

Council



Forest Heath
District Council

Title:	Agenda
Date:	Wednesday 14 June 2017
Time:	6.00 pm
Venue:	Council Chamber District Offices College Heath Road Mildenhall
Membership:	All Councillors You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council to transact the business on the agenda set out below.  Ian Gallin Chief Executive 6 June 2017
Quorum	One quarter of the total number of Members
Committee administrator:	Helen Hardinge Democratic Services Officer Tel: 01638 719363 Email: helen.hardinge@westsuffolk.gov.uk

Public Information



Forest Heath
District Council

Venue:	District Offices College Heath Road Mildenhall Suffolk, IP28 7EY	Tel: 01638 719000 Email: democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk Web: www.westsuffolk.gov.uk
Access to agenda and reports before the meeting:	Copies of the agenda and reports are open for public inspection at the above address at least five clear days before the meeting. They are also available to view on our website.	
Attendance at meetings:	The District Council actively welcomes members of the public and the press to attend its meetings and holds as many of its meetings as possible in public.	
Public speaking:	<p>At ordinary meetings of the Council, members of the public who live or work in the District may put questions about the work of the Council to members of the Cabinet or any Committee. 30 minutes will be set aside for this. 30 minutes will also be set aside for questions at extraordinary meetings of the Council, but must be limited to the business to be transacted at that meeting.</p> <p>A person who wishes to speak must register at least fifteen minutes before the time the meeting is scheduled to start. This can be done by sending the request to: democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk or by telephoning 01638 719363 or in person by telling the Democratic Services Officer present at the meeting.</p> <p>Written questions, detailing the full question to be asked, may be submitted by members of the public to the Service Manager (Democratic Services) no later than 10.00am on the previous working day to the meeting of the Council. Email: democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk Phone: 01638 719363</p>	
Disabled access:	The public gallery is on the first floor and is accessible via stairs. There is not a lift but disabled seating is available at the back of the Council Chamber on the ground floor. Please see the Committee Administrator who will be able to help you.	

Induction loop:	An Induction loop operates to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter.
Recording of meetings:	<p>The Council may record this meeting and permits members of 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>

Agenda

Procedural Matters

Part 1 - Public

- | | Page No |
|--|----------------|
| 1. Minutes | 1 - 10 |
| To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the Council meeting held on 26 April 2017 and the Annual Council meeting held on 10 May 2017 (copies attached). | |
| 2. Chairman's Announcements | 11 - 14 |
| Report No: COU/FH/17/011 | |
| 3. Apologies for Absence | |
| 4. Declarations of Interest | |
| 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. | |
| 5. The Leader's Report | 15 - 16 |
| Report No: COU/FH/17/012 | |
| Council Procedure Rule 8.2 states that <i>'the Leader of the Council will introduce the statement and members may ask the Leader questions on the content of both his/her introductory remarks and the written report. All questions will be answered immediately by the Leader or by the relevant Cabinet Member if the Leader refers any question to him or her, unless sufficient information to give an answer is not available. In these circumstances the member asking the question will receive a response in writing within five working days of the Council meeting at which the question was asked.'</i> | |
| 8.3 - <i>A total of 30 minutes will be allowed for questions and responses. There will be a limit of five minutes for each question to be asked and answered. The member asking the original question may put a supplementary question arising from the reply so long as the five minute limit is not exceeded.</i> | |

6. Public Participation

Council Procedure Rule 6 *Members of the public who live or work in the District are invited to put one question of not more than five minutes duration. A person who wishes to speak must register at least fifteen minutes before the time the meeting is scheduled to start.**

(Note: the maximum time to be set aside for this item is 30 minutes, but if all questions are dealt with sooner, or if there are no questions, the Council will proceed to the next business.)

*Each person may ask one question only. A total of **five minutes will be allowed for the question to be put and answered.** One further question will be allowed arising directly from the reply **provided that the original time limit of five minutes is not exceeded.***

Written questions may be submitted by members of the public to the Service Manager (Democratic Services) **no later than 10.00am Tuesday 13 June 2017.** The written notification should **detail the full question** to be asked at the meeting of the Council.*

**For further information, see the Public Information Sheet attached to this agenda.*

7. Referrals Report of Recommendations from Cabinet

Referrals from Extraordinary Joint Cabinet: 30 May 2017

(There are no direct referrals emanating from the Extraordinary Joint Cabinet meeting held with St Edmundsbury Borough Council on 30 May 2017. Reference to the consideration of matters held at that meeting on 'A Single Council for West Suffolk – Draft Business Case' is contained within the separate report (No: COU/FH/17/013) at Agenda Item 8 on this Council agenda.)

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|------------|--|-----------------|
| 8. | A Single Council for West Suffolk - Draft Business Case
Report No: COU/FH/17/013 | 17 - 56 |
| 9. | Community Governance Review
Report No: COU/FH/17/014 | 57 - 92 |
| 10. | Response to Network Rail's Proposed Suffolk Level Crossing Reduction Order
Report No: COU/FH/17/015 | 93 - 104 |

11. Representation on Suffolk County Council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Council is asked to nominate one Member and one substitute Member to serve on the County's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These Members should ideally be from the District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, although this is not essential as the necessary training will be given by the County Council.

The Committee on 6 June 2017 will consider nominations for a representative and a substitute Member for 2017/2018. The current members on this joint body are Councillor Christine Mason as the nominated representative and Councillor John Bloodworth as the nominated substitute.

The Council is **RECOMMENDED** that Councillor (to be reported verbally *) be nominated as the District Council's representative and Councillor (to be reported verbally) as the nominated substitute Member on the Suffolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2017/2018.

** Nominations to be verbally reported by the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny as a result of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting being held after the Council agenda has been published.*

12. Appointment of Independent Persons

105 - 108

Report No: **COU/FH/17/016**

13. Questions to Chairmen of other Committees

Questions to Chairmen on the business transacted by their Committees since the last ordinary meeting of Council:

Development Control Committee	3 May 2017 7 June 2017
Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee	25 May 2017
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	6 June 2017

14. Urgent Questions on Notice

The Council will consider any urgent question on notice that were notified to the Service Manager (Democratic Services) by 11.00am on the day of the meeting.

Council



Forest Heath
District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Council** held on
Wednesday 26 April 2017 at **6.00 pm** at the **Council Chamber, District**
Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall IP28 7EY

Present: **Councillors**

Chairman Carol Lynch

Vice Chairman Michael Anderson

Ruth Allen	Victor Lukaniuk
Andrew Appleby	Christine Mason
John Bloodworth	Robin Millar
David Bowman	David Palmer
Ruth Bowman J.P.	Peter Ridgwell
Rona Burt	Nigel Roman
Louis Busuttil	Reg Silvester
Andy Drummond	Lance Stanbury
Stephen Edwards	James Waters
Brian Harvey	

213. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2017 were accepted as an accurate record, with 20 voting for the motion and with 1 abstention, and were signed by the Chairman, subject to Councillor Victor Lukaniuk's name being amended to read in full.

The Chairman drew attention to Minute No. 209 (Community Governance Review) and reminded all present of the ongoing consultation period in respect of this item.

(Councillor James Waters joined the meeting at 6.03pm during the preliminary discussion of this item and prior to the voting thereon.)

214. **Chairman's Announcements (Report No: COU/FH/17/008)**

On commencement of her announcements the Chairman formally introduced and welcomed three recently appointed new Officers to the organisation, who were present:

- Leah Mickleborough, Democratic Services Manager and Monitoring Officer
- Mark Miller, Strategic Communications Manager
- Julie Baird, Assistant Director for Growth

The Chairman then drew attention to the USAFE Civic Leaders Tour listed in her itinerary (as set out in Report No: COU/FH/17/008) against 23 March 2017 and remarked on how worthwhile and interesting she had found this event.

Members were further advised that the Chairman had also attended RAF Lakenheath on 24 April 2017 in order to view an example of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter aircraft which were to be stationed at the air base from 2021.

With the consent of the Chairman, the Leader invited Councillor Andy Drummond, in his capacity as Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture, to inform the meeting of a future national event taking place within the District.

Councillor Dummond was pleased to advise that it had been publically announced that Newmarket and Aldeburgh would host the Suffolk stage of the OVO Energy Tour of Britain, commencing on Friday 8 September 2017. Stage Six of Britain's premier road cycling race would take place entirely within Suffolk, a first for the county, heading east from Newmarket to the finish in the centre of Aldeburgh.

The Cabinet Member explained what a great news story this was for Forest Heath, with the route passing through many other areas of the District including Mildenhall.

The report was noted.

215. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chris Barker, Simon Cole, Louise Marston and Bill Sadler.

Councillors Roger Dicker and Colin Noble were also unable to attend the meeting.

216. **Declarations of Interest**

None were declared.

217. **The Leader's Report (Report No: COU/FH/17/009)**

The Leader presented his statement to the meeting, as set out in Report No: COU/FH/17/009.

The Chairman welcomed the Leader back after his bout of ill health on behalf of the whole Council. The Leader thanked all for the support and well wishes, and assured the meeting that he was now fighting fit.

The report was noted.

218. **Public Participation**

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

219. **Referrals Report of Recommendations from Cabinet (Report No: COU/FH/17/010)**

The Council considered the referrals report of recommendations from Cabinet as set out in Report No: COU/FH/17/010:

1. Core Strategy Single Issue Review (CS SIR) and Site Allocations Local Plan (SALP) – Next Steps
(Cabinet: 4 April 2017)

Councillor Lance Stanbury, Cabinet Member for Planning and Growth, explained that the recommendation seeking approval was purely procedural practice in respect of the Council's ongoing Local Plan process.

On the motion of the Cabinet Member, seconded by Councillor David Bowman and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That the Planning Inspector be requested to make any necessary main modifications under Section 20 (7c) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchases Act that he/she judges necessary, to make all submitted Local Plan documents 'sound'.

2. Development of a New Partnership Agreement with Abbeycroft Leisure
(Cabinet: 4 April 2017)

Councillor Andy Drummond, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture, made reference to the Cabinet report which had been attached to the Council agenda for reference (Report No: CAB/FH/17/017) and spoke on the successes of the partnership and its future aims.

Council were also advised that Abbeycroft Leisure would be leading on the Council's involvement in the OVO Energy Tour of Britain, as made reference to earlier in the meeting.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member and Officers for the work that went into the development of the new Partnership Agreement.

On the motion of the Cabinet Member, seconded by Councillor David Bowman, and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. A new Partnership Agreement be entered into with Abbeycroft Leisure Ltd for a period of 15 years, with options to extend for 5 + 5 years, subject to the protections included in the Partnership Agreement; and

2. The Partnership Agreement be finalised in line with Report No: CAB/FH/17/017 and the Head of Terms attached at Appendix 1, subject to the inclusion of an additional indicator within the Performance Management Framework to measure the increase in participation at community events, run by other partners, but support by Abbeycroft Leisure Ltd.

220. **Questions to Chairmen of other Committees**

There were no questions to Chairmen of other Committees.

221. **Urgent Questions on Notice**

There were no urgent questions on notice.

The meeting concluded at 6.15 pm

Signed by:

Chairman

Annual Council



Forest Heath
District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Annual Council** held on
Wednesday 10 May 2017 at 6.00 pm at the **Council Chamber, District**
Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall IP28 7EY

Present: **Councillors**

Ruth Allen	Brian Harvey
Chris Barker	Victor Lukaniuk
John Bloodworth	Louise Marston
David Bowman	Robin Millar
Ruth Bowman J.P.	Colin Noble
Rona Burt	David Palmer
Louis Busuttill	Peter Ridgwell
Simon Cole	Nigel Roman
Roger Dicker	Reg Silvester
Andy Drummond	James Waters
Stephen Edwards	

222. **Election of Chairman of the Council for 2017/2018**

On opening the meeting Councillor Carol Lynch, the outgoing Chairman, advised all present that unfortunately their colleague and fellow District Councillor Bill Sadler was currently very unwell.

Councillor Lynch also offered congratulations to Councillors Louis Busuttill, Victor Lukaniuk, Robin Millar and Colin Noble for their election to Suffolk County Council on 4 May 2017.

Councillor Lynch then made a speech to the meeting outlining the work and achievements during her year as Chairman. She had very much enjoyed her year; having attended many functions on behalf of the District Council.

Lastly, Councillor Lynch gave thanks to the team within the Civic Office who had ably supported her through the year, and was pleased to inform the Council that she had raised £750 for her chosen charity CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably), a cause very personal to her.

It was moved by Councillor Lynch and seconded by Councillor Nigel Roman that Councillor Ruth Bowman be nominated as Chairman of the Council for 2017/2018.

With there being no other nominations and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Ruth Bowman be elected as Chairman of the Council for 2017/2018.

Councillor Bowman accepted the Chain of Office from Councillor Lynch, signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and took the Chair.

Councillor Bowman then made a speech to the meeting, thanking Members for electing her as Chairman of the Council for the coming year.

Councillor Bowman also thanked Councillor Lynch on behalf of the whole Council for her tireless efforts over the past year of being Chairman and presented her with her past Chairman's badge.

223. Election of Vice Chairman of the Council for 2017/2018

It was moved by Councillor Ruth Bowman and seconded by Councillor John Bloodworth that Councillor Brian Harvey be nominated as Vice Chairman of the Council for 2017/2018.

With there being no other nominations and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Brian Harvey be elected as Vice Chairman of the Council for 2017/2018.

Councillor Harvey then accepted the Chain of Office and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Councillor Bowman also thanked the outgoing Vice Chairman, Councillor Michael Anderson, on behalf of the whole Council.

224. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrew Appleby, Christine Mason, Bill Sadler and Lance Stanbury.

225. Appointment of Cabinet Members

The Leader of the Council gave notification that the Cabinet Members for 2017/2018 would remain as appointed for 2016/2017 with Councillor Robin Millar continuing as Deputy Leader.

226. Review of Political Balance and Appointment to Politically Balanced Bodies (Report No: AGM/FH/17/001)

The Leader of the Council presented this item which sought agreement to establish the Council's Committees for the municipal year.

It was proposed by the Leader, seconded by Councillor David Bowman and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. The Committees and Joint Committees listed in Paragraphs 1.2.1 to 1.2.4 of Report No: AGM/FH/17/001 continue to operate for 2017/2018 with their existing number of seats and Terms of Reference (ToR), as contained in Appendix 2 and as amended to include the revisions to the ToR for the Licensing and Regulatory Committee;
2. The formula for the allocation of seats to the political groups on those Committees which are required by law to be politically balanced, as indicated in Appendix 1 of Report No: AGM/FH/17/001, be approved;
3. The allocation of seats on the Committees which are required by law to be politically balanced, as indicated in Appendix 1 and Paragraph 1.2.7 of Report No: AGM/FH/17/001, be approved;
4. The allocation of seats on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee and the West Suffolk Joint Standards Committee, as indicated in Paragraph 1.2.8 of Report No: AGM/FH/17/001, be approved. These Committees are not required to be politically balanced; and
5. If the Council is unable to confirm the appointment of Members and Substitute Members at the Annual Meeting on 10 May 2017 the Service Manager (Democratic Services) be given Delegated Authority to appoint Members and Substitute Members to those bodies set out in Recommendations 3 and 4 above, on the basis of nominations from the relevant Group Leaders.

227. Appointment of Chairman and Vice Chairman of Committees

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Leader was invited to propose the Conservative Group's nominations for the chairmanships of the Council's Scrutiny Committees:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

It was moved by the Leader and seconded by Councillor Nigel Roman.

With there being no other nominations and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. Councillor Simon Cole be appointed as Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2017/2018; and

2. Councillor Ruth Bowman be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2017/2018.

Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee

It was moved by the Leader and seconded by Councillor Nigel Roman.

With there being no other nominations and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. Councillor Louis Busuttill be appointed as Chairman of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee for 2017/2018; and
2. Councillor Colin Noble be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee for 2017/2018.

228. **Review and Re-appointment of Representation of Outside Bodies (Report No: AGM/FH/17/002)**

The Leader of the Council presented this report which sought approval to appoint, or rearrange the delegation of, nominations of Councillors to service on outside bodies.

During the discussion of this item Councillor Carol Lynch reminded Members that during her time as Chairman of Council she had requested that Members provide regular updates to Council summarising the work they had undertaken in their roles on outside bodies.

The Service Manager (Democratic Services) drew attention to Recommendation 4 of Report No: AGM/FH/17/002 and explained that the delegation awarded to her would enable any new appointments or future changes to the Council's representatives on outside bodies to be made.

The Leader advised of two changes to the Conservative Group's nominations in respect of:

Citizens Advice Bureau (Newmarket)

Councillor Chris Barker to replace Michael Anderson

Suffolk Police and Crime Panel

Councillor David Bowman to replace Councillor Lance Stanbury (as the substitute member)

It was moved by the Leader, seconded by Councillor Rona Burt and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. Where the Council may send observers to meetings of outside bodies these will be appointed by the Cabinet;
2. If deemed appropriate, the Council to explore the passing of nominations to other organisations;
3. Where the Council may make a nomination, but the nominee is not automatically appointed by the organisation, the nomination be made by the Cabinet;
4. The Service Manager (Democratic Services) be requested to exercise their existing Delegated Authority to:
 - (a) Reappoint the existing District Council's representatives not covered by the provisions made in Recommendations 1, 2 and 3 above, for 2017/2018 as detailed in Appendix A of Report No: AGM/FH/17/002;
 - (b) Make new appointments to outside bodies, as applicable, in accordance with nominations put forward by the relevant Group Leaders or (if applicable) the nominating body or individual listed; and
 - (c) Amend the Council's representation on the Citizens Advice Bureau (Newmarket) and the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel, as verbally advised by the Leader at the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 6.12 pm

Signed by:

Chairman

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Council



Title of Report:	Chairman's Announcements and Itinerary	
Report No:	COU/FH/17/011	
Report to and date:	Council	14 June 2017

Chairman of the Council's Itinerary for April 2017 (part) to June 2017 (part)

Thursday	27 April	Mayor's Comedy Club Night Edmunds Restaurant, West Suffolk College
Friday	28 April	Forest Heath Chairman's Reception Dinner Bedford Lodge Hotel, Newmarket
Sunday	30 April	Haverhill Mayor's Civic Service St Mary's Church, Haverhill
Friday	5 May	Tuddenham Art Exhibition St Mary's Church, Tuddenham St Mary
Wednesday	10 May	Forest Heath District Council Annual Council Council Chamber, District Offices, Mildenhall
Tuesday	16 May	Haverhill Annual Meeting and Mayor Making Haverhill Arts Centre, High Street, Haverhill
Thursday	18 May	Mayor Making Ceremony and Special Council Meeting The Apex, Bury St Edmunds
Thursday	18 May	Civic Dinner hosted by the Mayor of St Edmundsbury The Athenaeum, Bury St Edmunds
Thursday	26 May	Angela Rushen's Funeral Hawstead Church, Hawstead
Thursday	1 June	Councillor Bill Sadler's Funeral St Mary's Church, Newmarket
Sunday	4 June	St Edmundsbury Mayor's Civic Service St Edmundsbury Cathedral/Athenaeum

Vice Chairman Itinerary for April 2017 (part) to June 2017 (part)

Sunday	4 June	St Edmundsbury Mayor's Civic Service St Edmundsbury Cathedral/Athenaeum
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Leader of the Council's Itinerary for April 2017 (part) to June 2017 (part)

Friday	28 April	Meeting with Matthew Hancock MP and Chief Executive West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds
Wednesday	10 May	Meeting with Leader/Deputy Leader South Cambs DC District Offices, Mildenhall
Monday	22 May	Meeting with the Leader District Offices, Mildenhall
Tuesday	23 May	Mildenhall Hub Public Drop-in session District Offices, Mildenhall
Thursday	25 May	AECOM (SPIF) Briefing for Leaders District Offices, Mildenhall
Friday	26 May	Suffolk Public Sector Leaders' meeting East Suffolk House, Melton, Suffolk
Tuesday	30 May	Joint Cabinet Planning meeting District Offices, Mildenhall
Tuesday	30 May	Joint Cabinet meeting District Offices, Mildenhall
Thursday	1 June	Councillor Bill Sadler's Funeral St Mary's Church, Newmarket
Tuesday	6 June	Greater Cambridgeshire Greater Peterborough LEP Board meeting Alconbury, Cambs
Wednesday	7 June	Leaders meeting with new AD Planning & Regulatory Services West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds
Wednesday	14 June	New Anglia LEP Board meeting University of the Arts, Norwich

Deputy Leader of the Council's Itinerary for April 2017 to June 2017 (part)

Monday	22 May	Meeting with Chief Executive and AD Families and Communities West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds
Monday	22 May	Meeting with the Leader District Offices, Mildenhall
Tuesday	23 May	Royal Garden Party London
Tuesday	30 May	Joint Cabinet Planning Meeting District Offices, Mildenhall
Tuesday	30 May	Joint Cabinet Meeting District Offices, Mildenhall
Thursday	1 June	Councillor Bill Sadler's funeral St Mary's Church, Newmarket
Monday	5 June	Meeting with Director District Offices, Mildenhall

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Council



Title of Report:	Leader's Statement	
Report No:	COU/FH/17/012	
Report to and date:	Council	14 June 2017

Single Council

We hosted a special joint cabinet here in Mildenhall to discuss looking at the benefits of a creating a new single council. As you may know it was a unanimous decision by both cabinets that the councils now look at the proposals. We already work together well, having saved £4 million a year under shared services. Members believe there are real benefits for our communities and it means we can work much more closely with them. It also will enable us to better play our part in delivering the strategic goals and benefits shared by all public services in Suffolk. Vitally it means we will continue to be financially stable to meet the challenges ahead but able to grab opportunities to create jobs, while continuing to deliver high quality services.

