Community Council, Stanton Bowls Club and the Clare Country Park Trust are among the groups which have benefited from the Rural Initiatives Grant this year. During 2015/16 we approved £56,695 worth of grant to nine projects for purposes such as modernising community facilities, supporting local initiatives and helping groups to provide sporting and social activities.

### Smarter Funding: Better Outcomes conference

A Smarter Funding: Better Outcomes Conference was held at the Apex in Bury St Edmunds in July 2015. This was borne out of a recognition that the quality of grant applications to funders across Suffolk could be improved. The purpose of the conference was to raise awareness of the importance of focusing grant applications on the outcomes that will be achieved as a result of the funding.

This was a useful and productive event with 150 representatives from more than 100 organisations in attendance.

A number of presentations were made by representatives from partner organisations including: Stepping Out, who set the scene in relation to reducing local government funding and organisations' historic dependency on revenue grants; Southgate Community Centre provided a case study on ownership and management of the community centre which was transferred from the local authority; and the Early Intervention Foundation about evidencing early intervention work which was then supported by a case study from Home-Start.

Attendees then had the opportunity to ask questions of the panel of representatives from our partner organisations.

A number of key actions were agreed at the conference which included looking at current grant patterns across West Suffolk in terms of geographical distribution and theme. This work will help identify gaps in beneficiaries of funding with the aim of targeting support as appropriate.

### 3. Leisure and green spaces

#### Parks and green spaces

During 2015/16, we worked alongside local community groups to deliver new and improved play areas.

In June 2015 we opened a new play area on the Haverhill Recreation Ground with modern equipment for a broad age range of children from

toddlers to teens. The opening of the play area was celebrated with a community fun day organised by the Castle Partnership Academy Trust. Work on the Allington Walk play park in Haverhill was also completed in 2015/16.

Two further play areas were redeveloped in Newmarket. The Hodgkins Yard play area was modernised in consultation with local schools. The Lady Wolverton play area has also been redeveloped in consultation with local people. Both sites are now open and being used well.

The newly-refurbished AstroTurf at Haverhill Leisure Centre was opened in October following work to replace the worn pitch. The new pitch was a much needed resource for the town and is being used well by football and hockey clubs, as well as for private hire.

We secured funding from the Premier League and the FA Facilities Fund, together with some locality grant funding, to provide fencing around football pitches at Oakes Road and Tollgate Recreation Grounds in Bury St Edmunds. The fencing was requested following high incidences of dog fouling on the playing pitches which was a concern to users.

The Priors Estate play area in Bury St Edmunds has been redeveloped following consultation with the Priors Estate Community Association about the play provision they needed for the future. A much improved playing environment has been created with the play area and ball park now next to each other to make it easier for different groups to use. The scheme was funded by St Edmundsbury and also used s106 money (funding from legal agreements with developers) from the nearby Havebury Housing Partnership development of new homes. Improvements have also been made around the access and facilities at Nowton Pit play park in Bury St Edmunds.

#### West Suffolk Sports Facilities Assessment

West Suffolk councils received funding for a Sports Facilities Assessment which included consultation with local sports clubs and users. In February, the document was adopted by the councils and the evidence base behind it will inform the delivery





of a more strategic approach to sport and leisure facilities in the future. A project team has been established to take this forward and the first workshop, which is working towards a sports and leisure strategy for West Suffolk, took place in March.

### Arts and heritage

During 2015/16, we introduced a number of initiatives to provide opportunities for increased engagement with our heritage collections and to promote them to a wider audience. From January 2016, behind the scenes tours were offered of the collection at West Stow on the last Thursday of every month. Advance bookings have so far been made for every tour with excellent feedback including a comment that 'the tour was most interesting and enjoyable'. In addition, the Gershom Parkington Gallery opened in August 2015 at Moyse's Hall, allowing 90% of this outstanding collection of clocks to be on display.

A number of loans have been made from our collections to other museums including: the

Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge; Gainsborough's House, Sudbury; The Bowe's Museum, Durham; and the Ancient House Museum, Thetford.

Our heritage work has continued to receive valuable support from eight volunteers who currently contribute approximately 20 hours a week. This also enables the volunteers to gain valuable skills and they have been involved in various projects including fine art and costume inventory, a small finds cataloguing project and improving the collections documentation.

Grant funding from the following external sources was secured during 2015/16:

- £23,300 capital grant from Arts Council England for security and environmental improvements at Moyse's Hall;
- £1000 Collections Review grant from SHARE Museums East to contribute to ongoing cataloguing and repacking of West Stow Small Finds collection; and

- £18,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund Young Roots project to deconstruct the Sunken House in Anglo-Saxon Village.

In 2015, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the start of excavations at West Stow by Dr Stanley West. A number of the original diggers, including Dr West, returned to the site to celebrate this event and free entry was on offer to visitors on that day. The Heritage Service worked in partnership with the Suffolk Archaeological Unit and young people aged between 13 and 25 to record and dismantle the Sunken House (one of the original reconstructed houses) due to its condition. The records that were made will help continue the ongoing evaluation of the village. The project ended at Easter 2016 and the young people were on site to talk about their experience.

We have enjoyed an increase in visitor numbers at West Stow and Moyse's Hall this year. From April 2015 to February 2016 visitor numbers at Moyse's Hall increased by 34% from the same period in the previous year and at West Stow they increased by 25%. We also worked hard to increase school visits, which resulted in a significant rise in young visitors.

Produced by Orchestras Live and City of London Sinfonia in partnership with Forest Heath and four other local authorities, plus two Music Education Hubs, a programme of creative workshops, training sessions and public concerts was held across Suffolk and north east Essex. The programme delivered a series of interactive Lullaby Concerts designed specifically for young children and their parents or carers, particularly aiming to reach people in dispersed rural communities and hard-to-reach areas. The essence of the project was about bringing inspirational first experiences of live orchestral music to young children and families to encourage the sustained use of music as a means of learning and play.

Local young musicians were involved in the concerts, acting as inspirational role models for the young audiences and the skills of nursery practitioners were developed through music training days.

In 2015 Colourbox Pre-school and Little Buds Nursery, both in Newmarket, participated in the programme. Each nursery setting received three 30-minute workshops. In the final workshop they were joined by three musicians from the City of London Sinfonia, enabling the participants to see and hear orchestral instruments and make connections with the content of the subsequent orchestral concerts.

*Feedback from  
a happy young  
musician*



The two performances took place at Newmarket Memorial Hall in October 2015 with 195 children and 74 adults attending. After the performances Suffolk County Council provided instruments and tutors to enable children to have a go at playing an instrument themselves.

### **Bury in Bloom**

We have continued to support Bury in Bloom, the organisation that works hard to help maintain Bury St Edmunds as a beautiful town for the enjoyment of everyone. Bury in Bloom has had another successful year with projects including: Flowerheads for the Community, where adults and children were involved in workshops to create flowers that were displayed in the Abbey Gardens; replanting the beds near the multi-storey car park to keep what is one of the pedestrian routes into the town attractive; and working with children and young people in nurseries and schools to encourage an interest in green issues and growing your own food.

### **Home of Horseracing**

A great deal of work by and with our partners has continued in this year to prepare for the opening of the National Horseracing Museum in Newmarket, in Autumn 2016. At the time of writing this report it is close to completion. This work has seen the regeneration of a range of listed buildings right in the heart of Newmarket. The district council is the freeholder of the site which will be leased to the National Horseracing Museum on a 999 year lease who will manage the Heritage Centre.

The new National Heritage Centre for Horseracing and Sporting Art will be one of the region's leading tourist attractions. It is expected to bring 50,000 to 60,000 tourists visitors a year to the town and over £2 million a year to the local/regional economy.

Further information is available on the following website: [www.palacehousenewmarket.co.uk](http://www.palacehousenewmarket.co.uk)

### Skate parks and tracks

We are using automatic counters at the Bury St Edmunds skate park to help us understand the popularity of the site and when it is most used. It continues to be a facility that is enjoyed by young people from in and around the local area.

We are also pleased to report that refurbishment work at the Newmarket skate park has started in this year. This initiative has been led by young people who use the facility and the council is now offering practical support to help progress this project.

### BurySOUND 2016

The long-running BurySOUND music competition declared its 17th winner in March after another successful competition celebrating the area's thriving music scene. The competition saw 15 bands battle to be declared the best local act and culminated in an exciting final at the Apex.

## 4. A commercial approach to our leisure and culture offer

### The Apex

The Apex's reputation as a venue with excellent acoustics and a more intimate setting than other larger venues is continuing to develop.

During 2015/16 the venue welcomed household names including: Lulu, Nigel Kennedy, Elaine Paige, Russell Kane, Tim Vine, Sean Lock, Katherine Ryan, Josh Widdicombe, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Jasper Carrott, Jonathan Dimbleby, Michael Portillo and Midge Ure to name but a few.

The Apex has also become an important part of the community providing a meeting place for many different groups and clubs. Over the year, more of the building's rooms and performance spaces were

used for events such as Songbook Sundays jazz brunches, baby ballet, belly dancing, Pilates and yoga classes.

Total ticket sales for 2015/16 exceeded £1.5 million – a 26% increase on the previous financial year. The Apex also attracted more than 14,000 new bookers, compared to around 12,000 during 2014/15.

