

Council



Forest Heath
District Council

Title:	Agenda
Date:	Wednesday 20 December 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 12 December 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 Democratic Services Officer 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 Democratic Services Officer 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 meetings held on 27 September 2017 and 18 October 2017 (copy attached). | |
| 2. Chairman's Announcements | 11 - 16 |
| Report No: COU/FH/17/031 | |
| 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 | 17 - 20 |
| Report No: COU/FH/17/032 | |

Council Procedure Rule 8.2 states that *'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.'*

8.3 - *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.*

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 19 December 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

21 - 70

Report No: **COU/FH/17/033**

(A) Referrals from Cabinet: 24 October 2017

1. West Suffolk Local Code of Corporate Governance
Cabinet Member: Councillor Stephen Edwards
2. First Year Review of Performance of the Council's Solar Farm and Future of its Wholly-Owned Company: Greenheath Energy Ltd
Cabinet Member: Councillor Stephen Edwards

(B) Referrals from Cabinet: 12 December 2017

1. West Suffolk Operational Hub
Cabinet Member: Councillor David Bowman

(For ease of reference, the full Cabinet report (Report No: CAB/FH/17/057) is attached to this referral as Appendix 1.)

2. Mid-Year Treasury Management Report 2017/2018 and Investment Activity: 1 April to 30 September 2017
Cabinet Member: Councillor Stephen Edwards

3. Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2018/2019
Cabinet Member: Councillor Stephen Edwards
4. Council Tax Base for Tax Setting Purposes 2018/2019
Cabinet Member: Councillor Stephen Edwards
5. Draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2018-2020
Cabinet Member: Councillor James Waters

(For ease of reference, the full Cabinet report (Report No: CAB/FH/17/064) is attached to this referral as Appendix 2.)

8. Questions to Chairmen of other Committees

Development Control Committee	4 October 2017 1 November 2017 6 December 2017
Licensing and Regulatory Committee	30 October 2017
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	9 November 2017
Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee	29 November 2017
West Suffolk Joint Standards Committee	11 December 2017

9. Questions on written notice

The Council will consider any urgent questions 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 27 September 2017 at **6.00 pm** at the **Council Chamber,**
District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall IP28 7EY

Present: **Councillors**

Chairman Ruth Bowman J.P.

Vice Chairman Brian Harvey

Ruth Allen	Victor Lukaniuk
Michael Anderson	Carol Lynch
Andrew Appleby	Louise Marston
Chris Barker	Christine Mason
John Bloodworth	Robin Millar
David Bowman	Robert Nobbs
Rona Burt	Colin Noble
Louis Busuttil	David Palmer
Simon Cole	Peter Ridgwell
Roger Dicker	Nigel Roman
Andy Drummond	Lance Stanbury
Stephen Edwards	James Waters

257. **Remembrance**

Prior to commencing the business on the agenda the Chairman asked all present to remain standing to observe a minute's silence in remembrance of Sophie Claydon, West Suffolk's HR Business Support colleague, who had sadly died in August 2017.

258. **Welcome**

The Chairman formally welcomed Councillor Robert Nobbs to his first meeting of the Authority, following his election to the District Council as result of the St Mary's By-Election on 17 August 2017.

259. **Minutes**

Councillor Peter Ridgwell asked if he was able to vote on the minutes in light of him not having been able to attend the meeting on 26 July 2017. The Chairman confirmed that his absence did not preclude him from accepting the minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2017 were unanimously accepted as an accurate record, subject to the reference to "Pay *Police*" being amended to read "Pay **Policy**" in Minute No. 250 (2.), and were signed by the Chairman.

260. **Chairman's Announcements (Report No: COU/FH/17/024)**

The Chairman advised the meeting that contrary to the list in Report No COU/FH/17/024 she did not attend the Battle of Britain Parade and Service on 17 September 2017.

Furthermore, she pointed out that the Vice Chairman, Leader and Deputy Leader all also attended her BBQ at Brandon Country Park on 10 September 2017.

The report was noted.

261. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Reg Silvester.

262. **Declarations of Interest**

None were declared.

263. **The Leader's Report (Report No: COU/FH/17/025)**

The Leader presented his statement to the meeting, as set out in Report No COU/FH/17/025.

At the invitation of the Leader, the Deputy Leader was pleased to advise the meeting that Newmarket Academy was justifiably celebrating the publication of the school's 'Good' Ofsted report after a long and challenging period of change, following the previous judgement of needing improvement.

Pleasingly Ofsted Inspectors had judged the school's overall effectiveness as 'Good' in all key categories. Furthermore, within their report the Inspectors recognised the extensive community involvement that the Academy had benefitted from during their improvement journey.

The Deputy Leader reminded Members of the work that the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee had undertaken in respect of the Academy and highlighted the fact that the District Council should be proud of the role they had played in this significant achievement.

The report was noted.

264. **Public Participation**

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

265. **A Single Council for West Suffolk - Business Case (Report No: COU/FH/17/026)**

Following the June meeting of Forest Heath District Council at which the draft proposals to form a single Council for West Suffolk were agreed, a period of

public engagement was undertaken which concluded strong support from residents and stakeholders towards the proposals.

Henceforth, the Leader presented this report which set out the final business case, amended in response to the public engagement and the work of the Future Governance Steering Group, and sought approval to the proposal to form a single Council for West Suffolk.

The Leader spoke in support of the proposal which he considered to be the natural 'next step' for Forest Heath following the successful years of working in partnership with St Edmundsbury Borough Council. He highlighted what a great opportunity this proposal gave West Suffolk in shaping its own future and creating a greater democratic voice for its residents.

The Leader also gave thanks to those Members who sat on the Future Governance Steering Group for all their efforts and input, and moved that the final business case be approved and this was duly seconded by Councillor Andy Drummond.