Tech Corridor

I met with the Leader of South Cambridgeshire District Council Councillor Peter Topping to discuss closer ties between our area and councils in Cambridgeshire. We share many of the same issues and ambitions and agreed there is much we can do together to help drive jobs and continue to encourage industry, such as high tech and agri tech, to our areas.

Mildenhall Hub

I am pleased to say that after several years of work and local engagement the planning application for the Mildenhall Hub has been submitted. If approved, it will revolutionise the future of education, leisure and public services in Mildenhall.

Volunteers' Week

Last week was national volunteers' week and I would like to publicly praise not only the hundreds of volunteers we work with but the army of community heroes that make our area so special and make a real difference. We recognise this also in the new ways we are working as part of our communities and family work. We have worked with residents across west Suffolk to invest £155,877 in 349 community led projects. The results of working with communities and the impact volunteers and groups have speak for themselves.

New Mayors

I hope you will join with me in congratulating Councillor Andy Drummond who returns as Mayor again at Newmarket Town Council where I know he will continue to do an excellent job.

Also I would like to pass on our congratulations to Councillor Terry Clements who was elected mayor of St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

In addition I'd like to extend our congratulations across the border to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and the election of their new and first mayor James Palmer. We already have a good relationship with James, as former leader of East Cambridgeshire District Council, and I know we will continue this into the future as he understands the shared issues we face.

Tributes

I also have the sad duty of reporting the death of our dear friend and respected colleague Councillor Bill Sadler. I am sure you, like me, were shocked to hear the news of his passing and he will be sadly missed both by us and the communities he served in Newmarket for more than 50 years. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends.

Equally it was sad to hear of the passing of St Edmundsbury Borough Councillor and colleague Angela Rushen and Waveney District Council Leader Colin Law. Both were dedicated to the communities they served and will be sadly missed.

Manchester and London

I want to briefly mention the tragic events in Manchester and London. We were all moved by the dreadful stories and pictures we saw following that cowardly act of terrorism and held a minute's silence at our joint Cabinet meeting. Our thoughts and prayers are with all those involved. But what was clear was how the communities and complete strangers as well as public and emergency services came together.

We are told Communities beat terrorism, by being vigilant and by working together. Here in Forest heath and west Suffolk we pride ourselves with working with communities. It is our way to welcome people into our communities and look out for one another. I know we will continue to do so. I would also like to thank our local emergency and public services for making sure our communities have been able to go about our normal lives during this time.

Council



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	A Single Council for West Suffolk – Draft Business Case	
Report No:	COU/FH/17/013	
Report to and date/s:	Council	14 June 2017
Portfolio holder:	Councillor James Waters Leader of the Council Tel: 07771 621038 Email: james.waters@forest-heath.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Ian Gallin Chief Executive Tel: 01284 757001 Email: ian.gallin@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	On 30 May 2017, both Cabinets commissioned Officers to test the option of a single council for West Suffolk against the potential alternatives. This report provides that analysis and seeks the consent of both Councils to undertake a public engagement exercise on the option of a single district-level council.	

Recommendation:	It is recommended that Council: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Agrees in principle that the draft business case attached at Appendix A demonstrates that a single district-level council for west Suffolk represents the most effective governance arrangements moving forwards; (2) Agrees to test the draft business case through an engagement exercise with the public and other key stakeholders in accordance with the approach set out in para 1.2 below; (3) Notes that the detailed considerations required in forming a single council will continue to be assessed by the Future Governance Member Steering Group set up for this purpose; and (4) Notes that a further report will be brought to both Councils in September, containing the final business case and incorporating the outcomes of the engagement exercise.
Key Decision:	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The intention to consider future governance arrangements for local government in West Suffolk was widely communicated on 9 May 2017. Members were briefed individually or through group leaders in advance. The communication also included notification to key stakeholders, and the views expressed in response have been taken into account in the drafting of this report and the business case. • The report sets out the proposed engagement plan which will take place should both Councils agree to the proposals.
Alternative option(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The alternative options are explored within the draft business case

Implications:			
Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cost of the public engagement exercise is approximately £20,000 to be jointly funded across the West Suffolk Councils and will be funded from within existing budgets. 	
Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The draft business case needs to take account of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government's tests for changes in governance arrangements and the requirements of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England 	
Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An equality screening opinion has been undertaken, and attached at Appendix B to this report, which has indicated that there are no negative impacts 	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
The opportunity to examine the most effective model of local government for west Suffolk is missed.	Medium	The business case attached at this report demonstrates that a single council is the best option when compared to the alternatives and should be examined by members.	Low
Stakeholders do not understand the proposals and the coverage and conversations cause confusion.	Medium	A robust engagement plan has been prepared to enable effective communication of the key benefits of the proposal.	Low

<p>The opportunity to avoid additional costs to the shared service partnership through diverging financial strategies is missed.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>The business case attached to this report demonstrates that a single council would create the opportunity to protect shared service savings achieved to date, avoid additional costs through diverging financial strategies, and generate additional cashable savings.</p>	<p>Low</p>
<p>Ward(s) affected:</p>		<p>All Wards</p>	
<p>Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i></p>		<p>Scoping paper presented to Joint Informal Cabinet meetings 30 May: https://democracy.westsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/s20546/CAB.FH.17.026%20The%20Future%20of%20Local%20Government%20in%20West%20Suffolk.pdf</p>	
<p>Documents attached:</p>		<p>Appendix A: Draft Business Case for a Single Council for west Suffolk Appendix B: Equalities Impact Assessment</p>	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

1.1 The case for a single council for west Suffolk

- 1.1.1 On 30 May, the Leaders of both Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils jointly presented a scoping report to an extraordinary meeting of both Cabinets, proposing that work be commissioned from officers to test their lead option of a single district-level council for west Suffolk against the other options available. This followed an announcement by both Leaders on 9 May of their intention to begin a process to explore the best option for council organisation in west Suffolk, focusing on a single district council.
- 1.1.2 The Cabinet report recognised that both councils are working in a more challenging and complex environment than before. There is now the opportunity to reflect the way that the councils work together, to make sure they remain financially and structurally resilient in the long term, and can continue with a strong base from which to invest in and support communities and businesses, and deliver services to customers in the next decade.
- 1.1.3 The Cabinet meeting recognised that any move towards a single council must be subject to a business case, to test the options available that are within our control. This required the testing of whether a single council would be better than continuing with the status quo of two separate councils.
- 1.1.4 This draft business case is now attached for Council consideration and approval at Appendix A, and concludes that a single council does represent the most efficient and effective form of district governance for the future in that, compared to the other options available, it would (see p6-8 of Appendix A):
- deliver greater value for money for residents, generate savings and enable increased self sufficiency;
 - be simpler for residents, officers and partner organisations;
 - maintain democratic accountability;
 - enable the Councils to increase their scale and influence as a district council; and
 - improve resilience compared to the current position.

A new single council would also be better able to play its part in delivering the strategic goals and benefits shared by all public services in Suffolk.

- 1.1.5 The draft business case has been subject to an equalities screening impact, attached at Appendix B, which has concluded that there are no negative impacts from the proposals and therefore no specific action required to be compliant.

1.2 Engagement plan

- 1.2.1 Should the draft business case be agreed by both Councils, a formal period of public and stakeholder engagement will be undertaken to ascertain if there is support amongst the communities, businesses and partner organisations in west Suffolk for the proposals as required by DCLG, before the Final Business Case is presented to Councils in September.

- 1.2.2 Key stakeholders have already been informed of the proposals, via formal communications on the day that the Leaders' intentions were announced (9 May 2017). The announcement was accompanied by a media briefing, which significantly increased the profile of the issue in the local and regional media and drew it to attention of many residents.
- 1.2.3 A full engagement programme over forthcoming weeks has been developed, which includes:
- Dialogue between Members and residents, businesses and community organisations in their Wards. Members are encouraged to raise the profile of the proposals and how to feed back views;
 - An online survey;
 - Identification of existing programmed community events where the single council proposals can be discussed and public attention drawn to the survey;
 - Formal communication to stakeholders, identifying the Councils' intention to proceed and why this is the case, offering opportunities to discuss the proposals and raising awareness of the online survey;
 - A 'phone poll, to be commissioned from a specialist nationwide polling company. The company will independently survey a representative sample of randomly selected electors across both Councils' areas to capture their views towards the proposal. The methodology used will give a statistically robust set of results, in line with industry standards; and
 - A separate section on the Councils' website, explaining why the Councils wish to proceed with the proposals. The website will also include "frequently asked questions" that have been raised through the process which should serve to allay any concerns or misunderstandings about the proposals.

1.3 **Progressing the proposals**

- 1.3.1 As set out above, subject to the agreement of both Councils, the draft business case will now be subject to engagement before it is presented back to Councils in September. If agreed, the final Business Case will then be presented to the Secretary of State for the Department for Communities and Local Government to assess and ultimately approve via the issue of a Draft Order, creating a new district council for West Suffolk.
- 1.3.2 Once the Order has been created, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) will undertake a review to establish the new ward structure, and a transition authority may come into immediate effect to oversee the implementation plan to create the new council.
- 1.3.3 As is highlighted within the draft business case, if the single council proposal does not receive Council approval, the LGBCE will be undertaking a full electoral review of the number of councillors and ward boundaries anyway and, as such, a review due to single council would not create any additional process for any party.
- 1.3.4 The timetable set out in pages 20-21 of the draft business case is ambitious, and in practice there are many technical aspects involved in creating a new council that members will have to consider – the name of the council, its status and governance arrangements, the number of councillors required, and how

the transition will operate.

- 1.3.5 We are aware that, for many members, the technical issues may be of significant importance as to whether they can support the final proposals. There are actually very few aspects of how a new council would work in future that are dictated by the Secretary of State's Order, but resolving these key issues at the earliest stage gives us the greatest opportunity to influence the decisions of the Secretary of State, and give clarity to our communities on exactly how a new council for West Suffolk would operate.
- 1.3.6 With this in mind, the Cabinets have formed a Future Governance Steering Group, to help inform debate on the technical issues required in order that proposals can be taken to Councils in the Autumn should the Final Business Case be agreed.

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APPENDIX A:

A SINGLE DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR WEST SUFFOLK – DRAFT BUSINESS CASE

Proposal from the Leaders of Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council for the creation of a new, single council for west Suffolk

A. Executive summary

1. Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council have prepared a draft business case to test the option of a new, single district or borough council for west Suffolk from May 2019.
2. The proposal has arisen out of a commitment to shape the arrangements for local government in west Suffolk in the best possible way, in order to support our residents and business communities in achieving their ambitions and facing the changing and challenging future in the next decade.
3. Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury have a long, shared history, culminating in recent years in the formation of a full shared service partnership between the two councils that has saved in excess of £4 million in staff and other costs every year since 2011.
4. Appendix A to the draft business case tests the following four options for further transformation in west Suffolk, against the Government's criteria for considering changes in local council structures:

Options

1. do nothing
2. revert to working as two separate councils (dismantle the shared service partnership)
3. expand the shared service partnership to include other councils
4. create a new, single district council for west Suffolk

Government criteria

- better local/public services;
- significant cost savings;
- greater value for money;
- stronger and more accountable local leadership; and
- sustainability in the medium to long term.

5. The options appraisal concludes that a new, single district council for west Suffolk would bring the greatest benefits for local businesses and communities, including:

- value for money, financial savings and self-sufficiency;
- simplicity;
- democratic accountability;
- influence; and

- resilience.

6. Central to the proposal to create a new, single council is the desire to ensure that we can continue to meet the challenges that we are facing and take advantage of opportunities. For example, we are ambitious to go further in our place-shaping role, growing our local economy further, and putting families and communities at the heart of everything we do.

7. We also want to move forward with new forms of local government, for example, putting decisions and services at the most local level possible, investing in prevention, not crisis interventions, maximising our assets, and integrating with the rest of the public sector system.

8. All of this will require strong leadership from elected ward members. Both councils will already be subject to Electoral Reviews by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) before the 2019 elections. So, whatever happens, the make-up of the two councils will be changing in the coming years to reflect growth in the districts over the last 15 years and changes in how local government works.

9. In spite of these strategic changes, there will be no change to the things that are currently valued about Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Councils, in terms of locally delivered services, good customer access and strong connections between local councillors and their communities.

10. As the financial section of the business case makes clear, the main financial driver of the proposal to become a single council would be to protect the over £4m per year savings already achieved and to maximise the organisation's efficiency to address future challenges. There would be some immediate cashable savings of around £0.5m per year. The proposal would also ensure resilience and sustainability of much-valued local council services across the whole of west Suffolk, enabling us to continue to support businesses and residents.

11. A new single council would have a single level of council tax after a period of harmonisation. Appendix B sets out how this might be achieved, building on the existing commitments and requirements for changes in council tax over the medium term.

12. If agreement to the proposal for a single council is reached at the Council meetings on 13 and 14 June 2017, a period of public engagement will follow. A further proposal will be brought to both councils at their meetings in September 2017 for final approval. If both councils agree to proceed with creating a single council at this stage, the process of implementation will begin.

B. Introduction

13. Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council are committed to shaping the arrangements for local government in west Suffolk in the best possible way, in order to support our residents and business communities in achieving their ambitions and facing the changing and challenging future in the next decade. Our belief is that the

best option for us to achieve this is through the creation of a new, single district or borough council for west Suffolk from May 2019.

14. Our proposal to create a single council is shaped by our commitment to:

- a strong and growing economy;
- strong families and communities;
- self-sufficient and resilient local government;
- Using our commercial approach to invest back into our communities; and
- Efficient, effective services, offering value for money.

15. This document gives further detail on what creating a single district council for west Suffolk would entail, and compares it to the other organisational options to the councils.

About West Suffolk

16. The concept of West Suffolk has a long history, and the two councils of Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury have a lot in common, most recently reflected in the strong will amongst both authorities to work together more closely. This has led, over the past 8 years, to the formation of joint strategic plans and objectives, and a fully shared officer structure. At a member level, the joint families and communities strategy has emphasised a growing leadership role to create strong, empowered communities.

17. West Suffolk lies at a crossroads between the larger urban centres of Cambridge, Ipswich and Norwich with whom it is well connected by the A14 and A11. But the area also has its own unique environmental, economic, social and cultural strengths. West Suffolk is a beautiful rural area, with 85 parishes, nationally significant forest and heathlands and a number of thriving market towns. In particular, west Suffolk includes the historic town of Bury St Edmunds; the world centre for the horseracing industry at Newmarket; enterprise zones at Haverhill and Bury St Edmunds, Center Parcs near Brandon, the US Air Force bases at Mildenhall and Lakenheath and the RAF base at Honington.

18. The two districts are marked by their similarities, not their differences. As the map and infographics show, similar proportions of residents live in urban and rural areas; there are similar levels of deprivation in the two districts and residents and businesses in the two districts face similar challenges and opportunities for the future, for example, benefitting from the growth of Cambridge on the one hand, and supporting an increasingly ageing population on the other hand.

19. An assessment of our governance structure will enable us to review how we can work more effectively to support these common challenges, without losing our strong community relationships.

About the councils

Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils are adjacent district councils in the west of Suffolk, a county with two-tier governance (Suffolk County Council plus 7 district councils). The councils are members of both New Anglia and Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough LEPS. They are not part of any current or proposed future combined authorities.

	Population (2015)	Number of Councillors	Revenue budget (2017-2018)*
Forest Heath	63,691	27	£31.5m
St Edmundsbury	112,523	45	£62.1m

**Gross budget including Housing Benefit payments*

Local government transformation in west Suffolk - savings and achievements so far

20. Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils are proud of our track record of sharing services and formulating joint plans and initiatives. We have saved in excess of £4 million in staff and other costs every year since 2011 through our full shared service and management partnership arrangements, and continue year-on-year to do this. This enables us to continue delivering excellent services and to support our communities to shape their futures. Since 2014, we have operated under shared Strategic Plans, Medium Term Financial Strategies and other major policies and strategies, underlining our shared commitment to working in partnership to make a difference in west Suffolk.

21. All of these savings were achieved without external funding or structural changes in governance. They form the first phase of our transformation journey in west Suffolk – the next step in which is our proposal to become a single council.

22. Our proposal follows consideration of the model of district-level local government our communities need in the future, in order to ensure their local provider of services is sufficiently stable, strong and influential in the face of radical change in the public sector and society more widely. These challenges include supporting an ageing population while driving growth in the local economy and in the context of reduced funding.

23. As set out in the remainder of this paper, our belief as Leaders, supported by our members, is that creating a new, single West Suffolk Council will give us the best possible opportunity to secure our future as viable councils as well as the future of the services delivered to our residents, businesses and communities.

The options for further transformation in west Suffolk

24. In formulating the proposal for a single council, consideration has been given to the following four options¹.

- do nothing
- revert to working as two separate councils (dismantle the shared service partnership)
- expand the shared service partnership to include other councils
- create a new, single district council for west Suffolk

25. Based on the high level options appraisal at Appendix A, we have developed the option of creating a new district council for west Suffolk (the 'single council'), as set out in the remainder of this document.

¹ Options 1-3 above already entail some element of change from the status quo, as both councils will be undergoing Electoral Review in 2017.

C: Benefits of a single council

26. A single council for West Suffolk would give us the following advantages:

Value for money, financial savings and self-sufficiency

- i) As set out in more detail in the financial business case below, becoming a single council is estimated to generate a further £0.5 million of annual cashable savings as well as protecting the annual shared services savings of £4 million plus across West Suffolk.
- ii) Becoming a single council would also mean releasing some capacity that is currently absorbed by serving two bodies. This would enable us to focus more on growing a single council's business areas (to generate new income to support services) and investing in communities. It would also mean doing the best for residents in terms of maximising the resources directed towards achieving outcomes, rather than spending time on complex or duplicated processes.
- iii) New income opportunities and savings will continue to be realised when contracts and system requirements come up for review, and dual arrangements can be replaced with a simpler, cheaper, single contractual relationship.
- iv) In the longer term, a single council would mean a bigger asset base to borrow against, without individual ring-fenced budgets.
- v) Achievement of i) – iv) above would provide a stronger basis from which to build a more financially self-sufficient organisation.

Simplicity

- vi) Becoming a single council could be seen as a natural continuation of the shared service journey. By removing the remaining complexities inherent in serving two bodies, the organisation would be simpler to run and manage, especially when considering new delivery models. Financial systems would be simpler, with single reporting requirements, and a removal of ring-fences and the need for reconciliation between different council budgets when running a shared operational service.
- vii) While we would still want a physical presence across the whole of West Suffolk with places for communities and businesses to access our services in different localities, including the Mildenhall Hub, the requirements for our buildings would be even simpler and more flexible than now.
- viii) We would also expect to see some of our staff capacity released as a result of more simple and effective ways of working, allowing us to focus on the delivery of key projects and strategic priorities.
- ix) Becoming a single council would also have benefits for our partnership working. Having seen the benefits that collaboration and clear leadership can bring to communities, some of our key service delivery partners have also joined together, so a single council for west Suffolk would mean a simplification of the decision making and service delivery relationships operating

within partnership relationships in local government and associated sectors.

- x) Delivery of services within local government and associated sectors has become increasingly fluid, with partners transferring responsibilities or working together more closely to deliver services. With increased fluidity, a single democratic decision making structure would support other systems established to support fast and efficient service delivery, meaning this proposal should be to the benefit of our key delivery partners.

Democratic accountability

- xi) A single council would mean the retention of a democratically sound model, but with an end to the need for joint decisions by the councils. Continuing with joint, but separate, decision-making could over time create a perceived 'democratic deficit', as joint decisions may be seen as blurring accountability, especially as financial pressures will differ over time. Residents would also benefit from a renewed democratic relationship with a new body. This would complement the opportunity of forging new relationships with communities.