### Moyse's Hall

We are delighted with the popularity of the Lego Exhibition at Moyse's Hall, which ran between January and April 2016. In total 15,509 visitors, which includes 1,068 school children came to the museum specifically to see the exhibition. This was a 200% increase on school visitor numbers on the same period as last year. As well as fantastic visitor numbers we received very positive feedback about the museum with a number of school groups planning a return trip to visit the collections in the rest of the museum. The Lego workshops we ran were popular with hard to reach groups and this element will continue with workshops held in the museum and as part of an outreach programme.

## 5. Improving wellbeing and health

### Suffolk Heath and Wellbeing Board

The West Suffolk councils are members of the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board along with the county council, local clinical commissioning groups, NHS England, HealthWatch, the police, the voluntary sector and other district and borough councils. Although health outcomes for many people in Suffolk and West Suffolk are good, the board aims to help those groups and communities which experience poorer health and wellbeing than others.

As a partner on the board we have worked with colleagues to develop strategies which provide a steer on the work that partners should be delivering and supporting. The West Suffolk councils partnership is a lead partner for the delivery of the Suffolk Prevention Strategy.

It is an important time with changes to the health service and greater integration between health and social care. Borough and district councils have a key role to play in terms of improving people's health – warm, safe homes, well-planned and



connected communities, parks and open spaces and safe places to work and eat. It is important that we continue to contribute effectively to bodies such as the Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure that as much focus is given to prevention as to clinical interventions. This work contributes towards our equality objective to improve physical and mental health and wellbeing.

### Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership

The Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership (WSCSP) is made up of representatives from St Edmundsbury, Forest Heath, Mid Suffolk and Babergh Councils, Suffolk Police, Suffolk County Council, the Youth offending Service, Probation and the Clinical Commissioning Group. The partnership works with partners in the community to develop an understanding of local concerns, to support Safer Neighbourhood Teams, and to empower communities to address issues that are important to them. It does this by carrying out an annual assessment of crime in the area and producing an annual plan.

### The Strong and Safe Communities Group

This multi-agency group, chaired by the West Suffolk councils' Chief Executive, has identified four work streams to focus on:

- domestic abuse;
- sexual exploitation;
- cyber crime; and
- youth violence and gangs

Each work stream has a scoping process underway to determine the current data and intelligence situation, what action is being taken already, and what else might be required. The group reports quarterly to the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board, where the findings of each work stream will eventually be examined in detail.

### Supporting diverse communities

The Dementia Action Alliance (DAA) brings together organisations in a local area that are committed to transforming the lives of people with dementia and their carers. The Bury St Edmunds branch of the DAA is looking to make the town a dementia-friendly community which will be home to dementia-friendly organisations (DFOs). The DAA

has started work to achieve this through Dementia Friends awareness sessions for all customer-facing staff and volunteers at participating organisations; adopting and sharing guidance and best practice between other local DAA members; raising awareness through the local media; and meeting the needs of people with dementia and their carers in the Bury St Edmunds area.

A DAA Steering Group, of which we are a member, has been set up which is full of individuals that are committed to promoting this work and how organisations can become dementia-friendly. A webpage has been set up where organisations can upload their action plans on how they can become a DFO.

The West Suffolk councils are already taking the first steps towards becoming a DFO. A member of the Families and Communities team has trained to deliver the awareness sessions that will be rolled out to staff and community groups.

At a recent St Edmundsbury Parish Conference, we ran a Dementia Friendly Communities workshop which prompted great interest from the participants.

## 6. Communicating with our residents

### Customer services

Over the past year we have continued with the implementation of our target operating model for customer services, meaning that the team is able to handle queries about a range of services. This enables customers to have their questions answered at the first point of contact. Now more than 90% of queries are resolved at the first point of contact, saving valuable time for both residents and staff. This year the team began taking calls for the Apex box office as well as managing the contacts relating to the new garden waste service. The team also managed all the calls relating to the elections service and offered extended hours in the run up to, and on, election day.

The service coped well in the face of increasing demand, taking 150,000 phone calls during 2015/16, compared with 107,000 last year. In addition, we have talked face-to-face with 70,000 customers to council offices in West Suffolk.



Our online offer has increased and we have introduced online applications for residents' parking permits, as well the garden waste collection service, with approximately 60% of subscriptions being completed online.

To support these changes, we introduced a new corporate Customer Relationship Management system that can handle queries for all the various types of work that we do and allows us to connect online forms with back office systems. This makes it simpler for residents across West Suffolk to make use of the services we provide.

### **Social media conversations**

As part of channel shift, and acknowledging the decline in circulation of traditional news print media, the councils are proactively using social media to engage with residents. Information is tweeted to nearly 6000 Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury followers giving other Twitter users the opportunity to share the news with their own followers. Their comments and enquiries are monitored and answered by the Customer Service Team and communications officers.

Tweets also direct residents to fuller information posted on our Facebook pages, which is shared with a growing audience of more than 50 community Facebook groups. Some of these groups have membership levels in excess of 10,000 people (who may also share the status to their friends). This enables the councils to have conversations with residents, helping them understand what changes mean to them and the reasons behind them. The councils' social media practice is evolving quickly in response to customer expectation. For example, the Garden Waste Collection Scheme launch used social media proactively to explain the complex messages and to dispel myths, and used it reactively to respond to individual queries and concerns expressed solely by social media.

### **Find My Nearest**

We are committed to making it more straightforward for residents to be able to access information on council services and their local area by themselves. As part of this we introduced 'Find My Nearest' in May. This is an online service that shows residents a wealth of information

relevant to them including their local democratic arrangements, nearby planning issues and waste and recycling arrangements. It also shows information relating to partner public services including nearby schools, health providers and roadworks. Since being launched the number of users has gradually grown and from the beginning of 2016 the service has attracted on average 2900 separate users per month.

### **Community Governance Review**

We are currently in phase two of the Community Governance Review of parish electoral arrangements in St Edmundsbury which we agreed to carry out in response to new growth under Vision 2031. We also asked parishes if there were any other governance issues which needed to be examined elsewhere in the borough.

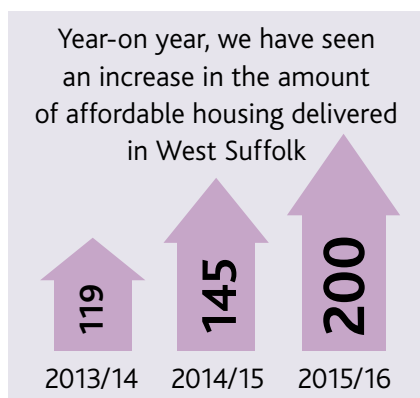
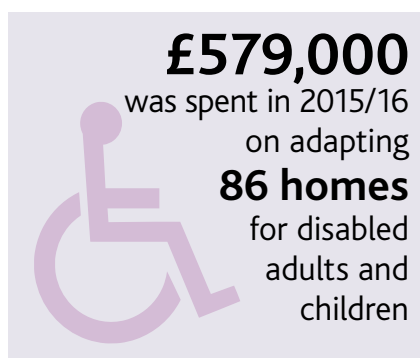
As a result there were over 20 issues with final recommendations that we formally consulted on as part of the Community Governance Reviews. The consultation ended in April 2016.

Final recommendations for any boundary or electoral changes will be agreed in summer 2016.

## Priority 3: Homes for our communities

### We want to see:

- sufficient housing for current and future generations, including more affordable homes and improvements to existing housing;
- new developments that are fit for the future, properly supported by infrastructure, and that build communities, not just housing; and
- homes that are flexible for people's changing needs.



### Why was this a priority for 2015/16?

Ensuring that people have an appropriate supply of housing is one of West Suffolk's three priorities because of its importance to our residents. Good housing has an important role in improving the wellbeing of people in our area, and it is vital in realising our ambitions for economic growth.

Because of this we work hard to ensure that there's a good range of options, across private sale, private rental, social, and affordable housing. Our housing work is underpinned by our role as a planning authority. In this role we are committed to ensuring

that new development is both appropriate to the area and complemented by sufficient infrastructure. By doing this we can ensure that new development isn't only about building houses; it's about building communities.

### What we have done to support this priority

Since adoption in October 2014, we have worked to deliver against the actions and targets in the West Suffolk Housing Strategy. Our progress against increasing the supply of new homes, making the best use of existing housing and providing specialist

housing and support, along with our progress against other actions to improve the housing situation in West Suffolk is detailed throughout this chapter.

## **1. Ensuring a sufficient supply of housing**

### **Forest Heath Local Plan**

Forest Heath District Council is planning for the long-term growth to ensure that there is certainty in how and where our settlements will grow. Consultations on the Site Allocations Local Plan and the Single Issue Review (SIR) of Core Strategy Policy CS7 (Overall Housing Provision and Distribution) took place between August and October 2015. The purpose of this consultation document was to stimulate debate to identify the most appropriate sites for housing, employment and community and leisure use.

The responses to the consultation have helped inform a further document (out to public consultation between April and June 2016) which sets out the council's preferred strategy for the allocation of sites across the district. Following this, a final draft of the Site Allocations document will be prepared, which the council will submit to the Secretary of State for an independent planning examination. This final draft will be known as the Submission Document and when it is published in 2016 there will be another final opportunity for the public and stakeholders to comment.

### **Vision 2031 Sites**

We are delighted that negotiations around the Eastern Relief Road were concluded in February 2016. The access that this road will bring means that 500 homes are set to be built on the Vision 2031 site east of Moreton Hall. Full planning permission has been granted for the first phase of 100 homes, of which 30 will be classified as affordable. A further 400 homes have been granted outline planning permission.

### **Bringing empty homes back into use**

West Suffolk councils have taken a pro-active partnership approach to returning under-used empty homes back into use. We have worked with colleagues at Anglia Revenues Partnership to survey owners of empty homes, to both ensure that our

records are more accurate and also to enable us to prioritise those requiring further actions. We support owners in a number of ways, including the offer of a grant to enable repairs, while also targeting those properties where further enforcement may be required. The total number of empty homes was reduced by 803 and we brought 30 empty homes back into use by improving standards through staff interventions in 2015/16.

### **Planning Improvement Plan**

During 2015 our Development Management Service went through extensive internal and external reviews to help us to understand, with supporting evidence, some of the opportunities for improvement that exist across the service. The recommendations from the review have been collated into a Planning Improvement Plan which will be delivered over the coming months. In the meantime, our performance has improved which is evident through data in our balanced scorecard.

As part of the Planning Improvement Plan we will be providing more information online and offering customers the chance to self-serve through the use of our website and the planning portal website. We look forward to reporting on the success of the Planning Improvement Plan next year.

## **2. Housing that is suitable for our communities**

### **Supporting the adoption of neighbourhood plans**

Neighbourhood plans are legally binding planning documents that give the local community a say in future development. We have been supporting Hargrave and Newmarket to produce their neighbourhood plans. Both areas settled on the geographical extent that their plan will eventually cover after we provided the resources to conduct consultations. The two neighbourhood areas were formally designated in late 2015.

We will continue to support both areas by assisting with future consultation, providing planning expertise and conducting the local referendum which will eventually decide whether or not the plans are formally adopted as legal planning documents.

## Case study: Design council

Preventing older persons' unplanned hospital admissions and ambulance call-outs is becoming an increasing priority both locally and nationally as the older population grows and the need for financial efficiencies intensifies. To help reduce unnecessary calls on services, the housing service at West Suffolk councils is leading a group, which includes partners from West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group, Suffolk County Council's Adults and Communities Service and Havebury Housing Partnership, to look at ways to reduce unnecessary ambulance call-outs and accident and emergency admissions amongst older people living in sheltered housing.

Data collected for the project show that across ten sheltered housing schemes, there are around 11 unplanned hospital admissions a month. The project is now seeking to co-ordinate day-to-day social support and social care and health preventative work to bring down this figure. With each acute hospital admission costing upwards of £1000 to the health service alone, halving this rate of unplanned admission would see an immediate annual saving of £66,000 to £100,000 with more savings to come as the approach is rolled out to other providers of sheltered housing accommodation in our area and the secondary benefits to other services are quantified.

Other work has included 'Human Centred Design' approach with the partners listed above which seeks to achieve: (a) a reduction in the time that older medically fit patients spend in hospital; and (b) achieve the best possible outcomes upon their return home. Positive outcomes of this work have included collaborative work amongst partners, information sharing and potential cost savings.

### 3. Identifying and delivering new funding models for affordable housing

#### Barley Homes (Group) Ltd

This year saw the establishment of Barley Homes (Group) Ltd which is a company limited by shares jointly owned by Suffolk County Council (50% of shares), Forest Heath District Council (25%) and St Edmundsbury Borough Council (25%). The purpose of the company is to develop houses across all tenures, for sale and private rent on a commercial basis, while also delivering much needed affordable homes. The company will also aim to provide specialist housing that the private sector does not currently deliver. The business case to establish the company was approved by the three councils in November 2015.

The housing company promises to be an innovative approach to help achieve both our housing and financial goals and is thought to be the country's first example of a county and district/borough jointly establishing a company to build homes.

Other housing companies in operation are wholly-owned by district or county councils; this is one of the first examples of a three-way partnership. Work has now begun on the development of the company's first five-year plan which will include specific details of sites to be developed in West Suffolk. It is hoped that the plan will be approved in late 2016, work can then progress on developing the first site.

#### Continue the supply of affordable housing

In partnership with registered housing providers we have maximised the delivery of affordable homes to help meet the needs of West Suffolk. Housing and planning services are continuing to ensure that new private developments contribute both affordable housing and contributions to key infrastructure.

A three-year high in new affordable housing delivery was achieved in 2015/16 when a total of 200 affordable houses were built, up from 119 in 2013/14 and 145 in 2014/15.

Of the 200 affordable homes delivered in 2015/16, 87 were built on registered provider-led developments consisting entirely of 100% affordable homes, with the remaining 113 affordable homes resulting from planning obligations fulfilled by private developers on mixed tenure schemes. In this case, the properties were sold on to registered providers.

We have continued to work with developers to ensure that we achieve 30% affordable housing on new developments.

### **Improving the quality of existing housing**

We continue to work with both owners and landlords in the private sector to ensure that homes are safe and suitable to live in. We have brought 50 homes up to the decent home standard for vulnerable owner-occupiers through our Housing Assistance Policy. In addition, we have brought 76 homes up to the Housing Act standard by ensuring that the landlord removes the serious hazards for their tenant(s).

A pro-active approach is now being taken to identify Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in our main towns. HMOs provide lower cost shared accommodation, but also pose a higher risk of fire and other concerns in the local community. We work closely with partners such as the Fire Service and the Police around making these properties safe, up to standard and to reduce the impact of anti-social behaviour and crime. We have recently targeted Newmarket, where we have been successful in identifying HMOs and they are being improved. We intend to carry out a similar survey in Haverhill, starting from May 2016.

### **Support through Disabled Facilities Grants**

We spent £579,000 on adapting 86 homes for disabled adults and children to meet their essential housing needs through a grant. We have worked with Suffolk partners to procure a new Home Improvement Agency (HIA) to deliver services for our most vulnerable and disabled residents under a new integrated approach, with the service going 'live' in May 2016.

The HIA will deliver the majority of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) allocation that the councils

have been allocated through the Better Care Fund (BCF) for 2016/17.

The new HIA will build on work that has been taking place with partners, such as the Clinical Commissioning Group and Suffolk County Council Adult Care, to prevent hospital admissions and improving hospital discharge, further information is provided in the Design Council section on page 32. West Suffolk councils have an important role in this process. Our strategy and operational work aims to ensure that residents can live independently and safely in their homes. This work supported our equality objective of providing 'homes that are flexible to meet people's changing needs'.

### **Suffolk co-ordination service**

West Suffolk councils have continued to lead the county-wide Suffolk co-ordination service, with funding from Suffolk County Council secured until September 2016. This service helps to place local people into supported accommodation. Across West Suffolk in 2015, a total of 321 people were placed in supported accommodation from a total of 507 assessments.

## **4. Homelessness and temporary accommodation**

### **Temporary accommodation in Bury St Edmunds**

We are committed to reducing dependency on bed and breakfast accommodation, which may be unsuitable for an individual or a family's needs and is not a cost effective solution. To reduce the need to use bed and breakfast accommodation, St Edmundsbury purchased Abbotts House in Bury St Edmunds, which is a former bed and breakfast. The property is being converted and will provide temporary accommodation for four families, two couples and one disabled person in housing need.

Along with the existing temporary accommodation we already have in Forest Heath and the purchase in 2015 of a house in Lake Avenue in Bury St Edmunds, we will be able to eliminate the need to use bed and breakfast accommodation (apart from emergencies) for people waiting to be permanently rehoused. This approach means we will be able to provide high quality temporary



accommodation for households in housing need as well as eventually saving more than £110,400 per annum in bed and breakfast accommodation. Our approach has already resulted in significant savings; in 2014/15, we spent £208,600 on bed and breakfast accommodation, compared with £98,200 in 2015/16.

It is clear that this strategy is working because at the end of 2015 there were two households in bed and breakfast, compared with 20 at the end of 2013.

### Homelessness

Our West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy was adopted by the West Suffolk councils at the beginning of 2015. Through this strategy we have committed to do more to combat homelessness and to make sure that those who are affected by homelessness receive timely advice and assistance. For example, this year we have facilitated additional accommodation and support across the area for victims of Domestic Abuse who would otherwise become homeless.

As a result of the emphasis to prevent homelessness the number of households where West Suffolk accepted a duty to rehouse fell from 240 in 2014/15 to 210 in 2015/16. The reduction in numbers shows that our homelessness strategy is working, but that there is still more that can be done to tackle homelessness.

We have been working with partners to establish a Young Persons' Action Group with the primary objective of developing a joined-up approach to preventing homelessness for young people and families, including appropriate interventions for relationship breakdown. Partnership working in this area will progress to complete a Suffolk-wide Action Plan and build on best practice from across Suffolk to ensure that effective interventions are aimed at assisting in times of relationship and family breakdown.

### Provide advice and support to vulnerable households to alleviate fuel poverty

We continue to work in partnership with all the local authorities across Suffolk to deliver the Warm Homes Healthy People Project. During 2015/16 this partnership has successfully secured funding of £1.6 million from the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) First Time Central Heating Fund and £350,000 from the fuel poverty charity National Energy Action. This funding will be used to deliver a range of energy efficiency improvements into vulnerable households across Suffolk. Both schemes are now operational with the first boiler installation taking place in January 2016. We are pleased to report that through these two projects it is anticipated that 400 vulnerable households will benefit from warmer and cosier homes which will mean improved health and wellbeing for those households.