Influence

- xii) A larger council, with a bigger population, local economy and GVA (Gross Value Added) would allow us more influence on the regional or national stage. A west Suffolk Council would have a population of over 176,000 (using 2015 estimates), rising to 202,129 in 2039². This would bring the councils from being 86th and 189th largest district councils in England (out of 202) to around 8th largest district/borough council when combined – a big voice among our peers and central Government.
- xiii) In particular, a larger council would be a more significant organisation in the context of a devolved model of working, alongside a combined authority and other partners with whom we want to pursue integrated working. This would be especially important when it comes to services such as health and social care where, as a council small enough to have strong local working relationships and knowledge, but large enough to deliver complex services competently, we could have a real impact on the lives of our residents and families.
- xiv) By creating a single council, we would be keeping pace with other areas where similar activities are taking place, such as East Suffolk, thereby allowing us to take advantage of being in the vanguard of transformation and reform.

Resilience

- xv) A single council will be a more resilient organisation than two smaller councils in the future and therefore better able to face the significant changes and challenges that local government will experience in the remainder of this decade and into the next.

² This compares to East Suffolk, whose combined population in 2014 was 240,695 and is expected to rise to 259,450 in 2039.

The current governance arrangements, which date back to 1974, while they have been fit for purpose so far, are likely to come under challenge in the longer term, particularly from the point of view of the potential for each individual council's financial strategies to diverge in the future, in light of some of the different financial pressures and opportunities facing each one. These pressures relate especially to those arising from changes to local government funding, such as the cut in government grants, 2017 business rates valuations, as well as significant changes expected around New Homes Bonus and 100% Business Rates Retention from 2019-20. All of these changes will put pressure on shared service delivery and therefore the cost-sharing model that supports them. This is explored further in the financial section later in this document. The small size of the councils, also raises questions about vulnerability in the medium term.

D: The role and vision of a West Suffolk council

The journey so far: shared ambitions

27. At the heart of the proposal to create a new, single council is a desire to continue to deliver against our strategic priorities and to make a difference for our residents, communities and businesses. These priorities are currently:

Priority 1: Increased opportunities for economic growth

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

Priority 3: Homes for our communities

28. As Leaders we also want to continue to embed the new ways of working that the councils have adopted in order to achieve these priorities, and the move towards self-sufficiency, which are described in the six themes of the councils' shared Medium Term Financial Strategy, as follows:

1. aligning resources to both councils' new strategic plan and essential services;
2. continuation of the shared service agenda and transformation of service delivery;
3. behaving more commercially;
4. considering new funding models (e.g. acting as an investor);
5. encouraging the use of digital forms for customer access; and
6. taking advantage of new forms of local government finance (e.g. business rate retention).

Looking ahead

29. As we look towards the next decade, we want to build on the councils' successes so far, by driving forward progress. West Suffolk is a thriving and dynamic part of the world, with vibrant market towns, strong

village communities and beautiful countryside. It has a broad-based economy, with a diverse range of small and medium sized enterprises, as well as some major employers. Tourism is a major asset, and new businesses are attracted to the area due to our relatively affordable housing, safe local areas, and good strategic transport links. However, we remain aware that some people in our communities can be left behind and don't enjoy these benefits. We therefore want to bring about inclusive growth and support our communities in making sure everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential and overcome challenges to their social, financial and physical wellbeing.

Our vision for a new council

30. If a new single council, fundamentally different from our existing councils (which have diligently served their communities for the past 40 years), becomes a reality then we would expect it to build its own vision through engagement with its councillors and, through them, its communities and local businesses.

31. However, a new West Suffolk council would present an opportunity to put in place many of the new ways of working and constitutional and corporate changes that Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury have been moving towards in recent years, and that do the best possible job in terms of supporting residents. From the outset, the new organisation could develop these ways of working further, for example:

- place-shaping on a wider scale than we do now, championing our localities and shaping them for the future;
- having the capacity to grow our own economy further, and reinvesting the benefits into supporting our local area;
- putting families and communities at the heart of everything that we do by engaging them in service delivery and reducing the need for some services;
- making sure things are done at the right level (subsidiarity), including a greater role for town and parish councils in truly local matters;
- using our community links to support our customers to access services in the best way;
- investing in prevention, not crisis interventions;
- integrating with the rest of the public sector system
- maximising our assets;
- behaving more commercially; and
- ensuring financial stability.

E: A new model of local government

The story so far - shared services

32. Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils have already started on a shared journey of strategic change, designed to support the achievement of our shared strategic vision to 'support communities to create the best possible future for people in west Suffolk'. The proposal

for a single council is therefore set in this context, and is the logical next step.

33. Since 2012, the councils have shared a Chief Executive, and since 2013, all staff have worked for both councils, on a single set of terms and conditions. In making these changes, which save more than £4 million of taxpayers' money each year, Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury have placed themselves at the forefront of public service reform, within the context of similarly strong transformation across the whole of the Suffolk public sector.

34. Councillors in Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury already work on a joint basis, for example through joint committees and working parties, joint Cabinet meetings, joint portfolio holder briefings and shared induction and learning and development programmes. Our councillor body consists of 72 members (27 in Forest Heath and 45 in St Edmundsbury). Both councils are currently Conservative-led, and each has its own Leader and Cabinet arrangement. Both councils currently set separate council taxes and budgets, even where used to fund jointly delivered services.

35. Sharing services has allowed the councils to remain strong in the face of recent challenges, and to support communities and deliver services in spite of ongoing cuts in funding. However, there is now a sense that the limits have now been reached of what the shared services model and traditional transformation and efficiency saving approaches can achieve in terms of making savings and creating a resilient organisation to face future challenges. Like several other councils locally and nationally, West Suffolk is ready to take the next step.

36. Councils are political organisations and, as such, the current partnership carries a significant financial risk to its sustainability in the event of political change (either through elections or of leadership), or through conflict arising between the two councils. This risk would be mitigated by the creation of a new, single council.

Council size

37. Critical to the success of a single council would be the leadership role of ward members, who would be at the frontline of our engagement with communities and integral to our ways of working, championing their localities, and providing local leadership, including liaising with town or parish councils.

38. Both councils will already be subject to Electoral Reviews by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) before the 2019 elections. The last reviews were in 2001 and implemented in 2003 and growth in the area has unbalanced the existing wards. So, whatever happens, the make-up of the two councils will be changing in the coming years to reflect growth in the districts over the last 15 years and changes in how local government works.

39. If FHDC and SEBC were to proceed with the creation of a single council, councillors from both authorities would still need to submit a proposal to the Secretary of State for the size and governance arrangements for the new council. As with the existing planned reviews, this would need to include the number of councillors needed for effective representation of the community and strategic decision-making, but in relation to a single council rather than two separate ones. The proposal would then inform the work of the LGBCE who would carry out an Electoral Review of the new council following the agreement of the Secretary of State to the proposal.

40. The proposals for the size of the new council would need to reflect the guidance from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on how many councillors are needed in 21st century councils. Applying the guidance to the whole of west Suffolk at the same time would allow a coherent view to be taken on the issue of ward size ensuring, among other things, electoral equality for shared decision-taking.

DCLG principles

41. In summary, a single council for west Suffolk would support the Department for Communities and Local Government's five broad, non-statutory principles that have been adopted for considering proposals for changes in local governance in advance of their being submitted to the Secretary of State for approval. These are as follows:

- better local/public services;
- significant cost savings;
- greater value for money;
- stronger and more accountable local leadership; and
- sustainability in the medium to long term.

42. We believe that, as set out above, the proposed creation of a single West Suffolk Council would support these principles.

F. Financial business case

Background

43. As discussed above, Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils have been on a journey of transformation and public service reform for many years saving in excess of £4 million in staff and other costs every year since 2011. The creation of a new, single council is a model of local government which would meet our communities' needs in the future and which would ensure a local provider of services which is sufficiently stable, strong and influential in the face of radical change in the public sector and society more widely.

44. In February 2017, both Councils approved 4 year balanced budgets covering the MTF period 2017-2021. Post April 2021 the anticipated combined savings targets (see paragraph 49 for business rates income assumptions) for the west Suffolk Councils are as follows:

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Savings Target (Cumulative)	921	1,404	1,887	2,370	2,853

45. Although this financial business case identifies those costs and savings directly attributable to the creation of a new, single council, it also focuses on the strengths and opportunities that would accompany the creation of a financially stronger council with a higher worth than the current separate authorities.

46. Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury have both some similarities and a differences in their financial profiles. In terms of their balance sheets they have similar profiles reflective of their sizes; however their revenue budget positions have some differences.

47. The table below presents a summary of a new, single council balance sheet for West Suffolk based on the 2015/16 audited Statement of Accounts. Whilst there would not necessarily be immediate or directly quantifiable advantages, the combined balance sheet would undoubtedly be stronger and qualitatively more favourable. West Suffolk would essentially be financially stronger, with a higher net worth base to borrow against and to continue to invest in its communities, without individual ring-fenced budgets.

	Forest Heath	St Edmundsbury	West Suffolk
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Long-Term Assets	£65,783	£109,602	£175,385
Current Assets	£31,736	£51,118	£82,854
Current Liabilities	(£5,013)	(£10,539)	(£15,552)
Long-Term Liabilities	(£21,163)	(£47,821)	(£68,984)
NET ASSETS	£71,343	£102,360	£173,703
Usable Reserves	£26,525	£35,008	£61,533
Unusable Reserves	£44,818	£67,352	£112,170
TOTAL RESERVES	£71,343	£102,360	£173,703

48. In terms of the revenue position of the two councils, probably the most noticeable difference concerns the position of the authorities is in respect of council tax receipts and the relative importance of localised business rates and government grants as an income source.

49. In 2019/20, Forest Heath has estimated net business rates income (including direct 'section 31' grants from Government and renewables

income), and revenue support grant of around £3.2 million (approximately 50% of their net revenue budget). In contrast, St Edmundsbury's net business rates income is estimated to be nearly £4.0 million, approximately 32% of their net revenue budget. Forest Heath consequently has a greater reliance on both business rates income and the residual Revenue Support Grant, which has been subject to major Government spending reductions and policy changes.

50. It is important to note that, around 2020, the business rates system will be completely re-set when the Government moves towards 100% retention of business rates by local government. This reset will also be accompanied by the transfer of additional responsibilities to local government, which could include a requirement to part-fund areas such as housing benefits. At this stage, it is impossible to predict the financial positions of both authorities under the new arrangements from 2020/21 onwards.

51. A single authority would have a different profile to the two current districts. Based on Medium Term Financial Strategy forecasts, the table below illustrates the comparative net budget and reserves and balances position of a new authority as at 2019/20, compared with the existing position.

2019/20 West Suffolk Net Budget Requirement (as approved February 2017)

NET BUDGET REQUIREMENT	Forest Heath £'000S	St Edmundsbury £'000S	West Suffolk £'000S
Council Tax	£2,730	£7,007	£9,737
Revenue Support Grant & Rural Services Delivery Grant	£214	£121	£335
Business Rates Retention	£2,992	£3,831	£6,823
New Homes Bonus Grant	£417	£1,493	£1,910
Total	£6,353	£12,452	£18,805
Council Tax	43%	56%	52%
Revenue Support Grant	3%	1%	2%
Business Rates Retention	47%	31%	36%
New Homes Bonus Grant	7%	12%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%
General - Revenue	£2,000	£3,035	£5,035
Earmarked - Revenue	£6,204	£17,681	£23,885
TOTAL RESERVES	£8,204	£20,716	£28,920

52. The creation of a new, single council would enable a fundamental review of the earmarked reserves and balances held by the two separate authorities. In a number of areas, both authorities hold earmarked reserves for the same stated purpose, and a single council approach

would entail consideration of revised and potentially lower levels for these. A new single council would be able to make more efficient use of its reserves, both in providing for future revenue commitments, and in enabling consideration of capital financing options, which are referred to in more detail later in this document.

Financial business case methodology

53. The ongoing savings / costs and one-off transition costs that could potentially be expected as a result of the creation of a new single council are based on an initial review and by taking into account others undertaking similar work in this area, such as East Suffolk.

54. As the West Suffolk councils have been sharing all services since 2011, there are limited opportunities to generate further material savings from simply creating a new, single council. The savings are therefore based on the elimination of the relatively fixed costs of being separate authorities.

55. The ongoing savings have been categorised into the following areas:

- a. democratic savings
- b. corporate savings
- c. opportunity cost savings from removing need to invest in additional resources to support diverging financial strategies of two separate authorities

56. Later sections of this proposal consider two other financial aspects of a potential single council - council tax equalisation and capital finance considerations.

57. Overall, this financial analysis indicates that a creation of a single council could potentially produce further annual cashable savings of £0.5 million on top of the £4 million plus shared service savings being delivered annually to date across West Suffolk.

58. Estimated transition costs are likely to be recoverable within a year and will cover officer time and some external legal and software system costs to support the move to a single council.

Ongoing savings

Democratic savings

59. As noted in paragraphs 37-40 (above), the question of how many councillors should be elected to a new West Suffolk Council has not yet been considered by current Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councillors. Form needs to follow function, so this number must reflect the democratic model sought for the new council and could be either higher or lower than now. However, for the purposes of indicative financial modelling only, a figure of 60 councillors has been used. This is an approximate midpoint between the current councillor number of 72; and a council based on ward sizes of 2500 electors (reflecting current national trends), which would

result in around 50 councillors. A council of 60 councillors would have a ward size of just over 2000 electors.

60. The level of allowances will also be subject to the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) and the decision of the new council. To provide a cautious estimate of potential savings, it has been assumed that the new scheme would pay both the highest current allowance in each Members Allowance Scheme, and would also continue to pay any allowance that it is currently paid by one or other of the authorities. This modelling, the midpoint figure referred to above, 60 councillors would, based upon the 15/16 Schemes, gives an estimate for potential savings of £100,000.

Corporate costs

61. In this financial analysis, a quantified estimate has been made in respect of a number of corporate areas where a single council would effectively automatically generate cashable savings compared with the current arrangements.

62. In addition to these estimates, however, an extremely important element of a single council that needs to be recognised is the gain in efficiency and capacity that would be released. Particularly at senior management team level, serving two authorities generates a considerable level of diseconomies, especially in attending committee meetings, briefing councillors, report writing, etc. In these areas, a single council would create a high level of efficiency savings that, whilst not immediately cashable, would create increased effectiveness of management and productivity. This would enable greater focus on growing business areas (to generate new income to support services) and investing in communities. To express this in financial terms, a 20% efficiency gain for leadership team, and a 10% efficiency gain for service managers is estimated to be equivalent to around £0.35 million per annum.

63. Examples of corporate areas that would effectively see immediate savings include external audit fees, corporate memberships, insurance policies costs and banking. External audit fees contain a significant element of fixed cost relating to the existence of both authorities as separate entities, and savings could be expected in both corporate audit costs, and the audit of benefit subsidy claims. Corporate memberships, such as Local Government Association (LGA) membership and insurance and banking charges would also be expected to reduce.

Opportunity cost savings

64. One of the risks of status quo is the councils could begin to diverge in their financial strategies as they face different pressures due to their revenue profiles, population sizes and other factors. This could then begin to unravel the considerable financial and service delivery benefits of shared services and as a result is likely to add cost back into the system through additional staffing capacity to deliver the diverging agendas. An estimated £0.2 million is expected to be saved under a single council model as additional capacity would not be required to support the diverging agendas of two separate authorities.

One-off transition costs

65. Estimates of one-off transition costs have been made at a corporate level, taking into account as far as possible the projects needed to support the two authorities through their transformational journey to a single council date and beyond as a new authority becomes embedded. Allowances for corporate one-off costs include estimates for change management, TUPE support, software system changes, legal and financial matters, contract novation and branding and signage (which could be phased), estimated to be below £0.5million with payback well within one year.

Other financial considerations

Capital finance considerations

66. There could be some potential to reduce the external borrowing requirements that would normally be projected if a single treasury management function, with access to greater volumes of cash and varying profiles, was available under a new, single council. There could also in the short term be some potential reduction in the Minimum Revenue Provision (annual allowance for the repayment of borrowing) requirement as the single council has access to a single capital receipt budget. Based on an estimated borrowing of around £1 million a year, which results in a MRP of around £40,000 (assuming a rate of 4%), and the use of capital receipts this revenue impact could effectively reduce by around £35,000 a year. The cumulative effect of adopting this approach would obviously be dependent on the availability of capital receipts or other resources.

67. No allowance has been made at this stage in this financial summary for any revenue savings arising from these possible revisions to capital financing policy – a new, single council would need fundamentally to review its capital programme priorities and funding, and financing considerations would form an element of this.

Summary financial analysis

68. A summary of the financial analysis work that has been quantified at this stage is shown below as a high-level summary. This summary is focused on the narrower consideration of the costs and benefits associated with the creation of a single council which could assist DCLG in consideration of this proposal. Consequently, a number of areas where the new authority would need further to develop its approach to deliver the financial advantages associated with being a stronger, single, authority have not been built into this summary. Using these relatively narrow parameters, this summary indicates payback of estimated transition costs early in year 1 following establishment of a new council, and ongoing savings are estimated to progressively increase during this analysis period when the new authority would be becoming increasingly embedded.

69. In addition to these identified ongoing savings, further potential revenue savings could result from review of both earmarked reserves and capital financing policy, as referred to later in this section. Additional non-cashable savings of £0.35 million a year are also expected through the

management efficiencies and capacity created, as explained under the corporate costs section at paragraph 61.

On-going savings	Cashable savings	Non-cashable savings	Total
Democratic/corporate	£0.30m	£0.35m	£0.65m
Opportunity cost savings	£0.20m	£-	£0.20m
Total	£0.5m	£0.35m	£0.85m

Council Tax Modelling

70. There would be a need (and opportunity) to establish a new budget for a single council, supported by a single level of council tax. The current (2017/18 rates) council tax levels for Band D are as follows:

- i. Forest Heath DC - £142.38
- ii. St Edmundsbury BC - £182.16

71. It is important to note that council tax income is increasingly becoming one of the more reliable and resilient elements of an authority's income budget. With the increased uncertainty of business rates income and government grants (councils continue to experience significant reductions) it is increasingly likely that councils will need to consider a stable level of council tax income in any future budget projections. This approach supports the desire to become more self-sufficient in order to protect services for our various communities. For Forest Heath Council councillors, in particular, increased council tax receipts are likely to continue to be an essential element of their financial strategy in the next administration even if a single council is not created.

72. DCLG has in the past offered the opportunity to harmonise to a single council tax level over a five-year period but indicated that other options could be considered taking each business case on its own merits. It should be noted that it will be for the new, single council to determine the appropriate level of council tax, however for the purposes of this paper and the overall single council discussion and debate a number of harmonisation options have been worked on.

73. The modelling, attached at appendix B), seeks to ensure the following principle in any single year of a harmonisation period (for example 5 years): that the overall council tax receipts of a single council would not be significantly less than the projections of the combined receipts of the two separate councils over the medium term. (The receipts for a single council take into account the assumed cashable savings of becoming a single council.) The modelling also takes into account the current annual council tax increase referendum limit (2% or £5 whichever is higher).

74. Based on the above, the level of council tax for the new, single council across the options modelled is likely to be around £182 - £188 per average band D property by 2025/26 (7th year of new single council). This charge is commensurate (perhaps slightly on the lower side) when

compared with projected levels for other similar, local councils. This comes with the caveat that, of course, it will be for councillors at individual authorities to set their council tax levels taking into account all financial and political considerations.

G: FUTURE CHANGES AND CHALLENGES

75. In moving forward in these areas, we recognise as Leaders that, in common with many local councils, Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Councils are now facing unprecedented levels of change, challenges and opportunities, including:

- localism and devolution;
- changes in funding (for example, reductions in Government grant and New Homes Bonus and the move to 100% Business Rate retention by local government);
- the need to focus on prevention and integration;
- technological change; and
- wider societal change.

76. We believe that we therefore need to maximise the resilience of local government in West Suffolk in order to be able to achieve the ambitions set out above, while responding intelligently to, and overcoming, the challenges facing our communities and the councillors who serve them.

77. Any consideration of the proposal for creating a single council needs to be set against this background of change. When comparing the 'do nothing' option with the single council proposal, for example, we need to bear in mind that the context in which both will operate will be very different from the current position in five to fifteen years' time. Our thinking therefore needs to focus on which model will best allow us to achieve our ambitions, give us the greatest resilience and financial self-sufficiency from 2020 onwards, not at the current time.

Examples of future changes and challenges

Behaving more commercially

The way councils are financed is changing and the main Government grant will end by around 2020. This means looking at new investments which generate an annual return and allow the councils to be more self-sufficient and therefore to protect public services.