The Warm Homes Healthy People Project continues to deliver its core service of offering 'in the home' independent advice and support and onward referrals to the appropriate schemes. In 2015/16 17 in home surveys were carried out in Forest Heath, which lead to £616 being spent on loft insulation, £800 on boiler repairs and £2,843 to assist residents with heating fuel. 30 in home surveys were carried out in St Edmundsbury which lead to 8 boiler upgrades, 6 heating installations and £4,310 to assist residents with heating fuel.

During 2015/16, the DECC funded Green Deal Community fund continued to support the installation of external wall insulation, with grants of up to £6000 available to each property. This scheme will support an estimated 900 homes until it finishes in the summer of 2016, with many residents in West Suffolk feeling the benefits.

## Case Study: National Grid Energy Innovation Fund – Shepherds Grove Park, Stanton

A successful bid was submitted to the National Grid Energy Innovation fund to provide new gas central heating systems and external wall insulation (EWI) to park homes in Stanton. National Grid awarded the project £100,000 and they also funded the installation of 14 new gas connections and heating systems to homes with residents over the age of 70. The £100,000 has been primarily used to fund the installation of external wall insulation to 24 park home properties.

The site has 216 homes in total and all residents must be over 55 years old. Many are retired and spend considerable time at home, so being able to maintain a warm and affordable property is essential. Ten of the properties benefited from both a new gas central heating system and EWI and the improvement to the comfort levels in these properties is significant. Most of the homes who have had EWI installed comment that the thermostat has been turned down a few degrees and the home remains warmer longer once the heating is turned off.



*A Shepherds Grove Park in Stanton resident signs a new gas connection application form with National Grid Affordable Warmth.*

The 14 EWI measures where central heating was already installed should see lifetime CO<sub>2</sub> savings of 25 tonnes and financial savings of at least £237 per year. The 10 properties that had new gas central heating and EWI installed should benefit from savings of £402 per year and lifetime CO<sub>2</sub> savings of 64 tonnes.

# West Suffolk ways of working

## Why was this important to us in 2015/16?

The publication of our Strategic Plan in 2014 which set out our vision: 'Working together, Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils will support communities to create the best possible future for people in West Suffolk'. Since then we have made ambitious plans for how to achieve this. In order to achieve this vision we set out our priorities, around opportunities for economic growth; resilient, healthy and active families and communities; and homes for our communities. Working together to share the way we deliver services as two councils has saved taxpayers significant amounts of money and made us more efficient, but it is clear that to make our vision a reality we need to change the way we work to become even more flexible and effective.

By taking necessary steps to develop our organisation, West Suffolk's public estate, and our Councillors and staff, we can secure our ability to deliver on our priorities now and into the future.

## What we have done to support this

### 1. Developing our organisation

#### Transformation Challenge Award (TCA)

In 2014 public authorities in Suffolk were awarded £3.3 million of government funding for an ambitious programme of collaboration and integration that will reduce costs and improve services for local people.

A great deal of transformation work happens 'below the radar' but the benefits can be felt in the improved way that the organisations work together. In June 2015 we worked on a system-wide project to bring data together in support of the ONE Haverhill Board. We brought the insight of the West Suffolk councils, Suffolk County Council, and West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group into one report so that the Board could ensure that their priorities were informed by high-quality

data. A system-wide approach was also essential in securing Design Council support for our initiatives to reduce hospital admissions among residents of sheltered housing by putting people, not processes, at the heart of service design.

Suffolk already has a strong history of working closely together to achieve better and more efficient services. This is clearly demonstrated by the way that Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury have worked together to share services. The principle can also be seen in our approach to the public sector estate across the county and our ambitious shared legal service project. TCA funding allows us to take these and other efforts further, by unblocking the problems that were getting in the way and by building capacity and facilitating change.

#### Shared legal services

This project is setting up a shared legal service across four partner councils in Suffolk to build skills, capacity and resilience.

Work has been ongoing to scope the needs and deliverables based on a strong customer focus. It is clear that the case can be made for a more diverse and flexible pool of staff, with a wider range of modern legal skills and knowledge within the service. We will be commencing with the early stages of the service in Spring/Summer 2016.

These initial stages will entail a joining of the teams from Babergh, Forest Heath, Mid Suffolk and St Edmundsbury councils. Along with Babergh and Mid Suffolk we are also working with Ipswich, Suffolk Coastal and Waveney councils on a joint arrangement to procure a combined Case Management System which will further support modern and new ways of working.

We also recently employed two new trainee solicitors who we support through the early stages of their legal careers; welcome additions to the team. All the lawyers are instrumental in providing legal expertise to complex new projects through their roles as partners to our council business.



## 2. Developing the public sector estate in West Suffolk

### Operational Hub

The West Suffolk Operational Hub (WSOH) is a project to build a site containing vehicle workshops, depot, waste transfer station, household waste and recycling centre and associated facilities. The project is a partnership between the West Suffolk councils, responsible for collecting waste, and Suffolk County Council, responsible for disposing of it through recycling or the energy-from-waste facility in Great Blakenham.

By having these facilities on the same site we would increase efficiency, save taxpayers' money, cut our current environmental impact and future-proof waste management for West Suffolk's growing communities. By combining our facilities on a new single site we would also unlock valuable public sector land that could be used for development to create employment and deliver economic benefits.

During 2015/16 we conducted two consultations to seek residents' views on the operational hub. Most recently we sought views on the work we carried out on investigating various options, both for delivery (we concluded that a single site was the best option) and on a number of sites close to Bury St Edmunds. We asked people to look at our research and give us their views, including suggestions for alternative sites. Further information on the project, including the consultations and outcomes are on the WSOH webpage: [www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/WSOH](http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/WSOH)

### One Public Estate

The West Suffolk councils and local partners successfully bid for funds from the Government's One Public Estate (OPE) programme which is designed to release the value of public sector assets. The bid was made by the councils, Suffolk County Council, Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough LEP, New Anglia LEP, and the West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group. On behalf of the partners, Forest Heath District Council received £230,000 to use mainly towards planning for the future of RAF Mildenhall.

Part of the project is also to create a One Public Estate Board of West Suffolk partners which will assist with information sharing and coordination of all public estate projects in the area, for example NHS estates strategies, the Bury St Edmunds magistrates' court closure and town centre masterplans. The Board will also keep an overview on the Mildenhall Hub project which will bring together public services to make them more accessible to the public whilst reducing the cost of public services to the taxpayer. As well as the immediate benefits, the Hub is also part of the bigger picture of how Mildenhall's infrastructure will adapt for the future as the needs of the town change and, as such, it will be built to include flexible and expandable accommodation. The relocation of public services to a Hub site will also enable the release of other publicly-owned sites for housing and growth.

### Bus station building

In October 2015 St Edmundsbury Borough Council approved investing £39,500 in the Bury St Edmunds bus station building to enable significant longer term savings. The building had been costing the council £250,000 every year to run. We have been able to make savings of £100,000 every year through changes to staffing.

The investment was used to configure the building into two parts – a waiting area with a lettable café kiosk and access to public toilets; and a large lettable area for rent. Though the provision of real-time information boards outside the building has unfortunately been delayed, Suffolk County Council has committed to installing the boards in the bus stands.

In addition to the savings already unlocked by staffing changes, the café kiosk and lettable area have created the potential for some income from commercial opportunities in the future.

### Verse Ltd joint venture

St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath, together with Suffolk County Council, have formed a joint venture company with Vertas Group Limited, a publicly-owned facilities management company.

The new joint venture company is called Verse Ltd and consolidates facilities management services across West Suffolk. This will result in efficiency savings of £40,000 per year.

In due course Verse will be able to offer their commercial services to other organisations and businesses and so generate revenue, helping to contribute to the cost of running vital public services.

### 3. Developing our people

#### Staff learning and development

We are committed to the development of our workforce and the learning of new skills, behaviours and competencies, as set out by the University of Birmingham in their 21st Century Public Servant report. New initiatives in 2015/16 included a series of three one-day sessions on commercial awareness, shared with partner councils. The corporate training programme was tailored to meet key organisational priorities and also included sessions on negotiating skills, project management, effective writing for business and handling difficult conversations. We continued to develop our coaching and mentoring offer and supported our future talent through Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) courses including coaching, mentoring, and management. We also supported mediation training and are now able to offer mediation in the workplace.

In 2015/16 some 200 members of staff attended training events including PREVENT awareness sessions (the identification and prevention of radicalisation).

In September 2015 we moved the West Suffolk corporate e-learning platform to a shared access portal with Suffolk County Council. This move was cost-effective and allowed us to access a much wider range of learning materials.

Twenty-six managers completed, or are in the process of completing, ILM qualifications at level 3 and level 5. This offer was made to staff based on assessment of their performance and potential (through the annual Performance and Development Review scheme). The courses are being delivered in partnership with borough, county and district

councils in Suffolk, thereby building support networks across the Suffolk system, sharing experiences and differences and enabling cost-effective delivery. We continue to work with the Suffolk Coaching and Mentoring Partnership, having a role on the Board, offering staff the opportunity to find a coach-mentor match and developing coaching capacity across the organisation.

The apprenticeship rolling programme saw 17 young apprentices working in the organisation across all service areas and six members of staff taking up level 2 and level 3 apprenticeships in customer services. The intern programme has also grown considerably with nine interns employed over the summer months in 2015 and very positive feedback received from them about their experience working for West Suffolk. The programme saw the interns delivering a range of projects which gave them the opportunity to experience real life work to support their future career paths.

#### Councillor learning and development

2015 was dominated by the delivery of the member induction programme, including a range of topics from equality and diversity to information communication technology training. Each member was allocated a staff 'buddy' to help them through the initial stages of induction. The programme started with an informal networking session with representatives from each of the services meeting and concluded with local government finance.