And the councils have been bold with our investments. For example in August 2016 Forest Heath became the owners of a £14.5 million solar farm. This is largest publicly-owned solar farm in the UK and will generate income rising from £300,000 in the first year to just over £700,000 per year by year ten of the 25-year project.

Considering new funding models

The councils have been taking new steps to develop our organisation, estate, councillors and staff. We're now looking at new ways to provide

efficient services which generate efficiency savings and build resilience into our services in the future.

One model being explored is joint ventures. The West Suffolk councils recently set up Verse Facilities Management Limited with Suffolk County Council. Verse has enabled the partners to consolidate facilities management services into one company, saving more than £40,000 a year. But this joint venture isn't only about putting facilities management under one hat, it also enables the partner councils to offer commercial services to other organisations and businesses to generate revenue which will contribute to the cost of running vital public services.

H. Public engagement and next steps

78. This proposal will be considered by St Edmundsbury Borough Council on 13 June 2017 and Forest Heath District Council on 14 June 2017.

79. If agreed, following the consultation and engagement period (see below), a further proposal will be brought to both councils at their meetings in September 2017 for final approval. If both councils agree to proceed with creating a single council at this stage, the process of implementation will begin.

80. The formal process for creating a new council would involve the Secretary of State using his powers under s15 of the Cities and Local Government Act 2016 to make changes to local arrangements, in response to proposals from local councils. To do this, the Secretary of State would look to the local elected councillors to make a proposal for the new council, including the number of councillors it should comprise; and to offer evidence alongside the proposal of local public support for it. This evidence would be drawn from the consultation and engagement period proposed to take place during June – September 2017.

Consultation and engagement

81. It is a matter for individual councils how exactly they engage with local people to inform them about, and seek their response to, a proposal to merge with a neighbouring council. There are no statutory requirements to consult in a particular way.

82. If FHDC and SEBC agree to the recommendations, a period of public consultation and engagement would begin during June 2017. During the engagement period, there would be:

- an opportunity for all residents to respond to an online/printed questionnaire;
- a telephone poll of a representative sample of 1000 electors, carried out by an independent opinion polling company;
- and
- ongoing dialogue with stakeholders, including businesses, communities, interest groups and residents.

Recommended timetable

St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) meeting. Recommendation: to agree proposal and launch consultation and engagement period	13 June 2017
Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) meeting Recommendation: to agree proposal and launch consultation and engagement period	14 June 2017
Future Governance Member Steering Group established to consider council size	June 2017
Consultation and engagement period	June – September 2017
SEBC Council meeting Recommendation: to agree to submit proposal to Secretary of State	26 September 2017
FHDC Council meeting Recommendation: to agree to submit proposal to Secretary of State	27 September 2017
FHDC and SEBC Special Cabinet meetings Recommendation: to agree the executive elements of the proposals	On the rising of both full council meetings
Proposal submitted to Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government	October / November
Secretary of State lays orders for a single council	Autumn 2017 - Spring 2018
Electoral review process by Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) (i.e. internal ward boundaries)	Autumn 2017-2018
New Council established	April 2019
First elections to new council	2 May 2019

I. Appendices

Appendix A – Options appraisal for alternative future governance models
 Appendix B – Detailed council tax modelling
 Appendix C - Appraisal of risks associated with proceeding with the creation of a single West Suffolk Council

J. Background documents

West Suffolk Strategic Plan 2014-2016
 West Suffolk Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016-2020
 West Suffolk Annual Report 2015-2016

Council Tax Harmonisation options

APPENDIX B

Option 1 - Harmonisation over 5 years

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
Council Tax Levels							
Forest Heath DC	152.28	157.23	162.18	167.13	172.08	177.03	181.98
<i>Annual change Forest Heath DC</i>	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95
St Edmundsbury BC	182.16	182.16	182.16	182.16	172.08	177.03	181.98
<i>Annual change St Edmundsbury BC</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-10.08	4.95	4.95
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Council Tax Foregone	0	0	135	275	808	771	736
Transitional costs (est.)	300						
Savings	(300)	(300)	(500)	(500)	(500)	(500)	(500)
Net impact (income)/cost	0	(300)	(365)	(225)	308	271	236

Option 2 - Harmonisation over 6 years

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
Council Tax Levels							
Forest Heath DC	152.28	157.23	162.18	167.13	172.08	177.03	181.98
<i>Annual change Forest Heath DC</i>	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95
St Edmundsbury BC	182.16	182.16	182.16	182.16	182.16	177.03	181.98
<i>Annual change St Edmundsbury BC</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-5.13	4.95
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Council Tax Foregone	0	0	135	275	420	771	736
Transitional costs (est.)	300						
Savings	(300)	(300)	(500)	(500)	(500)	(500)	(500)
Net impact (income)/cost	0	(300)	(365)	(225)	(80)	271	236

Option 3 - Harmonisation over 7 years

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
Council Tax Levels							
Forest Heath DC	152.28	157.23	162.18	167.13	172.08	177.03	181.98
<i>Annual change Forest Heath DC</i>	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95
St Edmundsbury BC	182.16	182.16	182.16	182.16	182.16	182.16	181.98
<i>Annual change St Edmundsbury BC</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.18
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Council Tax Foregone	0	0	135	275	420	572	736
Transitional costs (est.)	300						
Savings	(300)	(300)	(500)	(500)	(500)	(500)	(500)
Net impact (income)/cost	0	(300)	(365)	(225)	(80)	72	236

Option 4 - Merged rate from April 2019

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 5	Year 5
Council Tax Levels							
Forest Heath DC	166.94	170.28	173.69	177.16	180.70	184.32	188.00
<i>Annual change Forest Heath DC</i>	19.61	3.34	3.41	3.47	3.54	3.61	3.69
St Edmundsbury BC	166.94	170.28	173.69	177.16	180.70	184.32	188.00
<i>Annual change St Edmundsbury BC</i>	-15.22	3.34	3.41	3.47	3.54	3.61	3.69
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Council Tax Foregone	300	207	244	280	316	351	392
Savings	(300)	(300)	(500)	(500)	(500)	(500)	(500)
Net impact (income)/cost	0	(93)	(256)	(220)	(184)	(149)	(108)

For information - cost of reducing to the lowest level, discounted as not financially viable

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Council Tax Levels	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 5	Year 5
Forest Heath DC	152.28	157.23	162.18	167.13	172.08	177.03	181.98
<i>Annual change Forest Heath DC</i>	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95
St Edmundsbury BC	152.28	157.23	162.18	167.13	172.08	177.03	181.98
<i>Annual change St Edmundsbury BC</i>	-29.88	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Council Tax Foregone	1,105	931	889	848	808	964	743
Savings	(300)	(300)	(500)	(500)	(500)	(500)	(500)
Net impact (income)/cost	805	631	389	348	308	464	243

Note: The 'annual change' rows under each option above, reflect the annual change under the harmonised council tax options as a single council. Both council's financial plans, as standalone councils, would have assumed a continued rise in council tax during the same period. Forest Heath DC at £4.95 a year and St Edmundsbury BC at 2% per year.

Appendix C: Risk management

1. In order to properly consider whether to proceed with the proposed single council creation, we need to be mindful of the risks associated both with proceeding and with not proceeding, to ensure that the benefits described above outweigh the risks.

2. An appraisal of the risks associated with proceeding with a new council is set out below, covering the following risks and potential mitigations.

1. Proposal is not approved by the Secretary of State.
2. Creation of a new council is not implemented effectively.
3. Predicted benefits are not realised.
4. Changing status results in unforeseen changes in funding.
5. Confusion over new governance arrangements.
6. Residents perceive the council is more distant.
7. Lack of support from the public.
8. Resistance to change among staff and councillors.
9. Lack of clarity on overall vision and outcomes.
10. Changes in the external environment.

3. Meanwhile, there are a number of risks associated with NOT proceeding with a single council, which need to be borne in mind including:

1. Financial risks of diverging priorities – leading to cuts in service provision, reduced customer satisfaction and higher acute costs (due to lack of investment in prevention).
2. Risks of diverging political priorities during a time of intense pressure on local government (competing priorities). Possible breakdown of shared services arrangements.
3. Greater pressure on council tax levels.
4. Creating asymmetrical member arrangements across the two councils through the forthcoming electoral review process (in 2017) and missing the opportunity to align ward sizes.
5. Reduced councillor, staff and resident morale due to potential impacts on service delivery.
6. Missing out on 'first mover' advantage.

1. Proposal is not approved by the Secretary of State	
Impact	Action/ control
Unable to implement the creation of a single West Suffolk Council.	We will continue to seek advice and guidance from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and other associated bodies such as the Local government Association (LGA) and Local Government Boundary Commission for England (BCE)

	to ensure we meet their expectations and make our vision and outcomes clear.
2. Creation of new council is not implemented effectively	
Impact	Action/ control
Negative impact on political relationships and service delivery. Negative impact on profile of the previous councils and new merged Council.	We will create a clear and long term vision with regular performance management and progress reports. We will also establish robust political and officer governance to deliver the creation of a new council and long term vision.
3. Predicted benefits are not realised	
Impact	Action/ control
Savings and service benefits are not delivered which creates additional budget pressures for the new council.	We will create a clear framework for managing the financial benefits expected from the change. Detailed project design will ensure successful implementation of the new arrangements and associated benefits.
4. Changing status results in unforeseen changes in funding	
Impact	Action/ control
Unforeseen budget and service delivery pressures for the new council.	We will continue to horizon scan and engage with Government departments on new developments and announcements. Throughout the transition to a new council we will assess the impact not only on the separate councils but also the future council.
5. Confusion over new governance arrangements	
Impact	Action/ control
Reduced public confidence in the decision-making process and quality of decisions being made by the council. Inability to make key decisions which are essential to the running of West Suffolk services.	We will establish robust political governance in consultation with DCLG, the LGA and the BCE. Cross-party and cross-authority work on the new constitution will start during 2017 to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place ahead of the first election in May 2019.
6. Residents perceive the council is more distant	
Impact	Action/ control
Less sustainable and resilient communities resulting in increased public sector demand and costs.	There will no change to customer access arrangements. We have a new approach to

<p>The council could experience a reduced ability to understand and address different needs across the West Suffolk localities.</p>	<p>supporting families and communities and would look to take this approach into the new, single council. A detailed communications plan will be in place to ensure we actively engage with key partners, stakeholders and the local community to minimise any impacts.</p>
<p>7. Lack of support from the public</p>	
<p>Impact</p>	<p>Action/ control</p>
<p>This would bring a lack of credibility from residents, businesses, councillors and partners. The knock-on effect would be reduced willingness to form partnerships with a new council and a lack of public trust in the councils' ability now, or future new council's ability, to deliver public services.</p>	<p>A comprehensive communications plan will be in place and will include detailed engagement with the public. Engagement with the public will include a telephone poll with a representative sample of west Suffolk residents alongside the ability for anyone to comment. The communications plan will also include briefings with staff and politicians so that the key messages can be disseminated to and discussed with the public, local business and our partners.</p>
<p>8. Resistance to change among staff and councillors</p>	
<p>Impact</p>	<p>Action/ control</p>
<p>Difficulty trying to establish an organisation culture and potential for councillor resignations/disaffection. The message being disseminated by staff and members could be negative and this could impact on the public support for the creation of a single council. Increased employee and member dissatisfaction could lead to poor performance.</p>	<p>Our strategy for the creation of a new council will be open and transparent so that all staff and members are fully informed and engaged with at every step of the process. In addition we will work with the Unison to ensure that any staff transitional arrangements are clear and straightforward. We will have regular briefings with all members and ensure that all communication channels are used to keep members are fully informed at all times.</p>
<p>9. Lack of clarity on overall vision and outcomes</p>	
<p>Impact</p>	<p>Action/ control</p>
<p>Increased senior officer and member time to manage internal and external relationships. A lack of clarity regarding the direction of the council could also</p>	<p>We will have a clear, long term, strategic vision for the new single council. The political and officer structures and</p>

have a negative on the profile for the council and bring difficulties to service delivery. Elected members' commitment to the partnership could falter and there could be a return to the previous separate arrangements.	governance arrangements will have been established and in place ready for the first elections. We also have a performance management framework in place to ensure that the ambitions for the new council are being delivered.
10. Changes in the external environment	
Impact	Action/ control
New Government initiatives or policies or a change in local government reorganisation could halt or delay the creation of a single council.	We will continue to liaise with DCLG and the LGA regarding any national developments or Government announcements. Our business and service planning arrangements will remain flexible so that we can make changes to reflect the changing economic climate and political landscape.

APPENDIX B – Equalities Impact Assessment – screening form

Question	Response						
Q1) Name of the strategy, policy, programme or project being assessed.	Proposal for the creation of a single council at district level for the area currently covered by Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) and St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC)						
Q2) In no more than five lines and using Plain English, summarise the purpose of the policy or proposal, and its desired outcomes.	A business case from the Leaders of FHDC and SEBC to test the proposal of a new, single council at district level for west Suffolk from May 2019. The business case tests whether this proposal is the best possible way to for the councils to continue to support residents, business and communities in the future.						
Q3) Who should benefit from the proposal and in what way?	<p>The following groups are likely to benefit from the creation of a single council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all residents living in the two districts (including all electors) • all staff employed by the two existing councils • all staff employed by organisations commissioned to carry out services/functions on their behalf by one (or more) of the two councils. • all Councillors in the two districts (27 – Forest Heath and 45 – St Edmundsbury) • partner organisations working with FHDC and SEBC (e.g. parish councils, VCSE organisations, community groups) • businesses operating in the two districts • businesses contracting with the councils 						
Q4) Is there any evidence or reason to believe that in relation to this proposal, there may be a difference in:	<table border="1" data-bbox="730 1134 2103 1209"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="730 1134 1003 1209">Protected characteristic</th> <th data-bbox="1003 1134 1552 1209">West Suffolk (%)</th> <th data-bbox="1552 1134 2103 1209">England and Wales* (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td colspan="3" data-bbox="730 1209 2103 1394">The demographic characteristics of residents of West Suffolk are broadly similar to those of the population of England, as follows:</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Protected characteristic	West Suffolk (%)	England and Wales* (%)	The demographic characteristics of residents of West Suffolk are broadly similar to those of the population of England, as follows:		
Protected characteristic	West Suffolk (%)	England and Wales* (%)					
The demographic characteristics of residents of West Suffolk are broadly similar to those of the population of England, as follows:							

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels of participation • Uptake by different groups • Needs or experiences of different groups • Priorities • Other areas? 	Age	Under 18 20.9%	Aged 65+ 20.1%	Under 18 21.3%	Aged 65+ 17.9%
	Disability (those living with a long-term illness or disability)	15.9%		17.9%	
	Gender reassignment	Data not available		Prevalence estimates 0.1% to 0.6% of all adults.	
	Marriage and civil partnership	Married: 51% Civil partnership: 0%		Married: 46.6% Civil partnership: 0.2%	
	Pregnancy and maternity	Data not available		Data not available	
	Race	White: 94.6% Mixed/multiple ethnic group: 2% Asian/Asian British: 1.8% Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: 1.1% Other ethnic group: 0.5%		White 86.0% Mixed/multiple ethnic group: 2.2% Asian/Asian British: 7.5% Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: 3.3% Other ethnic group: 1.0%	
	Religion or belief	Has a religion: 64.5% No religion: 28.1%		Has a religion: 67.7% No religion: 25.1%	
	Sex	Males 50.2%	Females 49.8%	Males 49.2%	Females 50.8%
	Sexual orientation	Data not available for west Suffolk.		ONS 2015 data – 1.7% of UK population identified themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB)	

*local government is devolved to England, but data are mostly available for England and

	<p>Wales.</p> <p>We would therefore not expect the proposal to impact differently on any particular group when compared to the population of England as a whole. One exception to this is that a large number of residents of Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury are members or dependents of the US Armed Forces, based at RAF Lakenheath or Mildenhall. The proposals will have less impact on these people as they do not vote in local elections or pay council tax, but they do benefit from the services provided by the councils.</p>
<p>Q5) Using the evidence listed above, fill in the table below to highlight the groups you think this policy or proposal has the potential to impact upon:</p> <p>(i) Is there any potential for negative impact? Yes or No</p> <p>(ii) Are there opportunities for positive impact or to promote equality of opportunity?</p>	<p>i) No negative impacts have so far been identified. This will be reviewed following a period of public consultation and engagement. The proposals will not directly affect service delivery, or customer access.</p> <p>ii) A small beneficial impact on all groups is anticipated. Becoming a single council is estimated to generate a further £0.5 million of annual cashable savings, on top of the annual shared services savings of £4 million.</p> <p>Becoming a single council would also release some capacity as a result of a more simple and effective way of working, allowing the councils to focus on the delivery of key projects and invest in communities. There is also potential for all residents to benefit from a renewed democratic relationship with a new body, complementing the opportunity of forging new relationships with communities.</p> <p>A single west Suffolk council with a larger population, local economy and GVA would bring the councils from being 86th and 189th largest district/borough councils in England (out of 202) to around 7th largest district/borough council when combined. Having a larger council will mean having a bigger voice within the sector and with central Government.</p> <p>The creation of a new single council would also help develop new ways of working that the councils have been moving towards in recent years. This includes an emphasis on prevention, not crisis interventions, thus benefitting everyone who</p>

	uses the councils' services, particularly the most vulnerable in society.
Q6) Considering your answers to questions 1-5, do you believe a Full Equality Impact Assessment is needed?	Not at this time as no negative impacts have been identified.
Q7) Considering our duty to proactively tackle disadvantage and promote equality of opportunity, list the actions required.	No actions required as no adverse impact identified.

Impacts Table

	Is there potential for negative impact? YES or NO	Are there opportunities for positive impact? YES or NO	If YES, please provide details of the impact below	
			Positive Impact	Negative Impact
All groups or society generally	NO	YES	The opportunities for positive impact are listed above.	
Age - Older or younger people	NO	YES		
Disability - People with a	NO	YES		

disability				
Sex - Women or men	NO	YES		
Pregnancy or maternity - including expectant or new parents i.e. pregnancy and maternity	NO	YES		
Marriage and civil partnership – including same sex couples	NO	YES		
Race - People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME)	NO	YES		
Religion - People with a religion or belief (or who choose not to have a religion or belief)	NO	YES		
Sexual Orientation - People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) or in a Civil Partnership	NO	YES		
Gender Reassignment - People who are transitioning from one gender to another	NO	YES		

<i>Families and those with parenting or caring responsibilities (The Families Test)</i>	NO	YES		
<i>Individuals on low income</i>	NO	YES		
<i>Those suffering rural isolation</i>	NO	YES		
<i>Those who do not have English as a first language</i>	NO	YES		

Council



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	Community Governance Review	
Report No:	COU/FH/17/014	
Report to and date/s:	Council	14 June 2017
Portfolio holder:	Not applicable – electoral matters are not an executive function	
Lead officers:	<p>Fiona Osman, Elections Manager Tel: 01284 757105 Email: fiona.osman@westsuffolk.gov.uk</p> <p>Alex Wilson, Director Tel: 01284 757695 Email: alex.wilson@westsuffolk.gov.uk</p>	
Purpose of report:	To allow Council to make final decisions on the Community Governance Review for Forest Heath.	
Recommendation:	<p>It is recommended that:</p> <p>(1) Council considers the evidence provided during consultation on the Community Governance Review (CGR) so that it can make the various final decisions required in respect of the parish-specific recommendations for issues 1-3 (as set out in Appendix A)</p> <p><i>[NB this will require three separate motions to be proposed, seconded and voted upon at the meeting, in turn, which will be explained at the meeting];</i></p> <p>(2) in respect of the other statutory recommendations the Council is required to make for the review:</p>	

	<p>(a) no existing parish be abolished as part of the review;</p> <p>(b) there be no change to the name of any existing parish;</p> <p>(c) there be no change to the current arrangements which determine whether an existing parish has a council or not i.e.:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(i) if it currently has a parish meeting it will continue to do so; and/or</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(ii) if it currently has a parish council it will continue to do so;</p> <p>(3) the Local Government Boundary Commission for England be requested to make any necessary consequential changes to district and/or county council electoral arrangements, if applicable;</p> <p>(4) the timing of the implementation of any agreed changes to parish electoral arrangements arising from this review be dealt with as set out in section 1.4 of this report; and</p> <p>(5) the decisions taken as part of this CGR be published and, in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, and the advice of the Boundary Commission, the necessary order(s) be made and implemented at the appropriate time(s) before the next parish elections in 2019.</p>
Key Decision:	<p><i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i></p> <p>No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation has taken place on the terms of reference and final recommendations for the review and the results are summarised in this report.
Alternative option(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has already agreed to carry out the review. Not carrying out a CGR at this time would mean that changes desired to parish arrangements will not be taken into account in a forthcoming electoral review of the district and may be difficult to implement before the 2019 parish elections. • At this stage of the process, the Council is able to change its recommendations based on evidence received through consultation.

Implications:			
Are there any new financial implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any new staffing implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council is following the statutory process. 	
Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has a legal duty to ensure that its recommendations do not undermine community cohesion, and ensure effective local government for all electors in a parish. 	
Risk/opportunity assessment:			
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
Matters which local communities want included in the CGR are missed	Medium	Consult on terms of reference prior to adoption	Low
Final decisions do not reflect community views	Medium	Consult on recommendations	Low
Consequential impacts on district wards and county divisions	Medium	Feed changes into electoral reviews by the LGBCE	Low
Review is not completed in 12 months	Low	Timetable review phases in terms of reference	Low
Ward(s) affected:	All Saints, Eriswell and the Rows, Exning, Great Heath, Market, Severals, South and St Mary's.		
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council paper COU/FH/17/006, 22 February 2017 Council paper COU/FH/16/025, 22 November 2016 LGBCE National Guidance: http://www.lgbce.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/10387/community-governance-review-guidance.pdf 		
Documents attached:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appendix A – results of consultation 		

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Community Governance Reviews (CGRs) provide the opportunity for principal councils to review and make changes to community governance at parish level within their areas. Changes can range from the creation of new parishes through to minor boundary adjustments or alteration of the number of parish councillors.

1.1.2 The first informal phase of this review, initial evidence gathering, took place between November 2016 and January 2017 to determine terms of reference. As well as being publicised to other stakeholders, all FHDC parishes were consulted and given the chance to suggest issues to examine. The final phase, and the formal consultation stage, was the publication of the terms of reference, along with recommendations, which were based on decisions taken at the February 2017 meeting of the Council. The Council will consider the results of that consultation and make its final decisions on the review at this meeting.

1.2 Nature of Final Recommendations

1.2.1 The legislation requires that the Council must make final recommendations in respect of each of the issues in the CGR. The recommendations must also be definite i.e. it must be a recommendation whether or not to make one of the permitted statutory changes.

1.2.2 Furthermore, the published recommendations were intended to give those taking part in the consultation a sense of what the Council was minded to do, based on the evidence it had in February 2017. Therefore, as well as being final recommendations, they were also 'draft' insofar as they were still subject to testing through consultation; the final decision by Council in summer 2017 may be different to the recommendation agreed in February 2017 if new or stronger evidence emerges during phase 2. This is the context in which the recent consultation should be viewed.

1.2.3 In addition to the parish-specific recommendations on each issue (as set out in Appendix A), there are a number of statutory recommendations the Council must make in respect of any CGR issue. These are to clarify whether the review will result in the abolition of any existing parishes, changes to existing parish names or changes to the form of governance of existing parishes. Since the terms of reference for the review only examine potential changes to boundaries between two existing parishes (issues 1 and 3) or the potential creation of a new parish from part of the area of an existing parish (issue 2), no such changes can result from this review. Therefore, as set out in recommendation 2 of this report, the Council can safely adopt these statutory recommendations without fettering its decisions on the main issues under consideration. Furthermore, no comments have been received on these statutory recommendations during the consultation.

1.3 Assessing the consultation responses

1.3.1 A CGR should create the conditions to:

- (a) improve community engagement;
- (b) provide for more cohesive communities;
- (c) provide better local democracy; and
- (d) result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

- 1.3.2 The decisions the Council makes in relation to the CGR should relate back to the issues identified in the terms of reference and final recommendations, since those taking part would have submitted evidence on that basis.
- 1.3.3 The Council must also take into account local opinion received through the consultation. However, the aim of the consultation was not to conduct a formal referendum, but simply to give people the chance to comment on the recommendations and help shape the Council's final decision. Ultimately, where opinion is divided, the Council will need to make a balanced judgement, with each case taken on its own individual merits.
- 1.3.4 Having said that, if the Council has no strong evidence that a change is justified (either in terms of the CGR guidance and/or the level of local support) it would normally presume to maintain the status quo.
- 1.3.5 Evidence in relation to each of the three issues in the CGR is set out in the appendix to this report. For consistency, the responses to the consultation are recorded using the following convention, although this does not represent any particular weighting:
- The Parish council/meeting which currently represents the electors
 - Views of neighbouring parish(es) if applicable
 - Any community organisations representing the area affected
 - Local electors, businesses and landowners (with comments reflecting the viewpoint of the majority of respondents listed first)
 - Local elected representatives (the views of local councillors are represented only when they identified themselves in this capacity – some have responded as local residents and are recorded as such).
- 1.3.6 As this was an assurance made in the consultation, responses from local electors and businesses are also presented as anonymously as possible.

1.4 **Implementation of any changes**

1.4.1 The timing of any changes would need to be taken on a case by case basis, as the rules for changes to boundaries differ from those to electoral arrangements. There are also other implications to consider such as consequential changes to district and county electoral arrangements and the scale of change. However, all changes would need to be made before the next parish elections in 2019.

1.4.2 Taking each issue in turn:

Issue 1: Exning/Newmarket

If approved at this meeting, such a minor boundary change could be implemented on 1 April 2018 subject to the view of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) regarding the timing of any consequential changes to district ward boundaries (there would be no consequential changes to current county council divisions since both parishes are already in the same division). If the LGBCE would prefer the parish boundary to be changed at the same time as it implements its own electoral

review of district council electoral arrangements, then the change would be made on 1 April 2019 instead, ready for the next scheduled parish elections.

Issue 2: Mildenhall

If the Council wished to change its recommendation and create a new parish council for West Row this change would occur in 2019. Time would be needed to set up the new council (and manage any transition) and, in any event, new electoral arrangements are normally introduced at the time of the next scheduled elections.

Issue 3: Kentford/Moulton

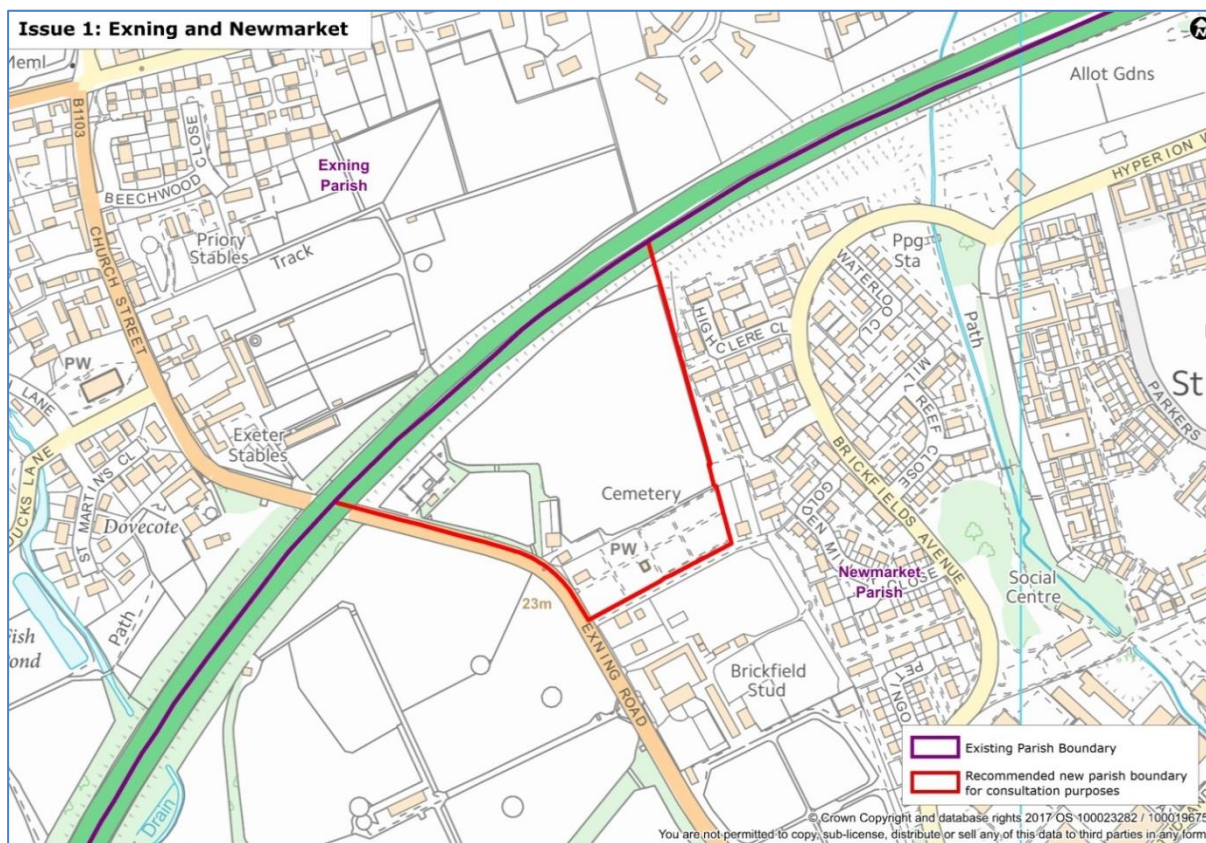
There would be no consequential impacts to current district or county electoral arrangements from changing this boundary between the two parishes. Similarly, no changes to the electoral arrangements of either parish have been suggested as part of the review. Therefore the normal aim would be to introduce any change as soon as possible i.e. 1 April 2018. However, given the scale of the change, and the fact that the LGBCE will be conducting its own electoral review of district council arrangements before 2019, the advice of the Commission would still be sought in terms of whether to implement the change on 1 April 2019 instead (linked to the next parish elections). The District Council would reserve its position on whether to implement the change in 2018 or 2019 until it had received that advice.

Consultation on final recommendations for Community Governance Review

No	Area or Properties Under Review	Parishes Directly Affected	Matter covered by final recommendation
1	Properties at or in the vicinity of Exning Cemetery, Exning Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Exning •Newmarket 	Whether or not (and how) Exning Cemetery should be transferred from Newmarket Parish to Exning Parish by way of a minor boundary change.

Final Recommendation Used for Consultation, March to May 2017

The boundary of Exning Parish be extended to include Exning Cemetery and adjoining properties, as shown on the consultation map below.



Background Information for Recommendation

The reason for the recommendation was that, subject to local preference being established through the consultation, it potentially provides more appropriate parish boundaries to reflect the identities and interests of local residents and, in particular, to recognise the significance of the Cemetery to the Exning community.

The proposal to include this matter in the CGR was made by Cllr Simon Cole, who is the FHDC ward councillor and a parish councillor in Exning. The suggestion was to review whether Exning’s cemetery should be included in Exning Parish, in view of its close community connection.

The proposed new boundary is shown on the consultation map above. This option relates most strongly to ground features, including the Exning Road which is already used as a parish ward boundary in Newmarket (and provides a direct connection between the existing parish and the area in question). However, it would result in the transfer of four existing properties between the parishes, and the majority view of those electors would be critical to any final decision made in the CGR. The alternative options available to the Council are to make no change to the boundary at all or to make minor amendments to the proposed boundary change.

If adopted as a result of this CGR, this proposal would require a consequential change to district ward boundaries. There would be no consequential impact on current County Council electoral arrangements as both parishes are already in the same Division.

Electorate Information:

The recent electorates of Exning and Newmarket Parishes were 1,554 and 11,664 respectively. A five year electorate forecast is not required in this instance as the proposal involves a small and fixed number of electors (currently 7 electors in 4 existing properties), and there are no growth proposals affecting the land in question.

Summary of Consultation

The consultation has identified good support for the proposed transfer from the majority of directly affected electors and Exning Parish Council, with no objections being received, including from the Town Council. Furthermore, there were no suggested changes to the line of the amended boundary.

Responses received

A. Newmarket Town Council

The Town Council has considered the matter and raised no objections to the proposal.

B. Exning Parish Council

The Parish Council is in full support of the consultation proposing the transfer of Exning Cemetery and four adjacent properties from Newmarket Parish to Exning Parish. This is due to the close connection the cemetery has with the Parish of Exning, particularly with St Martin's Church in Exning, and that the cemetery is under the care and maintenance of Exning Parish Council. The residents of adjacent properties have a close connection with Exning Parish; their addresses being Exning.

C. Community Organisations

The War Graves Commission, Exning Primary School and the Church Parish have not commented on the proposal.

D. Affected Local Electors

Electors at four properties directly affected by the proposal were consulted. Five

electors, living in three of the properties, responded; all in support of the recommendation. This represents the support of 75% of the affected properties and 71% of the affected electors.

Two responses included the following comments:

1. "It makes good sense"
2. "We have been living at the property for over 12 years and have always considered the house to be part of Exning Village. Our 3 boys go to Exning School and we have an Exning Address. We would be delighted for the boundary to be changed to reflect this"

E. Exning Residents

A resident of Exning Parish wrote to indicate they were in full favour of the recommendation.

Options for Councillors to Consider

To assist in the conduct of the meeting, draft motions for the various options are set out below, in no order of importance/preference:

A: Adopt Recommendation

That the final recommendation for Issue 1 (Exning/Newmarket) be adopted as the outcome of this CGR, and the boundary between the two parishes be amended accordingly, as set out in the consultation map in Appendix A to this report.

Or

B: Amend the Recommendation

That the final recommendation for Issue 1 (Exning/Newmarket), as set out in Appendix A to this report, be adopted as the outcome of this CGR subject to the following amendment: [*describe amendment and reason for it – a revised map would also be included in the minutes of the meeting*]

Or

C: Reject the Recommendation (no change)

That there be no change to the current parish boundary between Exning and Newmarket parishes on the basis that [*insert reason for changing recommendation*].

No	Area or Properties Under Review	Parishes Directly Affected	Matter covered by final recommendation
2	Mildenhall Parish	Mildenhall	Whether or not (and how) the existing Parish of Mildenhall should be divided to create two parishes, each with its own parish council: a smaller Parish of Mildenhall and a new Parish of West Row.
Final Recommendation Used for Consultation, March to May 2017			
That there be no change to the current arrangements i.e. Mildenhall Parish stays as it is and a new parish for West Row is <u>not</u> created.			
Background Information for Recommendation			
<p>The proposal to include this matter in the CGR was made by the West Row Action Group which felt that West Row should have its own parish council in order to provide it with its own representation and to reflect its separate community identity.</p> <p>The reason for the CGR recommendation above is that the District Council felt that, given the significance of the change involved for all electors of Mildenhall Parish, it needed evidence of widespread local support to justify creating a new parish for West Row. Therefore, it agreed that it should be the 'status quo' position that was tested in the final stage of the review.</p> <p>However, in consulting on such a final recommendation, the Council made it clear to respondents what the alternative option and implications would be, since the Council can change its recommendation in the light of evidence received i.e. if significant support is expressed for a separate parish.</p> <p>The District Council's final recommendation for consultation would see West Row village and surrounding area (including Isleham Marina) remain within the existing Mildenhall Parish, and continue to be served by Mildenhall Parish Council. The area would continue to have its own West Row Ward within the Parish, with its own parish councillors. More information on the Parish Council can be found at: http://mildenhall.onesuffolk.net/ .</p> <p>The alternative option, as suggested by the Action Group, would be to create an entirely new and separate Parish for the West Row area, served by its own parish council. This would reduce the area of the current Mildenhall Parish, and therefore the proposal affects all electors in it.</p>			

Electorate Information

If a West Row Parish were to be created, its electorate would depend on its agreed boundaries (see next section). Furthermore, producing a five year electorate forecast ahead of adoption of a new Local Plan is not easy and any estimate must therefore be treated with caution ahead of determination of the relevant planning processes. Nonetheless, to assist respondents, **and as guidance only**, an indicative five year estimate of the electorate of the existing Parish of Mildenhall¹ would be:

Mildenhall Parish Ward(s)	Electorate forecast for 2022
Great Heath and Market	6240
West Row	1502

Alternative Option

If the recommendation is changed, and a new parish council is formed, then the District Council will need to determine:

- (a) the name of the new parish council;
- (b) the new parish boundary;
- (c) the number of councillors;
- (d) whether the new parish will be warded; and
- (e) an implementation date and election timetable thereafter (see covering report).

The minimum size of any new parish council for West Row would be 5 councillors, but 9 councillors would be consistent with several other large parishes in the District e.g. Exning with 1554 electors. By comparison, Mildenhall Parish Council currently comprises 15 councillors to represent the three wards of the Parish (and just under 7000 electors). Three of these parish councillors represent the West Row Ward (with the other two wards having six councillors each).

The boundary of any new parish would need to reflect a common community identity and support convenient and effective local government. Boundaries should also, where possible, be linked to recognisable ground features, particularly those which form natural boundaries themselves. The simplest way to create a new West Row Parish would be to use the three existing Mildenhall parish wards as 'building blocks'. This is because these are well-established and understood. This also avoids consequential changes to existing district or county arrangements. On this basis, a new West Row Parish could be formed entirely from the current West Row Ward of Mildenhall Parish. This would mean that any new parish councillors for West Row represented exactly the same area as the three existing Mildenhall parish councillors from the West Row Ward.

¹ This estimate reflects the current assessment of the five year supply of housing land in Forest Heath which was published in November 2016 and is available on the Council's website as part of the background papers for the Local Plan consultation. This indicative estimate also reflects the current impact of USVF residents on the electoral registers for Mildenhall Parish. The estimate is therefore subject to the completion of the relevant planning processes and future changes at both airbases.

Summary of Consultation

As set out in detail in the next section, opinion remains divided, albeit a large majority of the electors who responded to the consultation opposed the recommendation, and wished to see it changed so that a new parish council is formed. The Council must therefore decide if it now has enough evidence, in relation to the criteria for CGRs and local opinion, to justify a change to the current parish boundary.

No comments have been received to disagree with the suggestion (in the background information for the consultation pack) that any new parish could be coterminous with Mildenhall Parish Council's existing West Row Ward, with 9 councillors.

Responses During Consultation

As well as correspondence to elected representatives, community organisations and other stakeholders in the Parish, this issue was publicised by the Council on its website, through social media and via a press release. The Council also created an online response form which explained the two options available, with background information for each. Local publicity was also provided by those advocating the change.

In this context, responses received were as follows.

A. Mildenhall Parish Council

The formal response of the Parish Council is as follows:

Community Governance Review- Formal Consultation

Mildenhall Parish Council debated the subject at their full council meeting on 30th March 2017. Below is the collective response:

Mildenhall Parish Council has considered the proposal by some West Row Parishioners that there should be a separate Parish Council serving West Row.

The Council was of the mind that this is a decision for the residents of West Row and would not want to oppose or prevent such a move if it were demonstrably the will of a majority.

In the discussions, concern was expressed that some of the material promoting separation had given misleading information - for example about street lighting and cemetery provision - and the MPC would hope that every effort would be made to correct any misapprehensions.

The Parish Council has subsequently clarified, in light of the above, that it looks after the majority of street lights in West Row (with the County Council maintaining the rest), and pointed out that its role on planning applications is advisory to the district council, as a consultee, not the decision-taker. The cemetery is addressed in other consultation responses received, summarised below.

In addition to the Parish Council's formal response, a personal letter has been received from one of the existing parish councillors, which is included in section E below, as per the reporting protocol.

B. West Row Action Group

The submission of the Group is as follows:



WEST ROW ACTION GROUP



OUR SUBMISSION



OUR IDENTITY



SUBMISSION FROM WEST ROW ACTION GROUP

The 'West Row Action Group' was founded in response to a planning application submitted to Forest Heath District Council by The Waters Family, Pidgeon Developments and Suffolk County Council. The application was for a housing development that we feel threatens the very nature of our rural agricultural village.

In our struggle to defend our community against this threat, some of the problems about how we are represented have become part of what we have had to deal with. Villagers attended Mildenhall Parish in order to enlist our parishes support and take the first official step in opposing the application. This meeting was much more than a disappointment to the villagers it highlighted the point that there is a gulf between the village of West Row and Mildenhall Parish. As communities, we have little in common and as things are set up our representation is so small that we are effectively just a subordinate part of another towns parish. On returning to West Row, we decided that not only regarding this application but for the very practical reason that an urban community cannot be expected to legislate for the needs of what is a diverse rural community. We need to take control of our own affairs.

We know that West Row is a natural large rural parish and for just the practical reason of how to run a parish that includes the community in an active sense this is common sense.

Looking at the proposed parish, you will see that this is exactly what you would expect of a large rural parish. A village, with a large village hall, primary school, pre-school, shops, churches, chapels and a scattered rural community. If this process is about community cohesion it would be hard to find an instance where creating a parish would have a more positive role is sustaining a community.