A new IT-based committee management system was implemented enabling full and secure access to committee papers online. Members were encouraged, through using new technology, to reduce reliance on paper-based information. Throughout the year ICT sessions have been delivered to groups of Members and on a one-to-one basis, to support the use of the system, and to enable internet access to minutes, agendas and reports. This work will continue to build confidence and support Members in their ward and committee roles.

## The future

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This year we have made considerable steps towards achieving our strategic priorities and we are always working to make sure we continue to do so in the future. The role and shape of local government is changing and we must make sure that not only are we taking advantage of the opportunities, but that we are ready for the challenges too.

### Devolution

A devolution deal for East Anglia was announced in the government's 2016 Budget covering councils in Cambridgeshire, Peterborough, Suffolk, and Norfolk. The deal is due to be ratified by each council in turn in early summer 2016. Covering areas such as jobs, transport, housebuilding, and health and social care the deal offers the opportunity for more decisions to be taken locally, rather than in Whitehall.

Under the proposed deal, £30 million of funding will be devolved each year over the next 30 years to support economic growth, the development of infrastructure and the creation of jobs. In addition, £175 million will be devolved over the next five years to support housebuilding across the region. The region would also gain control of around £50 million a year in adult skills funding.

### RAF Mildenhall and RAF Lakenheath

The USAF-occupied RAF Lakenheath and RAF Mildenhall airbases are both in the Forest Heath district but the impact of the approximately 8800 US personnel/staff and 1100 UK civilians employed by the airbases goes far wider into Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk. Over the next six years we will see substantial changes at both airbases with the withdrawal of USAF operations from RAF Mildenhall and the deployment of the F-35A aircraft at RAF Lakenheath.

In 2015/16 Forest Heath commissioned an impact study to assess the economic impact of the two airbases on West Suffolk and the surrounding areas. New Anglia LEP, Greater Cambridgeshire and Greater Peterborough LEP, Suffolk County Council and Breckland and East Cambridgeshire councils also helped to fund the economic impact study. The study revealed that the two airbases collectively

could currently be worth as much as £700 million a year to the West Suffolk, Breckland and East Cambridgeshire economies. This is after direct employment on-base and indirect employment associated with spending on and off-base is taken into account.

The impact study has helped us to work alongside our communities and local businesses to plan for the impact of changes across both airbases. The Ministry of Defence (MOD) and other government departments are currently considering the future of the RAF Mildenhall airbase as part of its Strategic Defence and Security Review, which is due to conclude in the summer 2016. We believe that the release of the RAF Mildenhall site is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to shape the future of Mildenhall and the surrounding areas. We are therefore working with the MOD to deliver a vision that attracts new businesses and creates employment and delivers appropriate housing.

During this year we have held a number of engagement sessions for residents, community representatives and businesses to discuss the changes at RAF Mildenhall, which will be vacated by US forces by 2022. Forest Heath recognised the importance of the public having a say in the future of the site and that this is kept at the heart of decision-making. The engagement sessions gave us the opportunity to harness a great deal of local interest in a future vision for Mildenhall, including discussions on the infrastructure needed to support possible uses for the site and concerns about the impact of the airbase closure on local people and the local economy.

We received some strong messages about what local people think should happen in the future and we're using that information to help inform our discussions with the MOD about what should happen to the site post 2022. We are currently awaiting a decision on how the land will be used in the future and we will share the latest developments on this as soon as we can.

### **RAF Barnham**

In January 2016 the Ministry of Defence confirmed that they would be withdrawing operations from RAF Barnham. The RAF Barnham site is heavily constrained by land-use planning restrictions and by its use as an operational military base. We are discussing with the MOD about the impact of the closure of RAF Barnham and its plans for bringing the land forward for development. When more information is known, St Edmundsbury Borough Council will ensure that local communities are informed and engaged in any future decision-making about potential options for the site.

### **Everything we do**

As well as tackling the major issues of tomorrow in the specific areas detailed above, we are laying plans for the future in all areas of our work. We will grow our commercial services and expand our apprenticeship schemes. We will continue to strengthen our partnerships to make sure that our markets, town centres and rural areas are as vibrant as they can be. We will support economic growth and housebuilding by implementing our Planning Improvement Plan, which will build capacity in our planning service. Even further, we will explore how to extend our pioneering Families and Communities approach into everything we do. We will continue to take a leading role in our communities, building resilience, creating connections, and delivering resources, such as funding, to support people to improve their own lives, and the lives of others around them, in their own local communities.



# West Suffolk

Cambridge

London











Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury councils

**West Suffolk**  
working together



# (Informal Joint) Cabinet



**Forest Heath**  
District Council

Title of Report:	Introduction of Charging for a Pre-application Advice Planning Service	
Report No:	CAB/FH/16/025	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	14 June 2016
Portfolio holder:	Lance Stanbury Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth Tel: 07970 947704 Email: <a href="mailto:lance.stanbury@forest-heath.gov.uk">lance.stanbury@forest-heath.gov.uk</a>	
Lead officer:	Rachel Almond Service Manager (Planning Development) Tel: 01638 719455 Email: <a href="mailto:rachel.almond@westsuffolk.gov.uk">rachel.almond@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	
Purpose of report:	To consider the proposed introduction of a charging schedule for pre-application advice on planning matters.	
Recommendation:	<b>The Cabinet is invited to <u>APPROVE</u>:</b>  <b>(1) the principle of charging for pre application advice as set out in the report;</b>  <b>(2) the charging schedule as set out in Appendix 1 to Report No CAB/FH/16/025, be implemented from 4 July 2016;</b>  <b>(3) that the scale of charges be reviewed annually in accordance with the Fees and Charges policy.</b>	
Key Decision:	<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 decisions made as a result of this report will usually be published within <b>48 hours</b> and cannot be actioned until <b>five clear working days of the publication of the decision</b> have elapsed. This item is included on the Decisions Plan.</i>		

<b>Consultation:</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>	
<b>Alternative option(s):</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The alternative option is to continue with the existing arrangements missing the opportunity to improve the service to customers and reduce costs to the councils.</li> </ul>	
<b>Implications:</b>			
Are there any <b>financial</b> implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An estimated income of £17,500 has been included in the 2016/17 Forest Heath budget.</li> <li>An estimated income of £32,500 has been included in the 2016/17 St Edmundsbury budget.</li> </ul>	
Are there any <b>staffing</b> implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any <b>ICT</b> implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any <b>legal and/or policy</b> implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See resource and legal implications</li> </ul>	
Are there any <b>equality</b> implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Risk/opportunity assessment:</b>		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
<b>Risk area</b>	<b>Inherent level of risk</b> (before controls)	<b>Controls</b>	<b>Residual risk</b> (after controls)
Demand for the service does not match predictions and associated income levels.	Medium	Quarterly monitoring and resource management.	Low
That the councils are challenged on advice provided at the pre-application stage.	Medium	The councils will take out "professional negligence insurance" at a cost of approx. £1,000 per authority.	Low
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>		All	
<b>Background papers:</b> <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		None	
<b>Documents attached:</b>		<b>Appendix 1</b> – Schedule of Fees	

## **1. Key issues and reasons for recommendations**

### **1.1 Background**

- 1.1.1 Pre application planning advice is where prospective applicants or their agents seek informal advice or guidance before submitting a planning application. This report does not impact upon the processes, procedures and fees associated with formal planning applications.
- 1.1.2 During 2015 an internal review of the Development Management service was undertaken along with an external resource review of the service by the LGA Planning Advisory Service (PAS). Both reviews recommended the development of a new 'self-serve' approach to the customer service offer for planning guidance. This new approach is underpinned by three key principles:
- Customers will be directed through the Customer Services Team as the "first point of contact" and to "self-serve" via the West Suffolk web pages, reducing demand on planning officers and in line with our Target Operating Model for customer access.
  - Recover the cost of providing pre-application advice, in line with our Medium Term Financial Strategy.
  - Providing professional and timely information and advice to planning applicants/agents.

### **2.1. New Arrangements**

- 2.1.1 To implement the above principles a newly designed 'one stop shop' webpages for Council planning guidance has been designed and will support customers to self-serve for guidance on planning applications. The new webpages will go live ahead of the proposed introduction of charging, as outlined in this report.
- 2.1.2 The development of the webpages will enable the transfer of the 'helpdesk' planning advice function to the Customer Service Team. The Customer Services Team will support Development Management customers with enquiries and where possible direct the customer to the information available on the webpages as appropriate.
- 2.1.3 Where customers require additional advice to the guidance on the webpages this will be classified as 'professional advice', which it is proposed will be a chargeable service. Customers will be able to book and pay for an appointment with a planning officer at a mutually convenient time (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) either in one of the offices or on site as requested by the customer. This will replace the current (walk-in) duty planning officer service which operates Monday to Friday 9am to 1pm.
- 2.1.4 A Charging Schedule has been developed which outlines the fees applicable for the various levels of advice and guidance a customer may request and Members are invited to approve charging for pre-application advice in line with the fees as set out at Appendix 1. The charging schedule will use the same exemptions for charges as those laid down in the nationally set fee regulations for planning applications.