There are many negatives we could point to in our history with Mildenhall Parish, their name being used to define our treasure! But this is about a rural active community asking for its identity and something that we can promote in a positive sense.

In the local plan consultation, village of the year and our resistance to the developers we have already proved that there is a community here with a real passion for our village and surrounding community. The situation regarding our parish representation we maintain is unsustainable and this review is probably our best chance to tidy things up and create a rural parish for our community and let Mildenhall have its town council.

We hope that you will see this logic of this change and the positive advantages of this rural agricultural parish.

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1986

VILLAGE AND FEN-WEST ROW

WEST ROW VILLAGE IS SITUATED ON THE EDGE OF THE FENS AMIDST SOME OF THE BEST AGRICULTURAL LAND IN EAST ANGLIA.

JUST INSIDE THE SUFFOLK BORDER, IT IS SOME 2 MILES FROM MILDENHALL, 15 MILES FROM BURY ST. EDMUNDS AND 25 MILES FROM CAMBRIDGE. IT IS SEPARATED FROM ITS NEIGHBOURING VILLAGE OF BECK ROW BY THE U.S.A.F. BASE - R.A.F. MILDENHALL

THE VILLAGE IS SOMEWHAT CUT OFF FROM THE MAIN ROAD SYSTEM AND IS VERY MUCH A RURAL COMMUNITY, MANY OF ITS OLD FAMILIES HAVING DEEP LINKS WITH THE PAST.

ITS WINDING, TWISTING ROADS ARE A FEATURE OF THE VILLAGE WHILE THE ROADS INTO THE FEN, MAINLY FARM TRACKS, ARE KNOWN AS DROVES.

Map of the area

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Ordnance Survey 100039117

1986



2011



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BLE FARMLAND - WEST ROW - 1986

THE PRIMARY SCHOOL - WEST ROW - 1986

MARKET GARDENING - WEST ROW - 1986

Written accounts from this D-block

Village And Fen-west Row	Farming - West Row
High Post Farm - West Row	Two Arable Farms - West Row
A Market Gardener-west Row	Drainage&irrigation West Row
Education - West Row	A Schoolgirl-1980-west Row
A Schoolgirl-1985-west Row	Local Government-west Row
The Post-office - West Row	The Village Shop - West Row
Farming Engineers-west Row	Morley's Coaches-west Row
Mildenhall Treasure-west Row	Archaeological Dig-west Row

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VILLAGE AND FEN-WEST ROW

WEST ROW VILLAGE IS SITUATED ON THE EDGE OF THE FENS AMIDST SOME OF THE BEST AGRICULTURAL LAND IN EAST ANGLIA.

JUST INSIDE THE SUFFOLK BORDER, IT IS SOME 2 MILES FROM MILDENHALL, 15 MILES FROM BURY ST. EDMUNDS AND 25 MILES FROM CAMBRIDGE. IT IS SEPARATED FROM ITS NEIGHBOURING VILLAGE OF BECK ROW BY THE U.S.A.F. BASE - R.A.F. MILDENHALL

THE VILLAGE IS SOMEWHAT CUT OFF FROM THE MAIN ROAD SYSTEM AND IS VERY MUCH A RURAL COMMUNITY, MANY OF ITS OLD FAMILIES HAVING DEEP LINKS WITH THE PAST.

ITS WINDING, TWISTING ROADS ARE A FEATURE OF THE VILLAGE WHILE THE ROADS INTO THE FEN, MAINLY FARM TRACKS, ARE KNOWN AS DROVES.

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VILLAGE LIFE - WEST ROW

"WE ARE VERY HAPPY LIVING HERE"

THIS IS THE RESPONSE ONE GETS FROM THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THIS AREA. IT IS A QUIET, FRIENDLY PLACE, WELL AWAY FROM THE MAIN HIGHWAYS BUT NOT CUT OFF FROM CIVILISATION. THERE IS A GREAT FEELING OF COMMUNITY HERE AND A PRIDE IN BELONGING. MANY OF THE FAMILIES HAVE STRONG TIES WITH THE AREA AND GO BACK FOR MANY GENERATIONS, AND THERE IS A SPIRIT OF DETERMINATION AND INDEPENDENCE. PRESSED TO ANSWER THE QUESTION "WHAT ARE THE DISADVANTAGES OF LIVING HERE?" MOST WILL REPLY THAT THE AEROPLANES ARE NOISY BUT YOU GET USED TO THEM AND ANYWAY THEY BRING JOBS!

CLASS 8, GREAT HEATH C.P.SCHOOL,
MILDENHALL, SUFFOLK.
JULY 1985

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MILDENHALL TREASURE-WEST ROW

NO SURVEY OF WEST ROW WOULD BE COMPLETE WITHOUT A REFERENCE TO THE MILDENHALL TREASURE WHICH IS HOUSED IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

IT WAS FOUND IN 1942 AT WEST ROW IN A FIELD BETWEEN WESTON DITCH AND THE GREEN. IT CONSISTS OF 34 PIECES OF VERY HIGH QUALITY SILVERWARE AND WAS PROBABLY BURIED BY ITS ROMAN OWNERS IN TROUBLED TIMES TOWARDS THE END OF THE ROMAN OCCUPATION.

THE TREASURE WAS UNEARTHED AFTER DEEP-PLOUGHING WHICH WAS INTRODUCED DURING THE WAR. IT WAS NOT UNTIL 4 YEARS AFTER ITS DISCOVERY THAT ITS VALUE WAS REALISED BY THE TWO MEN WHO FOUND IT.

DECLARED TREASURE TROVE BY AN INQUEST AT MILDENHALL IN 1946, IT WAS PUT ON PUBLIC DISPLAY THE SAME YEAR.

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LOCAL ISSUES - WEST ROW

PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH PLANNING AND HOUSING ARE THE USUAL ISSUES WHICH LOCAL COUNCILLORS HAVE TO TACKLE ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE THEY REPRESENT. IN PARTICULAR, NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS ARE VIEWED WITH A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF CONCERN, LEST THEY SPOIL THE QUIET ATMOSPHERE OF THE VILLAGE.

IN THE PAST, VILLAGERS HAVE CAMPAIGNED FOR A 30m.p.h. SPEED LIMIT, A CENTRAL WHITE LINE ON THE ROAD TO * MILDENHALL, AND THE RESHAPING OF A DANGEROUS ROAD JUNCTION. ALL HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL.

MANY LOCAL FARMERS VIEW WITH CONCERN DETERIORATING ROAD SURFACES, ESPECIALLY IN THE FENS, WHILE IN THE VILLAGE ITSELF SOME PEOPLE, NOTABLY THE ELDERLY, REGRET THE ALMOST COMPLETE LACK OF PAVEMENTS BORDERING THE ROADS.

C. Other Local Organisations

The Council wrote to the local churches, school and other organisations as part of the consultation, and received the following response from the West Row Baptist Church:

"Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposal to create a new local government Parish for West Row.

On behalf of West Row Baptist Church (Chapel), I would like to say that the proposal to create a separate Parish for West Row would be very

welcome indeed and we would like to vote for it.

You may or may not know, the Baptist Church is a Christian, Independent, Baptist denomination, Church. It is run solely by the active Church Members and has no interference from any overarching body. We are affiliated to the FIEC (Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches) but they are there purely to give advice when requested.

We are pleased to say that our Church has a thriving congregation and Membership with an average weekly attendance (including mid-week clubs etc) of over 200 persons.

As the vast majority of those attending use a car, the number of cars using the Church parking area is around 20 plus for each weekday meeting and 35 plus for each Sunday service.

In 2000, the church gave notice to Forest Heath District Council and the Mildenhall Parish Council, that the existing graveyard would be closed when it reaches a certain marker. That marker has now been reached and the graveyard is now closed to all new graves. The reason for closing the graveyard was twofold:

1) to ensure there was sufficient space left to accommodate all the cars of those visiting the premises.

2) to ensure there remained sufficient space to accommodate tents, bouncy castles, Bar-B-Q and serving areas etc during village outreach days for families and young people.

We have asked on more than one occasion if Mildenhall Parish could provide a separate burial ground in West Row, all to no avail as their stock answer is: "We have a burial ground in Mildenhall".

If West Row had its own Local Government Parish, at least the members of the West Row Parish could decide if a separate community graveyard should be provided."

D. Local Electors

By the close of consultation, 39 individual local residents had submitted comments. This represents around 3% of the current electorate of the West Row parish ward of Mildenhall Parish. The proposal affects the whole Parish, and its current electorate is just under 7000 electors.

Most respondents identified themselves as local residents or 'villagers' and four also indicated that, as well as being residents, they were members of West Row Action Group (3) or West Row Football Club (1).

Five respondents submitted more than one online response form. Where this occurred, they are counted only once in the statistics, and their recorded preference (if it differed) is taken to be the last one submitted before the deadline. However, all text comments made during the consultation are recorded below for completeness.

The map at the end of this report shows how comments were distributed evenly in West Row when plotted by post-code (please note that the dots on the map indicate the centre of a post-code, not a specific property).

36 (92.3%) of the respondents did not support the recommendation and wanted a parish council to be established. This represents the opinion of around 3% of the current electorate of West Row parish ward. Where provided, the comments of those against the recommendation were as follows (verbatim):

We desperately need to be represented with our own Parish Council to make our voice heard & help to secure growth in our village amongst other issues.

It betrays democracy and self-determination of the people within their own village. Smaller councils exist and therefore should be their own elected chamber with tax raising powers to meet the needs of its facilities. I also want Mildenhall to have Independence with a Mayor. But a mayor with no political affiliation but truly representative of Mildenhall as social inclusion has been destroyed by the wealth of political groups and evidence is supported by county election turnout in 2017. Time to bring changes to promote democracy for all villages and not a political agenda that parishes have become by the failings to include non-party members as chair or committee chairs.

West Row deserves a voice of its own.

Wording of the recommendation is a bit misleading I nearly voted against WR becoming its own Parish Council Would suggest that the votes are checked against the narrative. I think we in WR can and deserve to be independent - we are thriving and active.*

(*FHDC response: This check has been carried out as a matter of course because the legislation requires consultation to be framed around a definite recommendation. For reference, the two choices offered online were:

- I support this recommendation - West Row should continue to be represented by Mildenhall Parish Council
- I do not support this recommendation - West Row should have its own parish/parish council)

It is not in the best interests of residents.

I am 80 years old and feel that it is high time West Row was allowed to make her own decisions.

We as a village do not have independence to the larger town of Mildenhall, therefore we as a village aren't not receiving an independent consideration over the town. I have been a resident of this village 36 years of my 42 living years. We do not have a funded playground area as in Mildenhall. Services are not stretched to our village with due consideration that it needs. The recent social media public mocking made by members of our local council towards other pro-active West Row potential councillors also promotes the view that West Row is a village mocked by the whole of the Mildenhall Parish/Forest Heath District Council. I'm aware I do not fully

understand the control nor the powers that be within our Parish/council and whose roles are responsible for appointed services within our community. The fact that the recommendation is already to NOT recommend West Row to have its own Parish, given by this notice, highlights to me the allocation of giving West Row its own Parish shows there is a concern within the Mildenhall Parish that there will be monies lost to themselves to be allocated to West Row as its own Parish. Seeing the published figures of allocation of monies...this will result in Mildenhall Parish losing significant funding. Funding I believe a separate Parish of West Row would allocate more productively and effectively to its OWN village. Over time, using the monies more wisely, and in benefit to West Row directly will show our residents the village is for them.

West Row is West Row. It is not Mildenhall and does not need to be represented by that group. Especially when their decisions do not always reflect the thoughts of those living here in the village. Let us govern ourselves.

I do not believe that the Mildenhall Parish, as is, fairly represents issues within West Row due to the heavy bias of councillors in the Mildenhall area. The expense of the central employees is way beyond what a normal village council would be expected to underwrite. With any new initiatives, eg LED street lighting, Mildenhall always comes first it seems. We never have a breakdown of receipts and expenditure based on the areas of Mildenhall and West Row. This level of clarity would aid this decision.

I believe West Row has grown over the years into a thriving community, that needs to have its own specific representation not lumped into Mildenhall, I have been a resident for over 40 years and have seen how my village has changed, and I think we should be able to have our own individual say in local matters.

West Row needs its own, local, representation, and a Parish Precept based on taking care of West Row, not Mildenhall's, needs. It is obvious that, with small number of residents in West Row, their needs and wishes will be subservient to those of the greater populace of Mildenhall. Also, the Parish Precept paid by residents of West Row should be the far smaller amount actually needed for West Row, not for the more expensive upkeep of Mildenhall.

I fully support West Row having its own parish council. We are a proactive, progressive village who need councillors who understand the issues faced by the village. At the moment our representatives are outnumbered and as such we have no voice on Mildenhall parish council.

As a growing community I and many people I speak to think its time like many villages to have our own parishes so that we can have more say in the future of our lovely village. And with so many organisations in our village we help to make them grow with our own funds e.g. allotments. Mildenhall takes 4, 000 pounds a year or more and not a penny spent on improvements.

I believe the interests of our village would be better met by people who are interested in the maintenance and improvement of our rural way of life. I

believe the growth of the village is better served by those who live here and understand it. I do not feel representatives at local government level have viewed the village as a lone entity but always as a suburb of Mildenhall. We do not feel this way. Those who have ably supported our views on the parish council are often undermined and looked down upon by those who do not or no longer live here yet serve ours and Mildenhall's interests.

In view of the fact that West Row is a substantial rural community with both village and fen dwellings, shops, a church ,chapels and village and church halls. It is not practical for us to be a ward of what is an urban town council. There is very little that we have in common with Mildenhall and our interests often conflict. Only being able to send three councillors to a much larger council at Mildenhall means that our community is constantly out voted. In order for our community to thrive and have a sense of its own identity and for the practical reason that a council needs to be in its own community things cannot remain as they are.

West Row only has three Parish Councillors as against seven for Mildenhall and are therefore consistently out voted by Mildenhall. West Row is a happy, settled and picturesque community which is constantly dictated to by the urban requirements of the larger town of Mildenhall and eventually by Bury St Edmunds if the latest proposals for BSE to take over full control of Forest Heath District Council goes ahead. West Suffolk Council are already dictating planning requirements on West Row that are for city developments not suited to village life so if the takeover goes ahead West Row "Village" will eventually disappear completely. So the only way we can preserve our village identity and way of life is to have our own Parish Council that will make decision in the best interests of West Row.

West Row has an active community, one which warrants being able to prove its importance and independence from Mildenhall, much like many other small villages around this town. There are active groups, organisations and people all willing to prove that this community can be responsible for certain local government issues itself.

West Row is a growing vibrant community village in and of itself. It is logical that it should have the ability to directly answer for and be responsible for aspects directly relating to its existence.

West Row Action Group are committed to ensuring the nature of our village is not dominated by large housing development and the input as a 'Stand Alone' Parish Council is vital as part of this process.

I no longer feel my views are best supported by those representatives on Mildenhall parish council. I also feel as a village we can self-govern our own issues and parish needs. As a unique rural village with an extensive history and thriving community, I feel our interests are often viewed as Mildenhall interests, and not those of a village with little interest in joining together as a suburb of the town that governs us.

West Row village has a long history with her residents playing a strong part in all local happenings. The best people to make decisions on behalf of the villagers are the villagers themselves. It is not through a hatred of the town parish council that I make this objection but through a wish for the

residents of West Row to be able to stand alone and make their own decisions about issues that relate to the village. You state that we do not have the experience to be able to run our own council but the same can be said of a country which hasn't stood alone since the early 70s but that hasn't stopped the voice of the people being heard. There are enough people in West Row with the skills needed for us to follow the example of Beck Row and build a successful council.*

(*FHDC response: this was not stated by FHDC in any of its review materials; FHDC's only position has been to seek evidence of public support for or against the recommendation and provide supporting background information to assist consultees.)

Three (7.7%) of the respondents supported the recommendation (i.e. not creating a new parish council). One made the following comment:

It adds an unnecessary local authority and will not give local people any more say on things like planning, which is what WRAG is really concerned about.

E. Local elected representatives

The following letter has been received from an existing Mildenhall parish councillor:

I have been a parish councillor for the West Row ward of Mildenhall Parish Council for 38 years, so I know how much work there is in running a council.

West Row is large enough to be a parish council on its own, but finance is a huge issue. Mildenhall Parish Council pays for over 130 street lights in West Row, it also maintains the grass at the playing field and the Church Green, and the War Memorial. It pays for the children's play equipment to be inspected every month.

A parish clerk would have to be employed and possibly a new cemetery provided.

There is a lot of financial issues which should have been discussed.

So, in my opinion, West Row is better served staying in the parish of Mildenhall.

In addition, the online response form was completed by a Lakenheath Parish Councillor, who opposed the recommendation, commenting:

"As a strong believer in localism and the devolution of political power I think if enough people in West Row want to have their own council they should be allowed to have one."

A response was also received from a Forest Heath District Councillor (representing a ward not affected by the proposal) supporting the recommendation and commenting:

"There is a lack of a clear vision or reason for creating a new parish for West Row, that cannot be fulfilled under the present arrangement."

Options for Councillors to Consider

To assist in the conduct of the meeting, draft motions for the various options are set out below, in no order of importance/preference:

A: Adopt Recommendation (status quo)

That the final recommendation for Issue 2 (Mildenhall and West Row) be adopted as the outcome of this CGR, namely that there be no change to the current arrangements i.e. Mildenhall Parish stays as it is and a new parish for West Row is not created.

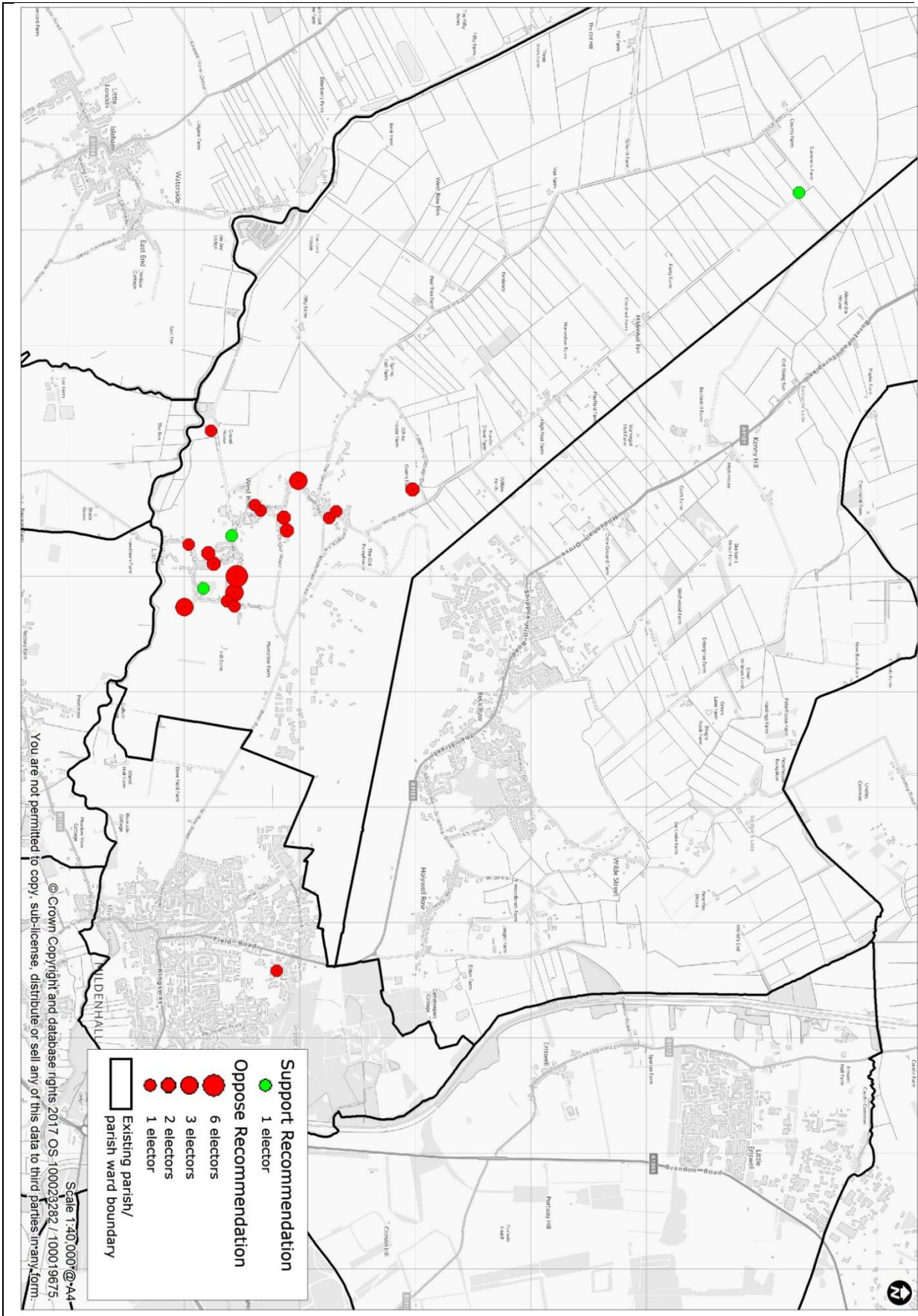
Or

B: Amend the Recommendation (create new parish council)

That, on the basis that [*insert reason for changing recommendation*], a new parish of West Row be created from the existing West Row parish ward of Mildenhall Parish, with the same boundary, and the Parish be served by a Parish Council with nine councillors and no wards.

Map of Consultation results

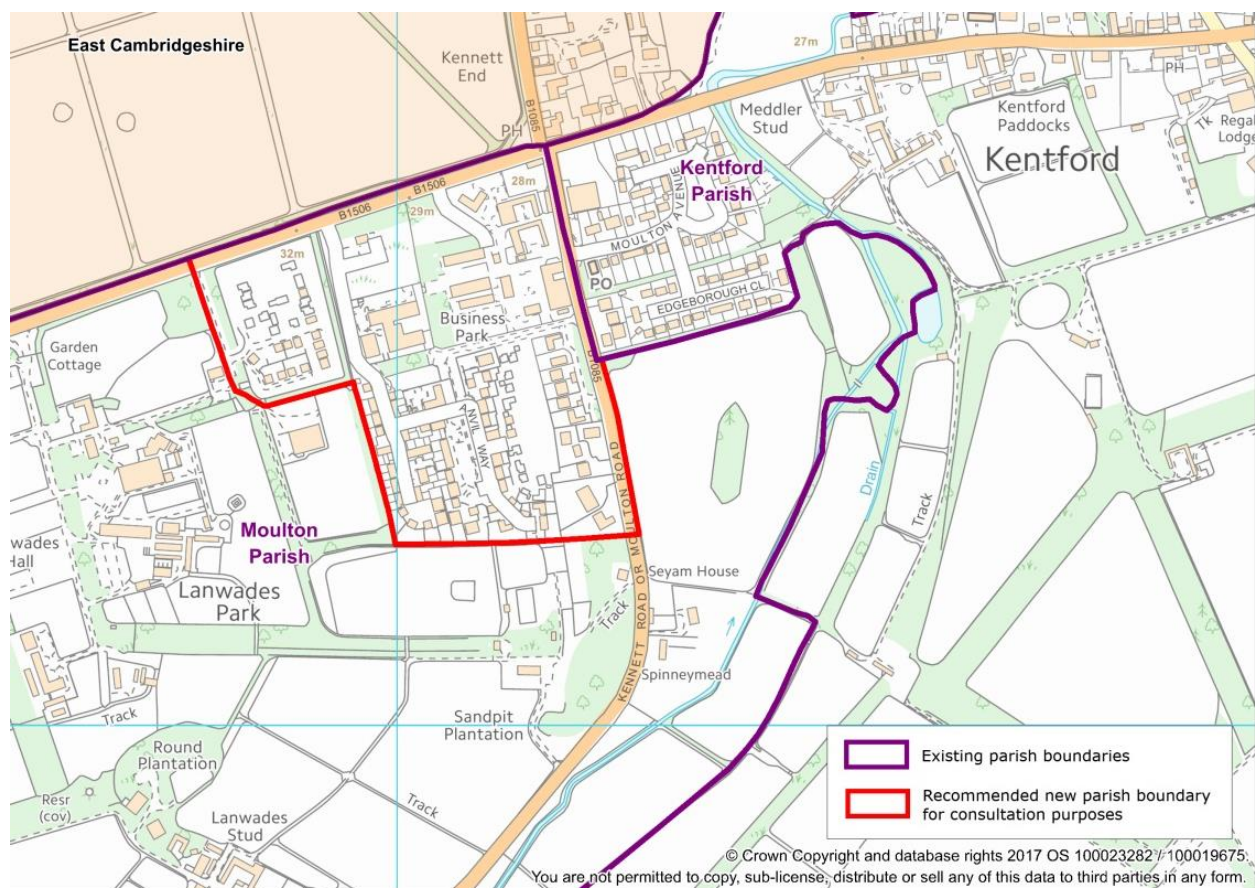
The map overleaf shows responses to the consultation by local electors by postcode (the dots show the centre of a postcode not a specific property). Red dots *opposed* the recommendation to maintain the status quo and can be read as showing support for the creation of a new parish council for West Row.



No	Area or Properties Under Review	Parishes Directly Affected	Matter covered by final recommendation
3	Properties to the north of Moulton Parish at or in the vicinity of the Farrier's Grange and Lambert Grove developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Kentford •Moulton 	Whether or not (and how) new and existing properties to the north of Moulton Parish should be transferred to Kentford Parish.

Final Recommendation Used for Consultation, March to May 2017

The boundary of Kentford Parish be extended to include properties at or in the vicinity of the 'Farrier's Grange' and 'Lambert Grove' developments, as shown on the consultation map below.



Background Information for Recommendation

The reason for the recommendation was that, subject to local preference being established through the consultation, it potentially provides more appropriate parish boundaries and local government arrangements to reflect the identities and interests of local residents.

The proposal to include this matter in the CGR was made by Kentford Parish Council. Kentford Parish Council and Moulton Parish Council have both indicated that it should be for residents to decide which parish their properties should be in.

The proposed new boundary is shown on the consultation map above. This option simply seeks to transfer the two recent housing developments from Moulton Parish to Kentford Parish. Therefore the views of those electors would be critical to any final decision made in the CGR.

Depending on the outcome of the review, there may be a need to review the size of

each of the parish councils i.e. number of councillors. While no change in this regard has been formally recommended by the District Council, comments on this matter were invited from respondents as part of this consultation.

There would not be any consequential impacts arising from this recommendation since both parishes are already in the same district ward and county division.

Electorate Information:

Estimating the future electorates of the two parishes is obviously dependent on the decision in this CGR regarding boundaries. Furthermore, producing a five year electorate forecast ahead of adoption of a new Local Plan is not easy and any estimate must therefore be treated with caution ahead of determination of the relevant planning processes. Nonetheless, to assist respondents, **and as guidance only**, an indicative five year estimate of the electorates of the two parishes² is:

Parish	Electorate forecast for 2022: Current boundaries	Electorate forecast for 2022: Recommended change in CGR
Moulton	1121	877
Kentford	605	849

Alternative Options

The Council can change its recommendation in the light of evidence received during the consultation. Alternatives to the recommendation *include*:

1. No change i.e. the properties remain in Moulton Parish; or
2. Alternative boundary changes which allow other properties in the vicinity to be transferred to Kentford Parish as well. When the Council considered the terms of reference of the review earlier in the year, it looked at several possible options, some of which are referred to in consultation responses (see map overleaf). However, only one of these options (option 2) was recommended for consultation, in accordance with the CGR rules. There are clearly multiple other options possible for adjusting the boundary in the vicinity.

² This estimate reflects the current assessment of the five year supply of housing land in Forest Heath which was published in November 2016 and is available on the Council's website as part of the background papers for the Local Plan consultation. This indicative estimate also reflects the current impact of USVF residents on the two electoral registers. The estimate is therefore subject to the completion of the relevant planning processes and future changes at both airbases.

A. Moulton Parish Council

The Parish Council has advised the Council as follows:

"I understand that some of the Councillors at Kentford have had a change of heart and are now supporting Option 3. I am emailing you to confirm that Moulton PC's views remain unchanged and stand as per [the Chairman's] email dated 20th Feb. We would support either Option 1 or 2, and any changes must concur with the views of the residents.

We have been approached by several in the Option 3 area who do have strong links with Moulton village and certainly they do not wish to see any change. I believe a similar view was put to [the Chairman of Kentford PC] when he visited some of these residents."

B. Kentford Parish Council

In supporting "Option 3", Kentford Parish Council has advised as follows:

"At the Parish Meeting held on Thursday 11 May I summarised and counted the return of the questionnaires sent out by the Kentford Parish Council regarding the options for the boundary change at Kentford/Moulton.

The vote was overwhelming for Option 3. This is the residents' decision as well as the Parish Council.

I do hope you will seriously take into consideration the decision and wishes of the Kentford Parish Council and the residents when deliberating the boundary change."

The Parish Council has also supplied details of its own questionnaire, the text of which was as follows (excluding map, which is the same as the one earlier in this report):

Dear Local Resident,

Kentford Parish Council have requested that the boundaries of its Parish should be reconsidered to better reflect the changing face of Kentford village, enabling the better representation for the village residents.

In response, the District Council have begun a consultation. You may well have seen their paperwork (delivered to certain parts of the village) and be planning to respond.

Kentford Parish Council would like to hear your views on the matter so we can represent your collective wishes. Ultimately, if there are any changes to boundaries, it is dependent on the views of residents. We need to submit Kentford Parish Council's opinion in early May, and, to do so, we need to understand your thoughts to direct our decision. The Council have discussed the matter at length (please see map of some potential boundary options overleaf), and in summary:

Option 1 – No change to boundaries. We believe that the present boundaries mean a large part of Kentford village would remain outside the Parish of Kentford.

Option 2 – Extending Kentford Parish to include Jeddah Way/Farrier Mews area (includes Lanwades Business Park and some residences on Moulton Road – see map). This brings all the new housing developments, which are in the village of Kentford, into the parish of Kentford. This is currently the option recommended by the District Council (as it can only consult on one option under the rules).

Option 3 – Further extending to include Lanwades Park / Animal Health Trust and additional residences on Moulton Road (see map) We recognise that houses in this area do have historic links with Moulton, but their location gives them a natural connection with the village of Kentford.

Option 4 – Further extending the boundary to include outlying properties (see map). We recognise that this area is midway between the villages and is currently much more strongly linked to Moulton.

Initially, Kentford Parish Council were comfortable with the consultation using Option 2. However, on further reflection and in balance, we are minded to support Option 3, whereby all dwellings within Kentford village will be represented by Kentford Parish Council. However, it is the views of both the residents of the affected areas and the existing Parish that are important in the decision making process and we are particularly keen to hear from you, so that the correct decision is made which reflects how you feel about community identity.

Please indicate below your preferred option, feel free to add your comments below / overleaf / via email. Although not necessary, your name & address (eg Miss B, Anvil Way) may help us gauge localised opinion:-

It is understood that the form was distributed to all villagers, as well as to those in Moulton affected by the review. The Council does not know how many of the respondents also took part in its own consultation (although some overlap is likely).

The Parish Council has indicated that 21 of 29 responses to their survey (72.4%) supported them in advocating "option 3" (see earlier map).

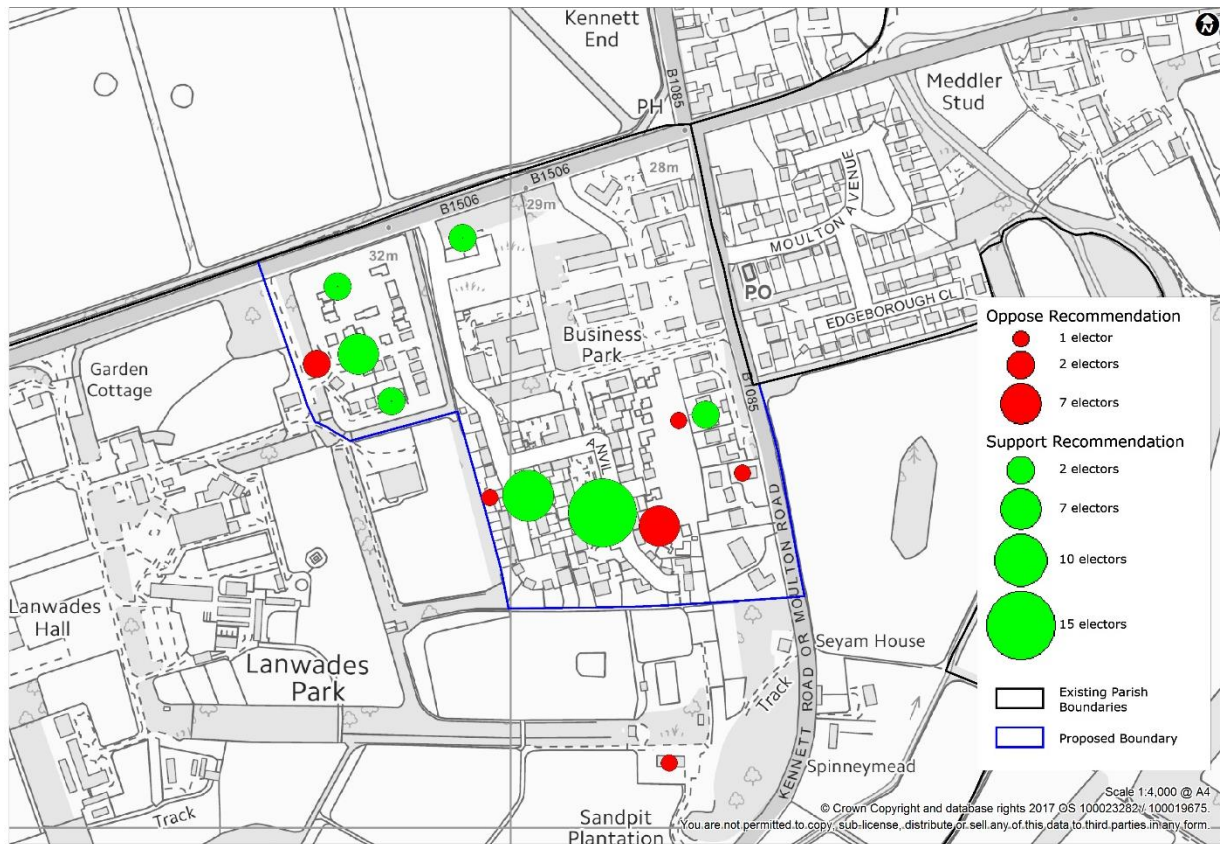
C. Local electors

Letters were sent by the Council to 190 residential properties and 44 businesses in the area covered by the original boundary options 2-4 (see map above). No businesses responded (which is not uncommon in a CGR). In this letter, a single boundary proposal (the Council's recommendation) was indicated, as per the CGR rules. However, it was made clear that other options had been considered, and how to view information on these.

The Council received responses from 53 electors to its own consultation, which represents the views of around 25% of the households directly affected by the

Council's recommended option.

The map below shows how these responses were balanced and distributed (NB the circles show the centre of a postcode, not a specific property).



40 (75.5%) respondents supported the Council's recommendation. Those that commented on their reasons, said the following:

It makes more sense for our house to be associated with Kentford than Moulton

I would also support options 3 or 4 to move the border beyond Lanwades Park as a logical decision. Additionally, the Council should consider changing our postal address from Kennett to Kentford as we are two miles from Kennett village and it would eliminate confusion from delivery drivers and visitors.

I support the principle of being part of the parish with direct paths and links to my property. However one of the considerations for living where we do was the fact that our daughter would be going to Moulton School as we live within the parish. If the boundary change will affect the chances of her obtaining a place at Moulton School then I am not in favour of the change. I also think whatever the boundary the parishes should work closely on local amenities e.g. footpaths, for the benefit of the whole area.*

[*FHDC response: This issue is raised in several responses, particularly those who opposed the recommendation. There is no evidence that CGRs affect school catchments. Specifically, the admissions policy on the website of Moulton CEVC Primary School states explicitly that: "Our catchment area covers Moulton, Gazeley, Dalham, Desningham, Higham, Needham Street, Kentford and Kennett End. We also welcome applications from those living outside the

catchment area. Suffolk Local Education Authority is responsible for admission to Moulton Primary School.”]

We believe that Farrier’s Grange should have been put in Kentford Parish Council from the start as all indicators show us to be part of Kentford and not the distant Moulton.

We have lived at this address since May 2013. We have always been confused by the parish boundaries feeling a natural and proximate relationship with the parish of Kentford. However, to vote we are required to travel to Moulton. Our nearest shop and pubs are in Kentford, the only access to Moulton is by car or bus. There is no footpath to the village we are supposed to be within. However we can easily walk to Kentford's shop and pubs.

We strongly support the recommendation as we feel part of the village of Kentford and it would be nice to have the parish boundary reflect this.

It is a logical and sensible solution.

Hopefully Kentford Parish Council would be more responsive in dealing with residents' concerns such as footpaths and unkempt areas of land on these two developments. Moulton Parish Council is no longer interested in our concerns.

When I first arrived we were or I was considered Kentford which made sense as I use Kentford roads, Kentford pub, Kentford for walks and rarely go to Moulton. Use Kentford post office. I do not have children but was told they would go to Moulton. Two years ago this all changed to paying Moulton fees which was strange as it is so far away. Bless them, Moulton people said Moulton pub was our local but how or even why you would walk to Moulton for a drink!! Let alone how dangerous the roads. Borrow a horse maybe!! I think us being part of Kentford would benefit especially in regards to the village life, village hall etc and plus our council tax would benefit a village we use rather than a village we don't use.

The Farrier’s Grange development totally lacks identity. We are divorced from and feel no sense of community with Moulton. However we are physically part of Kentford and therefore it makes perfect sense to effect the change.

As I spoke on the phone, I live in Kentford not Moulton. I stand by what I said at the meeting. Moulton had our money to finish off their hall. Great for them.

I support this because: The school on my current radius is in Moulton but no walkways are possible from Lambert Grove to Moulton. This switch would also mean having a better selection of schools for our new baby.

Larnach Drive is within walking distance of Kentford post office, the Bell Inn, The Kentford and the parish church. It is obviously part of Kentford not Moulton. When I bought this property the address was Kentford not Moulton.

Moulton is much further away from us than Kentford. We don't have a footpath to Moulton - so surely we need to be within Kentford which is the

nearest village - and where we can at home and have an identity and be involved.

13 (24.5%) respondents opposed the recommendation, although it should be noted that 4 of these 13 electors cited admission to the Moulton primary school as their main or partial reason. As explained above, the School's current admissions policy already covers Kentford as well as Moulton. Those that provided comments (some comments cover the views of more than one elector) stated:

Lanwades House stands on the crossroads at the end point of 3 villages - Kennett End, Kentford End and Moulton End. In the 19th Century Lanwades House was a farm. All land around it at Moulton End including what is now AHT was part of the farm. The farm was called Moulton End Farm. This house is the last outpost of the village of Moulton. It is Grade II Listed and of great historical significance. It must never be scooped up at a whim and placed inside a boundary purposefully made to make up the numbers. It is part of Moulton's history and has been on this site since the 16th century. We have previously objected when approached and thought this was an end to all this nonsense.

In the absence of any specific benefit I feel Moulton Parish has served us well and support matters are left as they are i.e. Alternative option 1.

I support this recommendation on the proviso that this boundary change is clearly stated and taken into consideration when all residents in the properties under consideration with current children under schooling age have to make their elections/preferences for which primary school they wish their child to go to. All residents purchased their property in the knowledge that it was in Moulton Parish Council, where most have therefore elected for their child to go to Moulton Primary School as it is in the parish. From a fairness perspective it is only fair that these residents are still considered to be in the parish of Moulton if they elect for any of their current children under school age to attend Moulton Primary School, especially as most of their older friends living in the same area will be at Moulton Primary School.

Moulton Parish Council are trying to gain funding to put a footpath onto the B1085 between our estate and Moulton School which our children along with many from the estate attend. This road is dangerously busy to walk or cycle along, something we would like to do. Moulton Parish are committed to maintaining pressure on FHDC to allocate funds to achieve this. I would prefer to maintain our connection with Moulton as a result of this.

Prefer to remain in Moulton Parish

A major factor in moving to the area was to be part of the Moulton school catchment. Thus enabling both our children to have a good chance of our preferred school. Primary school places are difficult in the areas and unfortunately the good schools are not in abundance.

I'm not sure I can agree that changes to the boundaries would reflect the identities and interests of local residents or what this actually means. I certainly can't agree that is makes for a good reason to alter existing and established boundaries. I also question the accuracy of the electorate

forecasts given for 2022. With two new large developments in the Kentford Parish (that we are already aware of) and none in the Moulton Parish. I can't see how these figures have been calculated. For these reasons I believe it would be misguided to move the Parish boundaries from their current locations.

Would love to stay as Moulton as my daughter in the school and use Moulton more than Kentford. Plus use local Moulton hall.

A resident of Kentford village wrote to the Council separately as follows:

"I would like to formally register my preference for Option 4 with regard to the Kentford/Moulton CGR. The AHT associates with Kentford and it would therefore make sense to bring the majority of the AHT site within the parish. Second preference is for Option 3. Finally Option 2. It would seem illogical to persist the current situation of developments within the village boundary 'belonging' to a different parish (namely Farriers Grange and Kings Chase)."