### 3.1 **Fee structure**

- 3.1.1 Charging for pre-application advice is now recommended as good practice by the LGA Planning Advisory Service. The Charging Schedule has been developed to reflect the range and complexity of advice sought from planning applicants and agents, specifically the difference between minor householder applications and large scale developments.
- 3.1.2 Each fee has been calculated on the basis of an estimation of the time and resource involved in offering pre-application advice. The fee is also inclusive of VAT as this is not a statutory service that could be offered by a third party and therefore subject to VAT.
- 3.1.3 Fees have been set at a level which is not considered to be prohibitive and which would not deter most applicants/agents from seeking advice, whilst being sufficient to justify the administrative costs and time taken.
- 3.1.4 Within region a number of other district/borough councils currently charges for pre-application advice including; Ipswich Borough Council; Suffolk Coastal District Council; Waveney District Council; South Cambridgeshire District Council and Huntingdonshire District Council. A review of charges shows that the proposed West Suffolk fees are broadly in line with authorities in the region.

### 4.1 **Resource and Legal Implications**

- 4.1.1 For budget planning purposes an estimate income of £17,500 for Forest Heath and £32,500 for St Edmundsbury has been included within the 2016/17 budget for Development Management.
- 4.1.2 Any advice given in relation to pre application enquiries will be based on a case officer's professional judgement. Planning officers' views and opinions on a pre-application enquiry are given without prejudice to the consideration by the Council of any formal planning application, which will be subject to wider consultation and publicity.
- 4.1.3 The councils will ensure that they have sufficient Professional Indemnity and Professional Negligence Insurance to ensure that the risk of financial loss from challenge is minimised, it is envisaged the insurance costs will be in the region of £1,000 per annum, per authority.

<b>Hourly rate - including 30% NI &amp; pension and 30% overheads</b>	
PO	24
SPO	30
PPO	40
Admin	20
Mileage rate ppm	0.44

Pre-booked 'Duty Officer' meeting for 30 minutes. This service is intended for use by householders and for those with a query of a minor nature. No written advice is offered and the time is limited to 30 minutes. This service will be available at both Council Offices at different times with queries relating to either Council area able to be discussed at either office.

40 Excluding VAT    48 Including VAT

Nature of Development	40 Excluding VAT    48 including VAT									
	Cost for up to 1 hour meeting at the Council Offices with no written advice		Cost for Written advice only		Cost for one formal meeting (up to 2 hours) and written follow up, including a review of any written minutes provided by the enquirer		Cost for a site visit when booked with any other option(in addition to any other charges). This does not allow for extended discussion on site, rather it allows the Officer to understand the site context		Cost for a one hour site meeting. This option offers no feedback other than verbal advice given on site.	
	Exc VAT	Inc VAT	Exc VAT	Inc VAT	Exc VAT	Inc VAT	Exc VAT	Inc VAT	Exc VAT	Inc VAT
Householder development	NA - please use 'Duty Officer' meeting procedure		50	60	NA	NA	88	106	113	136
Advertisement proposals	NA - please use 'Duty Officer' meeting procedure		50	60	NA	NA	88	106	113	136
Minor Developments This includes the following: - Up to nine dwellings - Non residential development of less than 100 square metres - Changes of use of less than 1000 square metres of floorspace or on a site of less than 1 hectre	100	120	220	264	300	360	133	160	183	220
Major Developments This includes the following: - Between 10 ann 99 units -Non residential development of between 1000 square meters and 4999 square meters - Changes of use of between 1000 square meters and 4999 square meters, or on a site of between 1 hectare and 1.99 hectares	180	216	620	744	780	936	133	160	233	279
Development of a significant scale	180	216	1,519	1,823	1,639	1,967	133	160	233	279
Non material amendment of variation of condition or query - Householder or minor development	40	48	NA - formal fee is only £28. Please submit formally or else use the pre-booked Duty Officer meeting system if you seek an informal opinion prior to submission		NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Non material amendment of variation of condition or query - major or significant development	100	120	160	192	NA	NA	133	160	153	183
Confirmation of the discharge / compliance with conditions	100	120	22	26	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Confirmation that an enforcement notice has been complied with	100	120	180	216	260	312	133	160	153	183
Specialist advice - listed buildings	100	120	180	216	260	312	133	160	153	183
Specialist advice - biodiversity advice in relation to a development proposal from the Council's Tree, Landscape and Ecology Officer	100	120	180	216	260	312	133	160	153	183
Specialist advice - works to trees	100	120	180	216	260	312	133	160	153	183

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# Cabinet



<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 25 May 2016</b>	
<b>Report No:</b>	<b>CAB/FH/16/027</b>	
<b>Report to and date:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	14 June 2016
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Stephen Edwards Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance <b>Tel:</b> 01638 660518 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:stephen.edwards@forest-heath.gov.uk">stephen.edwards@forest-heath.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Chairman of the Committee:</b>	Louis Busuttil Chairman of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee <b>Tel:</b> 01638 810517 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:louis.busuttil@forest-heath.gov.uk">louis.busuttil@forest-heath.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Christine Brain Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) <b>Tel:</b> 01638 719729 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk">christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	<p>On 25 May 2016, the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee held an informal joint meeting with members of St Edmundsbury's Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, and <u>considered the first five items jointly:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Internal Audit Annual Report (2015-2016) and Outline Internal Audit Plan (2016-2017);</li> <li>(2) Balanced Scorecard and Performance Report Quarter 4;</li> <li>(3) West Suffolk Strategic Risk Register Quarterly Report – March 2016;</li> <li>(4) Work Programme Update;</li> <li>(5) Ernst and Young – Certification of Claims and Returns Annual Report (2014-2015);</li> </ul>	

	<p>(6) Ernst and Young – Presentation of External Audit Plan and Fees 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 Indicative Fees; and</p> <p>(7) Financial Outturn Report (Revenue and Capital) 2015-2016</p>
<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>The Cabinet is requested to <u>NOTE</u> the contents of Report CAB/FH/16/027, being the report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee.</b>
<b>Key Decision:</b> <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that <b>do not</b> 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> <p>Report for information only.</p>
<b>Consultation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See reports listed in Section 2 below.</li> </ul>
<b>Alternative option(s):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See reports listed in Section 2 below</li> </ul>
<b>Implications:</b>	
<i>Are there any <b>financial</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please see background papers.</p>
<i>Are there any <b>staffing</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please see background papers.</p>
<i>Are there any <b>ICT</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please see background papers</p>
<i>Are there any <b>legal and/or policy</b> implications?</i>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please see background papers.</p>
<i>Are there any <b>equality</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please see background papers.</p>
<b>Risk/opportunity assessment:</b>	Please see background papers.
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	Please see background papers.
<b>Background papers:</b>	Please see background papers, which are listed at the end of the report.
<b>Documents attached:</b>	None

## **1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation**

### **1.1 Internal Audit Annual Report (2015-2016) and Outline Internal Audit Plan (2016-2017) (Report No: PAS/FH/16/008)**

1.1.1 This report summarised the work undertaken by Internal Audit during the year and provided details of the Outline Internal Audit Plan for 2016-2017. It also showed progress made during the year in developing and maintaining an anti-fraud and anti-corruption culture and actions taken where fraud or misconduct had been identified. Finally, the report showed the work undertaken to fulfil the requirement for an annual review of the effectiveness of internal audit.

1.1.2 The Committee considered the report, and endorsed the conclusion drawn in respect of the annual review of the effectiveness of internal audit. Finally, Members approved the Internal Audit Plan for 2016-2017, and noted the content of the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2015-2016 and the Managing the Risk of Fraud, Theft and Corruption Report.

### **1.2 Balanced Scorecard and Quarter 4 Performance Report 2015-2016 (Report No: PAS/FH/16/009)**

1.2.1 The Committee received and noted Report No PAS/FH/16/009, which set out the West Suffolk Balanced Scorecards being used to measure the Council's performance for 2015-2016 and an overview of performance against those indicators for the fourth quarter of 2015-2016. The six current balanced scorecards (attached at Appendices A to F to Report No: PAS/FH/16/009) were linked to the Heads of Service areas, which presented Quarter 4 2015-2016 performance.

1.2.2 Most indicators reported performance against an agreed target using a traffic light system with additional commentary provided for performance indicators below optimum performance.

1.2.3 Across all service balanced scorecards, there were indicators measuring the performance of the transactional finance functions. These were "% of non-disputed invoices paid within 30 days" and "% debt over 90 days old". In the first and second quarters of the year, against these indicators, almost all service areas had failed to meet the targets of more than 95% of non-disputed invoices paid within 30 days and less than 10% of debt over 90 days old.

1.2.4 The finance and performance team had been working with service areas to try and improve performance against both of these measures. As a result of this, four service areas were now achieving over 90% of invoices paid within 30 days.

1.2.5 No issues were required to be brought to the attention of Cabinet.

### **1.3 West Suffolk Strategic Risk Register Quarterly Report – March 2016 (Report No: PAS/FH/16/010)**

1.3.1 The Committee received and noted the fourth 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 28 January 2016, there had been no new risks or amendments made to any existing risks and no existing risks had been closed. Some individual controls and actions had been updated and those which were not ongoing and had been completed by March 2016 had been removed from the Register.

- 1.3.2 Members scrutinised the report and there were no issues to be brought to the attention of Cabinet.

#### 1.4 **Work Programme Update (Report No: PAS/FH/16/011)**

- 1.4.1 The Committee received and noted its Work Programme which provided items scheduled to be presented to the Committee during 2016.