Options for Councillors to Consider

To assist in the conduct of the meeting, draft motions for the various options are set out below, in no order of importance/preference:

A: Adopt Recommendation ("Option 2" in the terms of reference report)

That the final recommendation for Issue 3 (Kentford/Moulton) be adopted as the outcome of this CGR, namely the boundary of Kentford Parish be extended to include properties at or in the vicinity of the 'Farrier's Grange' and 'Lambert Grove' developments, as set out in the main consultation map in Appendix A to this report.

Or

B: Amend the Recommendation ("Option 3", "Option 4" or an alternative boundary change)

That the final recommendation for Issue 3 (Kentford/Moulton), as set out in Appendix A to this report, be adopted as the outcome of this CGR subject to the following amendment: the new boundary of Kentford Parish be further extended to follow the line of "Option [*insert number*]" as set out on the map contained in Council paper COU/FH/17/006 (22 February 2017) on the basis that [*insert reason for changing recommendation*].

[NB: A revised map would also be included in the minutes of the meeting]

Or

C: Reject the Recommendation (no change or original "Option 1")

That there be no change to the current parish boundary between Kentford and Moulton parishes on the basis that [*insert reason for changing recommendation*].

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Council



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	Response to Network Rail's Proposed Suffolk Level Crossing Reduction Order	
Report No:	COU/FH/17/015	
Report to and date/s:	Council	14 June 2017
Portfolio holder:	Councillor Lance Stanbury Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth Tel: 07970 947704 Email: lance.stanbury@forest-heath.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Sara Noonan Principal Growth Officer Tel: 01284 757 358 Email: sara.noonan@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	<p>The purpose of this report is to recommend to Full Council that an objection is formally lodged towards Network Rail's Suffolk Level Crossing Reduction Order (Transport and Works Order Act 1992, Transport and Works [Applications and Objections Procedure] [England and Wales] Rules 2006), which seeks to close the stop, look and listen at grade pedestrian crossing at Weatherby, Newmarket. Network Rail proposes that users would need to cross the railway by using the railway underpass at The Avenue/New Cheveley Road to the west. This means walking along the existing footways along The Avenue, New Cheveley Road, Green Road and Granary Road.</p> <p>The Department of Transport consulted on the closure of this at grade pedestrian crossing at Weatherby, which is a permissive footpath – i.e. no definitive public rights of way exist at this location. The pedestrian crossing goes over the Ipswich to Cambridge train line linking the All Saints ward and the Parish of Cheveley with the wards of Severals and St Mary's.</p>	

	<p>A letter was sent to the Department of Transport on 4 May 2017 from Cllr Stanbury as Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth setting out that the council objected and the reasons for the objection. The Department of Transport sent Cllr Stanbury a letter dated 4 May 2017 asking if the letter of objection had been ratified by the Council.</p> <p>This report seeks that ratification.</p>
Recommendation:	<p>It is recommended that the Council ratifies the letter of objection previously sent to the Department for Transport dated 4 May 2017, as contained in Appendix B to Report No: COU/FH/17/015 and therefore making a valid objection to Network Rail's proposed Transport and Works Act 1992 (Suffolk Level Crossing Reduction) Order.</p>
Key Decision:	<p><i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See body of report below
Alternative option(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See body of report below
Implications:	
<p>Are there any financial implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Are there any staffing implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Are there any ICT implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Are there any legal and/or policy implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As required by the Transport and Works Act (TWA) 1992, a statutory notice setting out the Borough Council's intended objection to the proposed closure of the pedestrian rail crossing at Cattishall was published in the press on 26 May 2017. • Ratification of objection sought by full Council to accord with TWA (Applications and Objections Procedure) (England and Wales) Procedure Rules, as set out in Appendix C
<p>Are there any equality implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
	Not applicable		Not applicable
Ward(s) affected:		All Saints, Severals and St Mary's	
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>			
Documents attached:		Appendix A – Original Consultation document by Network Rail Appendix B – Letter sent from Cllr Stanbury to the Department of Transport Appendix C – Letter sent from the Department of Transport to Cllr Stanbury	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

- 1.1 Following consultation by Network Rail it was agreed to consult with Members in the Wards (All Saints, Severals and St Mary's) affected with the final formal Council response coming from the Cabinet Member for Planning and Growth. That consultation was sent out on 31 March 2017 and sought a response by 17 April 2017. Within this email a link to the Network Rail consultation was attached and the two page consultation document is attached now at Appendix A.
 - 1.1.1 Councillor Robin Millar's (Ward Member for All Saints) response to the consultation on 31 March 2017 was incorporated into the response to the Department of Transport and with no other comments received by Officers concerning this matter it was considered that the issues raised by Officers sufficiently covered the necessary matters, and to object to the Department of Transport.
 - 1.1.2 As such a letter was sent from the Cabinet Member for Planning and Growth (Councillor Lance Stanbury) on 4 May 2017 to the Department of Transport and that letter is attached at Appendix B.
 - 1.1.3 An immediate response from the Department of Transport was sent to Councillor Stanbury (see Appendix C) asking for the decision to object to the proposal to be ratified by Full Council if that had not already occurred. This paper now seeks that ratification. The issues and reasons for the objection are fully set out in the original letter from Councillor Stanbury in Appendix B.

Anglia

Level Crossing Proposals

S22 – Weatherby

Newmarket Parish – Permissive Footpath

Network Rail has been working hard to better manage its level crossings and the risks they pose, and has developed proposals for the possible closure or change to public rights of way at over 130 of its level crossings in Anglia. Closing or modifying level crossings can help to bring about a number of benefits:

- Improve the safety of level crossing users
- Deliver a more efficient and reliable railway, which is vital in supporting the regional and UK economy
- Reduce the ongoing operating and maintenance cost of the railway
- Reduce delays to trains, pedestrians and other highway users
- Improve journey time reliability for all railways, highway and other rights of way users



The level crossings in this initial phase of the Anglia Level Crossing Reduction Strategy do not include any new bridges or underpasses, and offer benefits which are currently affordable and deliverable.

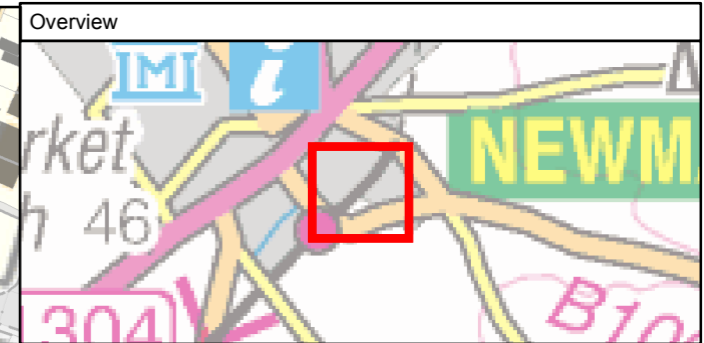
Weatherby is one of the level crossings in Suffolk County. It is located in Newmarket Parish and has the postcode CB8 8BT. This is a stop, look and listen level crossing where the user has to decide whether it is safe to cross. The crossing is a permissive footpath – ie no definitive public rights of way exist at this location. The railway at this crossing carries passenger and freight trains. A photograph of the crossing is shown above.

Our proposed change: Is to close the level crossing to all users. To cross the railway the following is currently proposed (shown on the drawing overleaf):

Red Route - Users would need to cross the railway by using the railway underpass at The Avenue/New Cheveley Road to the west. This means walking along the existing footways along The Avenue, New Cheveley Road, Green Road and Granary Road.

This summary sheet and a questionnaire are available at the public exhibitions and on the project website at: www.networkrail.co.uk/anglialevelcrossings. Please complete the separate questionnaire using the level crossing identification number **S22** and your feedback will be considered before the proposals are finalised.

To contact our team, please email us at: anglialevelcrossings@networkrail.co.uk or phone the helpline: **03457 11 41 41**. We thank you for your time and providing your comments on the Anglia Level Crossing Proposals.



Level crossing being discussed

A solid line indicates a proposed new Public Right of Way (type to be determined).
 Other line types using the above route option colours indicate use of existing Public Rights of Way.
 Right of way extinguishments are still to be determined and are not shown for clarity given multiple options.

Existing Public Rights of Way

- Footpath
 - Bridleway
 - Restricted byway
 - Byway open to all traffic
 - Highway (where used)
- If this line is in a colour, this denotes use by a route option (see above).

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 Kendell Street
 Leeds
 LS10 1JR
 United Kingdom
 +44 (0)113 3946700

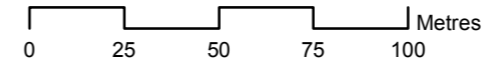
Anglia LX Consultation Stage 1

S22 - Weatherby
 Suffolk
 Newmarket CP

P3	07/06/2016	Revised Format	WC	-	SJP	JAS
P2	20/01/2016	NR Comments	WC	-	SJP	JAS
P1	16/10/2015	For Information	WC	-	SJP	JAS
Rev	Date	Description	Dwn	E Chk	Ch'k'd	App'd

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Scale at A3
 1:2,000

Drawing No.
 MMD-367516-S22-GEN-002



Email: Lance.Stanbury@forest-heath.gov.uk

Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP
Secretary of State for Transport c/o
Transport and Works Act Orders Unit
General Counsel's Office
Department for Transport - Zone 1/18
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Date: 4 May 2017

Dear Sir

**The Proposed Network Rail (Suffolk Level Crossing Reduction) Order
Transport and Works Act 1992
The Transport and Works (Applications and Objections Procedure) (England
and Wales) Rules 2006**

I am writing on behalf of Forest Heath District Council in response to Network Rail's proposed Suffolk Level Crossing Reduction Order. Forest Heath District Council remains broadly supportive of improved services, faster line speeds, better connectivity and Network Rail's ambitions behind the level crossing closure programme. However, we object to the closure of level crossing S22 Weatherby on the following grounds:

1. **Community impact**

Unlike many closures in the Suffolk order which are in the countryside, this crossing is located near the centre of Newmarket with a population of 20,300 (2011 census). A large number of Newmarket residents use the crossing (up to 506 pedestrians at the weekend and an average of 408 a day according to Network Rail's recent census). The crossing is used heavily by pedestrians from the south. Therefore, closure would be extraordinarily disruptive for residents, local schools, the GP surgery, public services and the town's main retail offers, which are all to the north of the railway line.

Likewise the football club located just south of the railway line is a big draw for pedestrians from the town heading south across the rail line for matches, training days and other social events.

Residents have already lobbied local councilors to keep the crossing open or find an alternative solution. Talks have already begun with Network Rail to achieve this, but have not reached a firm conclusion.

In addition the crossing, as mentioned above, links some of the main leisure facilities. The Council is concerned that the more barriers put in place to prevent people accessing such facilities the less chance of people using them and therefore harming national and local aims of improving physical and mental health.

2. Acceptability of proposed diversion

The proposed diversion using existing roads is considered unacceptable due to the length and steepness of the route, which disadvantages those with disabilities, the elderly and parents of small children. If residents cannot cross the railway line then the journey will be longer and walking will become significantly less attractive leading to more trips by car and adding to congestion within Newmarket. Equally this may put some people off altogether from accessing vital services or facilities that are crucial for continued wellbeing. We are unclear as to how Network Rail has taken into consideration the feedback from both phases of public consultation regarding the proposed diversion.

3. Level of risk

Regarding the level of risk associated with this crossing it is noted that:

- a. the crossing is over a single track line.
- b. an hourly rail service serves this line
- c. the crossing is located approximately 400 metres from Newmarket Railway Station meaning trains are slowing on the approach
- d. there are no plans presently for increased or faster services on this line within Network Rail's control period 6 (2019-2024)
- e. there is no rail freight in operation on this section of the line due to the constraints at Warren Hill tunnel
- f. when comparing recorded incidents against usage figures, there has been 1 incident in over 100,000 uses of this level crossing

4. Public right of way

Whilst this crossing is not a public right of way, it has been in longstanding and frequent use (an average of 408 people per day according to Network Rail's recent census). It is significant that Network Rail has maintained it as such for many years and is now including it within the necessary process for closing a public right of way.

5. Mitigation instead of closure

The proposal to address the risk – closure – is not the only option available to Network Rail. Alternative measures could include:

- a. extending the braking zone by a few hundred metres
- b. including warning sounds and lights at the pedestrian crossing

- c. introducing automatic locking gates for the crossing
- d. a better diversion route (a new path along the southern edge of the track bed westwards toward the railway bridge has been previously discussed with Network Rail). This option would be considerably less expensive than a footbridge and more convenient than the proposed diversion route.

Prior to submission of the Order, discussions with Network Rail were progressing. These talks aimed to defer the closure of the crossing, while developing a medium to long term closure plan linked to and triggered by heavier usage of the railway line. This was specifically linked to the introduction of twice hourly Ipswich to Cambridge services as noted in Network Rail's, *Anglia Route Strategy WACO7*.

We would like to work with Network Rail to review this level crossing taking into consideration short term maintenance, safety upgrade options, the development of alternative diversion routes and the aspiration of a twice hourly Ipswich to Cambridge service.

Given the considerations above, we re-iterate our objection to the closure of Weatherby level crossing.

Regarding the other proposed closures within Forest Heath District Council we have no representations to make at this time.

Yours faithfully



CLlr Lance Stanbury
Cabinet Member for Planning and Growth

Cc:

Hilary A Gurner, Acting Town Clerk, Newmarket Town Council
CLlr Robin Millar, ward member (All Saints), Forest Heath District Council
CLlr Stephen Edwards, ward member (All Saints), Forest Heath District Council
CLlr James Palmer, Leader, East Cambridgeshire District Council
CLlr James Finch, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Suffolk County Council
CLlr Ian Bates, Chairman, Environment & Economy Committee, Cambridgeshire County Council
Matt Hancock, MP

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Department for Transport

Cllr L Stanbury
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Telephone: 020 7944 3196
Email: transportandworksact@dft.gsi.gov.uk
Web Site: www.dft.gov.uk

Our Ref: TWA/17/APP/02/OBJ/27
Your Ref:

4 May 2017

Dear Sir,

**TRANSPORT AND WORKS ACT 1992 (TWA):
APPLICATION FOR THE PROPOSED NETWORK RAIL (FELIXSTOWE BRANCH
LINE LEVEL CROSSINGS CLOSURE) ORDER**

1. Thank you for your letter of 4 May 2017 on behalf of Forest Heath District Council to the Secretary of State for Transport objecting to this application. We shall take this into account in considering the application and shall send a copy of it to the applicants for the Order as required by the TWA procedure Rules. Please note that the Rules enable us to let others have a copy (including any personal information contained in it) if they ask for one.

2. I enclose for your information a brief guide to TWA Orders. This explains the procedure for considering order applications and how you can take part in the process if you wish to do so.

3. Part 3 of the guide (page 13) explains that where there are objections to a scheme we may decide to hold a public inquiry or a hearing, or to deal with them by an exchange of written representations. A decision on this will normally be made within 28 days of the end of the objection period.

4. It is not clear from your letter of objection whether it has been ratified by the whole Council in accordance with the procedures set out in section 239 of the Local Government Act 1972. That section, although originally concerned only with local authorities promoting or opposing a Bill in Parliament, has been applied by section 20 of the TWA to local authorities applying for, or objecting to, a TWA Order. This means that, for a local authority to make a valid objection, it has to have been endorsed by a majority of the whole number of the authority's members at a meeting of the authority, held after the requisite notice of that meeting has been given.

5. If it has not been possible for you to bring this matter before a full meeting of your Council within the statutory objection period, we are prepared nevertheless to accept your Council's representation as a holding objection, provided that it is endorsed by the full Council as soon as reasonably possible. Similarly, if it is the case that you were not aware that section 239 of the 1972 Act applied to TWA Order applications

and objections, we are prepared provisionally to accept the objection pending the passing of the relevant resolution.

6. If your Council has already passed the section 239 resolution, please could you confirm that and provide a certified copy of the resolution. If, however, your Council has still to pass the resolution, please advise us when the full Council meeting is to be held and the outcome of the debate.

7. To help us to decide which procedure to follow please let me know within two weeks from the date of this letter if you wish to speak or be represented at an inquiry or hearing, if one is held. Part 4 of the guide (page 18) explains what is involved in giving evidence at an inquiry. If you do not wish to speak at an inquiry, you may still send further written evidence to the Inspector, preferably before any inquiry opens.

8. At question 12, the guide explains that certain types of objector are classed as 'statutory objectors' and have certain additional rights. If you are a statutory objector and wish to exercise the right to have your objection heard, please inform us when letting us know that you wish to take part in any inquiry or hearing.

9. If we do not hear from you, we shall assume that you are content to rely on the comments that you have already made. Your objection will, as required by the TWA procedure Rules, be sent to the Inspector appointed to conduct any inquiry or hearing.

10. Please let me know if you require any further advice about these procedures and please keep the brief guide available, as we shall refer to it when writing to you again.

Yours faithfully,

Caroline O'Neill

Caroline O'Neill

Council



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	Appointment of Independent Persons	
Report No:	COU/FH/17/016	
Report to and date/s:	Council	14 June 2017
Committee Chairman:	Councillor David Bowman Chairman, West Suffolk Joint Standards Committee Tel: 07711 593737 Email: david.bowman@forest-heath.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Leah Mickleborough Service Manager (Democratic Services) and Monitoring Officer Tel: 01284 757162 Email: leah.mickleborough@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	This report seeks Council approval to appoint Independent Persons for West Suffolk.	
Recommendation:	<p>It is recommended that Council:</p> <p>(1) Agrees to re-appoint Mr Arnold Barrow as an Independent Person until 1 July 2019; and</p> <p>(2) Agrees to appoint Mrs Zoe Finn as an Independent Person until 1 July 2019.</p>	
Key Decision:	<p><i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i></p> <p>No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	
Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members of the West Suffolk Joint Standards Committee have been informed of the proposed appointment directly 	

Alternative option(s):		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council is required to have an Independent Person as a result of the Localism Act. Were Council minded not to approve the current appointment, a temporary solution would be required until a new appointment process could be undertaken 	
Implications:			
Are there any financial implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any staffing implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any ICT implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed appointment ensures the Council is compliant with its obligations under the Localism Act 2011 	
Are there any equality implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
The Independent Person fails to provide informed and carefully considered judgements, resulting in a loss of public confidence in the standards system	Low	The independent appointment process has been robust, and appropriate training is provided to independent persons to ensure they are fully aware of the responsibilities	Low
Ward(s) affected:		All Wards	
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		Report to West Suffolk Joint Standards Committee on the process to appoint an Independent Person: http://svr-mgov-01:9070/documents/s19985/JST.JT.17.001%20Appointment%20of%20Independent%20Persons%20Report.pdf	
Documents attached:		None	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

- 1.1.1 The Localism Act created the requirement for all authorities to appoint an Independent Person who must give their thoughts on allegations that a Parish, Town or District Councillor has breached the Code of Conduct. In addition, should the Council decide to take disciplinary action against its statutory officers, a panel, including at least two Independent Persons, may need to be convened. The appointment of Independent Persons must be confirmed by a Council vote.
- 1.1.2 Forest Heath Council originally joined the Suffolk-wide pool of Independent Persons, but in 2014 a separate appointment process was undertaken for the two West Suffolk councils alone. As a result, two Independent Persons – Mrs Joy Inameti and Mr Arnold Barrow were appointed. Mrs Inameti has recently confirmed that she does not intend to continue in the role and Mr Barrow’s appointment would also be due to expire.
- 1.2.3 Mr Arnold Barrow has consistently provided a robust opinion to the matters in hand on a timely basis, and it is proposed by the Standards Committee to continue his appointment. This will also help to ensure continuity and consistency as the new Independent Person adapts to the role.
- 1.2.4 The Standards Committee agreed an appointment process for the vacancy left by Mrs Inameti. A number of high-quality applications were received, and 4 candidates were shortlisted for interviews, undertaken by the Monitoring Officer, Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee. Following this process, it is now recommended that Mrs Zoe Finn be appointed by Council.
- 1.2.5 Mrs Finn has a long history of public service, having first worked as a psychiatric nurse in Wales, before retraining as a Police Officer and serving in Thames Valley, Essex and Suffolk, finishing at Detective Inspector level. Subsequently, she has retrained as a plumber and now runs her own plumbing business. She lives in West Suffolk, and impressed the interview panel with her balanced views between the need to follow due procedure whilst recognising the sensitivity of the situations that can arise and the challenges Councillors faced.
- 1.2.6 It is proposed to make both appointments until 1 July 2019, to align with the current electoral term.

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