#### 1.5 **Ernst and Young – Certification of Claims and Returns Annual Report (2014-2015) (Report No: PAS/FH/16/012)**

- 1.5.1 The Committee received and noted a report from the Council's external auditor, Ernst and Young (EY), which updated Members on the outcome of the annual audit of grant claims, as detailed in their Annual Certification Report for 2014/2015.
- 1.5.2 Mark Hodgson (External Director) from EY attended the meeting and presented this report, which summarised the results of the certification work which had been undertaken as part of the annual audit of grant claims to government departments. He drew relevant details from the report to Members' attention and explained the one claim relating to the Housing Benefits Subsidy Claim.

#### 1.6 **Ernst and Young – Presentation of External Audit Plan and Fees 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 Indicative Fees (Report No: PAS/FH/16/013)**

- 1.6.1 The Committee received and noted a further report from EY, which provided the basis to review EY's proposed audit approach and scope for the 2015/2016 audit, along with the planned fees to complete the work.
- 1.6.2 Mark Hodgson from EY presented this report, which summarised EY's assessment of the key risks which drive the development of an effective audit for the Council, and outlined their planned audit strategy in response to those risks. EY aimed to issue its audit opinion to Members by September 2016. He also drew Members' attention to the indicative audit fee for 2016/2017 and how the scale fee was based.

#### 1.7 **Financial Outturn Report (Revenue and Capital) 2015-2016 (Report No: PAS/FH/16/014)**

- 1.7.1 The Committee received the financial outturn report, which updated Members

on the outturn revenue and capital position for 2015-2016.

- 1.7.2 Attached at Appendix A to the report was the revenue outturn position as at 31 March 2016, which showed a break-even position. A summary by Head of Service area was provided at Appendix A, including an analysis of the variances at Appendix B.

The Council's capital outturn position for 2015-2016 was attached at Appendix C. The Council had spent £5,881,404 of its capital budget of £11,668,584 as at 31 March 2016, which showed a net underspend of £5,787,180. Appendix D to the report summarised the earmarked reserves for the year 2015-2016.

- 1.7.3 The Committee scrutinised the report in detail and asked a number of questions to which officers duly responded.
- 1.7.4 There being no decision required, the Committee noted the 2015-2016 outturn revenue and capital outturn positions as set out in Appendices A and C to Report No: PAS/FH/16/014.

## **2. Background Papers**

- 2.1.1 [Report No PAS/FH/16/008](#) & [Appendix A](#); [Appendix B](#); [Appendix C](#); [Appendix D](#); [Appendix E](#) to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: Internal Audit Annual Report (2015-2016) and Outline Internal Audit Plan (2016-2017)
- 2.1.2 [Report No PAS/FH/16/009](#) & [Appendix A](#); [Appendix B](#); [Appendix C](#); [Appendix D](#); [Appendix E](#); [Appendix F](#) to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: Balanced Scorecards and Quarter 4 Performance Report 2015-2016
- 2.1.3 [Report No PAS/FH/16/010](#) & [Appendix 1](#) to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: West Suffolk Strategic Risk Register Quarterly Monitoring Report – March 2016
- 2.1.4 [Report No PAS/FH/16/011](#) to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: Work Programme Update
- 2.1.5 [Report No PAS/FH/16/012](#) & [Appendix A](#) to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: Ernst and Young – Certification of Claims and Returns Annual Report (2014-2015)
- 2.1.6 [Report No PAS/FH/16/013](#) & [Appendix A](#); [Appendix B](#) to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: Ernst and Young – Presentation of External Audit Plan and Fees 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 Indicative Fees
- 2.1.7 [Report No PAS/FH/16/014](#); [Appendix A](#); [Appendix B](#); [Appendix C](#); [Appendix D](#) to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: Financial Outturn Report (Revenue and Capital) 2015-2016

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# Forest Heath District Council

**REPORT NO: CAB/FH/16/027**

## **Decisions Plan**

### **Key Decisions and other executive decisions to be considered**

**Date: 1 June 2016 to 31 May 2017**

**Publication Date: 16 May 2016**

The following plan shows both the key decisions and other decisions/matters taken in private, that the Cabinet, Joint Committees or Officers under delegated authority, are intending to take up to 31 May 2017. This table is updated on a monthly rolling basis and provides at least 28 clear days' notice of the consideration of any key decisions and of the taking of any items in private.

Executive decisions are taken at public meetings of the Cabinet and by other bodies provided with executive decision-making powers. Some decisions and items may be taken in private during the parts of the meeting at which the public may be excluded, when it is likely that confidential or exempt information may be disclosed. This is indicated on the relevant meeting agenda and in the '*Reason for taking the item in private*' column relevant to each item detailed on the plan.

Members of the public may wish to:

- make enquiries in respect of any of the intended decisions listed below;
- receive copies of any of the documents in the public domain listed below;
- receive copies of any other documents in the public domain relevant to those matters listed below which may be submitted to the decision taker; or
- make representations in relation to why meetings to consider the listed items intended for consideration in private should be open to the public.

In all instances, contact should be made with the named Officer in the first instance, either on the telephone number listed against their name, or via email using the format [firstname.surname@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:firstname.surname@westsuffolk.gov.uk) or via Forest Heath District Council, District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP28 7EY.



Expected Decision Date	Subject and Purpose of Decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date  (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio Holder Contact Details	Lead Officer Contact Details	Wards Affected	Documents to be submitted
14/06/16	<b>Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Devolution</b>  The Cabinet will be asked to make recommendations to Council in respect of its position on the proposal for a Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire combined authority as part of the devolution agenda.	Not applicable	(R) - Council 29/06/16	Cabinet/ Council	James Waters Leader of the Council 07771 621038	Ian Gallin Chief Executive 01284 757001	All Wards	Report to Cabinet, with recommendations to Council
14/06/16	<b>West Suffolk Operational Hub: Outcome of Second Round of Consultation and Proposed Next Steps</b> Following the second round of consultation, the Cabinet will be asked to jointly consider with St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Cabinet and recommend to both Councils, the proposed next steps for the West Suffolk Operational Hub project.	Paragraph 3	(R) - Council 29/06/16	Cabinet/ Council	David Bowman Operations 07711 593737	Mark Walsh Head of Operations 01284 757300	All Wards	Report to Cabinet, with recommendations to Council

<b>Expected Decision Date</b>	<b>Subject and Purpose of Decision</b>	<b>Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)</b>	<b>Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date</b>  <b>(see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)</b>	<b>Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)</b>	<b>Portfolio Holder Contact Details</b>	<b>Lead Officer Contact Details</b>	<b>Wards Affected</b>	<b>Documents to be submitted</b>
14/06/16	<b>West Suffolk Annual Report 2015/2016</b>  Following scrutiny by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Cabinet will be asked to consider the West Suffolk Annual Report 2015/2016, which has been jointly produced with St Edmundsbury Borough Council.	Not applicable	(D)	Cabinet	James Waters Leader of the Council 07771 621038	Davina Howes Head of Families and Communities 01284 757070	All Wards	Report to Cabinet, with recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
14/06/16	<b>Revenues Collection and Performance Write-Offs</b>  The Cabinet will be asked to consider writing-off outstanding debts detailed in the exempt Appendices.	Paragraphs 1 and 2	(KD)	Cabinet	Stephen Edwards Resources and Performance 01638 660518	Rachael Mann Head of Resources and Performance 01638 719245	All Wards	Report to Cabinet, with exempt appendices
14/06/16	<b>Introduction of Charging for a Pre-Application Advice Planning Service</b>  The Cabinet will be asked to consider the introduction of a charging schedule for pre-	Not applicable	(D)	Cabinet	James Waters Planning and Growth 07771 621038	Steven Wood Head of Planning and Growth 01284 757306  Rachel Almond Service Manager (Planning Development)	All Wards	Report to Cabinet

Expected Decision Date	Subject and Purpose of Decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date  (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio Holder Contact Details	Lead Officer Contact Details	Wards Affected	Documents to be submitted
	application advice on planning matters.					01638 719455		
13/09/16	<b>Revenues Collection and Performance Write-Offs</b>  This item has been removed from the Decisions Plan, as the Cabinet is now not required to consider writing-off any outstanding debts on this occasion.				Stephen Edwards Resources and Performance 01638 660518	Rachael Mann Head of Resources and Performance 01638 719245		
13/09/16	<b>Mildenhall Hub - Financial Business Case</b>  The Cabinet will be asked to consider and recommend to Council, the Financial Business Case for the Mildenhall Hub Project.	Paragraph 3	(R) - Council 28/09/16	Cabinet/ Council	James Waters Leader of the Council 07771 621038	Alex Wilson Director 01284 757695	Great Heath; Market	Report to Cabinet, with recommendations to Council

Expected Decision Date	Subject and Purpose of Decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date  (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio Holder Contact Details	Lead Officer Contact Details	Wards Affected	Documents to be submitted
20/09/16	<b>Housing Development Company - Barley Homes (Group) Ltd - Initial Five Year Business Plan</b>  The Cabinet will be asked to make recommendations to full Council, in respect of approving funding to implement the initial five year Business Plan for the Council's wholly owned Housing Development Company: Barley Homes (Group) Ltd.	Paragraph 3	(R) - Council 28/09/16	Cabinet/ Council	Sara Mildmay-White West Suffolk Lead for Housing 01359 270580 <a href="mailto:sara.mildmay-white@stedsbc.gov.uk">sara.mildmay-white@stedsbc.gov.uk</a>	Simon Phelan Head of Housing 01638 719440	All Wards	Recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;  Report to Cabinet, with recommendations to Council
25/10/16	<b>Revenues Collection and Performance Write-Offs</b>  The Cabinet will be asked to consider writing-off outstanding debts detailed in the exempt Appendices.	Paragraphs 1 and 2	(KD)	Cabinet	Stephen Edwards Resources and Performance 01638 660518	Rachael Mann Head of Resources and Performance 01638 719245	All Wards	Report to Cabinet, with exempt appendices

<b>Expected Decision Date</b>	<b>Subject and Purpose of Decision</b>	<b>Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)</b>	<b>Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date</b>  <b>(see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)</b>	<b>Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)</b>	<b>Portfolio Holder Contact Details</b>	<b>Lead Officer Contact Details</b>	<b>Wards Affected</b>	<b>Documents to be submitted</b>
25/10/16	<b>Delivering a Sustainable Budget 2017/2018</b>  The Cabinet will be asked to consider recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee for recommending to Council on proposals for achieving a sustainable budget in 2017/2018.	Not applicable	(R) - Council 21/12/16	Cabinet/ Council	Stephen Edwards Resources and Performance 01638 660518	Rachael Mann Head of Resources and Performance 01638 719245	All Wards	Recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet and Council
13/12/16	<b>Revenues Collection and Performance Write-Offs</b>  This item has been removed from the Decisions Plan, as the Cabinet is now not required to consider writing-off any outstanding debts on this occasion.				Stephen Edwards Resources and Performance 01638 660518	Rachael Mann Head of Resources and Performance 01638 719245		

<b>Expected Decision Date</b>	<b>Subject and Purpose of Decision</b>	<b>Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)</b>	<b>Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date</b>  <b>(see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)</b>	<b>Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)</b>	<b>Portfolio Holder Contact Details</b>	<b>Lead Officer Contact Details</b>	<b>Wards Affected</b>	<b>Documents to be submitted</b>
13/12/16	<b>Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Council Tax Technical Changes 2017/2018</b>  The Cabinet will be asked to consider proposals for the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Council Tax Technical Changes for 2017/2018, prior to seeking its approval by Council.	Not applicable	(R) - Council 21/12/16	Cabinet/ Council	Stephen Edwards Resources and Performance 01638 660518	Rachael Mann Head of Resources and Performance 01638 719245	All Wards	Report to Cabinet, with recommendations to Council
13/12/16	<b>Tax Base for Council Tax Setting Purposes 2017/2018</b>  The Cabinet will be asked to consider the Tax Base for Council Tax Setting Purposes for 2017/2018, prior to seeking its approval by Council.	Not applicable	(R) - Council 21/12/16	Cabinet/ Council	Stephen Edwards Resources and Performance 01638 660518	Rachael Mann Head of Resources and Performance 01638 719245	All Wards	Report to Cabinet, with recommendations to Council

Expected Decision Date	Subject and Purpose of Decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date  (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio Holder Contact Details	Lead Officer Contact Details	Wards Affected	Documents to be submitted
13/12/16	<b>Applications for Community Chest Grant Funding 2017/2018</b>  The Cabinet will be asked to consider applications for the Community Chest funding for 2017/2018.	Not applicable	(KD) Applications for the 2018/2019 year and beyond are also subject to the budget setting process	Cabinet	Robin Millar Families and Communities 07939 100937	Davina Howes Head of Families and Communities 01284 757070	All Wards	Report to Cabinet
14/02/17	<b>Revenues Collection and Performance Write-Offs</b>  The Cabinet will be asked to consider writing-off outstanding debts detailed in the exempt Appendices.	Paragraphs 1 and 2	(KD)	Cabinet	Stephen Edwards Resources and Performance 01638 660518	Rachael Mann Head of Resources and Performance 01638 719245	All Wards	Report to Cabinet, with exempt appendices
14/02/17	<b>Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2017/2018 and Treasury Management Code of Practice</b>  The Cabinet will be asked to recommend to Council the approval of the Treasury Management and	Not applicable	(R) - Council 22/02/17	Cabinet/ Council	Stephen Edwards Resources and Performance 01638 660518	Rachael Mann Head of Resources and Performance 01638 719245	All Wards	Report to Cabinet, with recommendations to Council



<b>Expected Decision Date</b>	<b>Subject and Purpose of Decision</b>	<b>Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)</b>	<b>Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date</b>  <b>(see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)</b>	<b>Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)</b>	<b>Portfolio Holder Contact Details</b>	<b>Lead Officer Contact Details</b>	<b>Wards Affected</b>	<b>Documents to be submitted</b>
	Investment Strategy 2017/2018, which must be undertaken before the start of each financial year.							
14/02/17	<b>Budget and Council Tax 2017/2018</b>  The Cabinet will be asked to consider the proposals for the 2017/2018 budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy, prior to its approval by Council. This report includes the Minimum Revenues Provision (MRP) Policy and Prudential Indicators.	Not applicable	(R) - Council 22/02/17	Cabinet/ Council	Stephen Edwards Resources and Performance 01638 660518	Rachael Mann Head of Resources and Performance 01638 719245	All Wards	Report to Cabinet, with recommendations to Council
04/04/17	<b>Revenues Collection and Performance Write-Offs</b>  This item has been removed from the Decisions Plan, as the Cabinet is now not required to consider writing-off any outstanding debts on this occasion.				Stephen Edwards Resources and Performance 01638 660518	Rachael Mann Head of Resources and Performance 01638 719245		

<b>Expected Decision Date</b>	<b>Subject and Purpose of Decision</b>	<b>Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)</b>	<b>Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date  (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)</b>	<b>Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)</b>	<b>Portfolio Holder Contact Details</b>	<b>Lead Officer Contact Details</b>	<b>Wards Affected</b>	<b>Documents to be submitted</b>
16/05/17	<b>Revenues Collection and Performance Write-Offs</b>  The Cabinet will be asked to consider writing-off outstanding debts detailed in the exempt Appendices.	Paragraphs 1 and 2	(KD)	Cabinet	Stephen Edwards Resources and Performance 01638 660518	Rachael Mann Head of Resources and Performance 01638 719245	All Wards	Report to Cabinet, with exempt appendices

## **NOTE 1: DEFINITIONS OF EXEMPT INFORMATION: RELEVANT PARAGRAPHS**

### **In accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)**

The public may be excluded from all or part of the meeting during the consideration of items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information defined in Schedule 12(A) of the Act, as follows:

#### PART 1

#### DESCRIPTIONS OF EXEMPT INFORMATION: ENGLAND

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes –
  - (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
  - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

### **In accordance with Section 100A(3) (a) and (b) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)**

Confidential information is also not for public access, but the difference between this and exempt information is that a Government department, legal opinion or the court has prohibited its disclosure in the public domain. Should confidential information require consideration in private, this will be detailed in this Decisions Plan.

## **NOTE 2: KEY DECISION DEFINITIONS**

Key decisions are:

- (a) A key decision means an executive decision which, pending any further guidance from the Secretary of State, is likely to:
  - (i) Be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area in the Borough/District; or
  - (ii) Result in any new expenditure, income or savings of more than £50,000 in relation to the Council's revenue budget or capital programme.
  - (iii) Comprise or include the making, approval or publication of a draft or final scheme which may require, either directly or in the event of objections, the approval of a Minister of the Crown.
- b) A decision taker may only make a key decision in accordance with the requirements of the Executive procedure rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.

### **NOTE 3: MEMBERSHIP OF BODIES MAKING KEY DECISIONS**

#### **(a) Membership of the Cabinet and their Portfolios:**

<u>Cabinet Member</u>	<u>Portfolio</u>
James Waters	Leader of the Council; Planning and Growth
Robin Millar	Deputy Leader of the Council; Families and Communities
David Bowman	Operations
Andy Drummond	Leisure and Culture
Stephen Edwards	Resources and Performance

#### **(b) Membership of the Anglia Revenues Partnership Joint Committee (Breckland Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Fenland District Council, Forest Heath District Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council, St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Waveney District Council)** (Membership amended from 1 December 2015 to one Member/two Substitutes per Authority)

<b>Full Breckland Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Full East Cambridgeshire District Council Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Full Fenland District Council Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Full Forest Heath District Council Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Full Suffolk Coastal District Council Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Full St Edmundsbury Borough Council Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Full Waveney District Council Cabinet Member</b>
Cllr Pablo Dimoglou	Cllr David Ambrose-Smith	Cllr Chris Seaton	Cllr Stephen Edwards	Cllr Richard Kerry	Cllr Ian Houlder	Cllr Mike Barnard
<b>Substitute Breckland Cabinet Members</b>	<b>Substitute East Cambridgeshire District Council Cabinet Members</b>	<b>Substitute Fenland District Council Cabinet Members</b>	<b>Substitute Forest Heath District Council Cabinet Members</b>	<b>Substitute Suffolk Coastal District Council Cabinet Members</b>	<b>Substitute St Edmundsbury Borough Council Cabinet Members</b>	<b>Substitute Waveney District Council Cabinet Members</b>
Cllr Michael Wassell	Cllr Lis Every	Cllr John Clark	Cllr James Waters	Cllr Geoff Holdcroft	Cllr Sara Mildmay-White	Cllr Sue Allen
Cllr Ellen Jolly	Cllr Julia Huffer	Cllr Will Sutton	Cllr David Bowman	Cllr Ray Herring	Cllr Robert Everitt	Cllr Letitia Smith

Steven Boyle  
Interim Service Manager (Legal and Democratic Services)  
Date: 16 May 2016

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