Prior to opening the debate the Chairman reminded the meeting that the business case, if approved, would be submitted to the Secretary of State for determination.

Furthermore, Members were reminded that an extraordinary meeting of Forest Heath Council had been arranged for 18 October 2017 at which the detailed arrangements for a single council would be discussed, if approved.

The Deputy Leader along with Councillors Lance Stanbury, Stephen Edwards and Colin Noble all spoke strongly in support of the proposal.

Councillor Andy Drummond also echoed the support but asked that the photograph on Page 15 of the Business Case (attached as Appendix 2 to Report No COU/FH/17/026) be replaced with an alternative, as the company it depicted (GE Aviation, Newmarket) was no longer in operation.

Councillors David Bowman and Ruth Allen similarly spoke in support whilst also making reference to the importance of public engagement and communication. Councillor Bowman voiced disappointment that no public were in attendance.

Councillor Peter Ridgwell questioned the need for the Mildenhall Hub development in light of the single council proposal which he considered to be in conflict. The Leader responded at length and clarified that the Mildenhall Hub scheme was a much needed community facility for Mildenhall and the surrounding area. It would include a new leisure centre, a swimming pool and a new high school amongst other facilities – it was not simply a replacement for the District Offices. Accordingly, the project was still planned for delivery if the single council proposal was approved.

The Chairman then addressed the meeting in her capacity as Chairman of the Future Governance Steering Group and highlighted the work that the Group had undertaken. She spoke in support of the proposal which she considered would bring about significant benefits and opportunities.

Prior to the vote being taking on the motion for approval the Leader requested a recorded vote and this was supported by five other Members, in line with the Council's Procedure Rules.

Upon being put to the vote Members voted as follows:

Name of Member	For	Against	Abstained
Ruth Allen	X		
Michael Anderson	X		
Andrew Appleby	X		
Chris Barker	X		
John Bloodworth	X		
David Bowman	X		
Ruth Bowman	X		
Rona Burt	X		
Louis Busuttil	X		
Simon Cole	X		
Roger Dicker	X		
Andy Drummond	X		
Stephen Edwards	X		
Brian Harvey	X		
Carol Lynch	X		
Victor Lukaniuk	X		
Louise Marston	X		
Christine Mason	X		
Robin Millar	X		
Robert Nobbs	X		
Colin Noble	X		
David Palmer	X		
Peter Ridgwell		X	
Nigel Roman	X		
Lance Stanbury	X		
James Waters	X		
TOTAL	25	1	0

With 25 voting for the motion and with 1 against, it was

RESOLVED:

That the final business case for a single council for West Suffolk, attached as Appendix 2 of Report No COU/FH/17/026, be approved for submission to the Secretary of State for Local Government.

The Chairman reminded all present that immediately following the meeting of Council there would be an extraordinary meeting of the Cabinet at which the decision made by Council would seek Executive ratification prior to submission.

266. **Review of Political Balance and Appointment to Politically Balanced Bodies (Report No: COU/FH/17/027)**

The Leader presented this report and explained that following the outcome of the District by-election for the Forest Heath (St Mary's Ward) vacancy which had taken place on 17 August 2017, the political make-up of the Council changed.

Accordingly, the Council was requested to review the allocation of seats and substitutes to political groups in accordance with the political balance rules.

The Leader moved the report's recommendations and this was duly seconded by Councillor David Bowman.

Councillor Andrew Appleby addressed the meeting in respect of Paragraph 1.1.5 of the report which made reference to the settlement reached between political groups regarding seat allocations.

Councillor Appleby sought clarity as to how this position had been reached and, accordingly, proposed an amendment to the recommendations in that the Licensing and Regulatory Committee remain as is and instead his group would sacrifice a seat from the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to enable the Conservatives to gain one. This was duly seconded by Councillor Ruth Allen.

The Service Manager (Democratic Services) confirmed that she had received written confirmation from Group Leaders that the changes as stated in the report were accepted.

Furthermore, Councillor Appleby's proposal to amend the membership on the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee would not bring about any form of change in respect of political balance as the Council's Scrutiny Committees were not required to be politically balanced, hence they were not included in the report before Council.

The Chairman then put the amendment to the vote (as proposed by Councillor Appleby) and with 6 voting for and 20 against, the Chairman declared the amendment lost.

The Leader's motion to approve the recommendations within the report were then put to the vote and with 20 voting for, 4 against and with 2 abstentions, it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. The formula for the allocation of seats to the political groups on those Committees which are required by law to be politically balanced as set out in Paragraph 1.1.1 of Report No: COU/FH/17/027, be approved;

2. 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. of Report No: COU/FH/17/027, be approved; and
3. If the Council is unable to confirm the appointment of Members and Substitute Members at the Council meeting on 27 September 2017, the Service Manager (Democratic Services) be given Delegated Authority to appoint Members and Substitute Members to those bodies set out in recommendation (2) above, on the basis of nominations from the relevant Group Leaders.

267. Questions to Chairmen of other Committees

There were no questions to Chairmen of other Committees.

268. Urgent Questions on Notice

There were no urgent questions on notice.

On conclusion of the meeting the Chairman reminded Members that immediately following there would be an extraordinary meeting of the Cabinet at which the decision made in respect of a single West Suffolk Council would seek Executive ratification prior to submission.

All non-Cabinet Members were welcome to remain in the meeting in order to observe proceedings, should they wish to.

The meeting concluded at 6.43pm

Signed by:

Chairman

Extraordinary Council



Forest Heath
District Council

Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of the **Council** held on
Wednesday 18 October 2017 at 6.00 pm at the **Council Chamber, District
Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall IP28 7EY**

Present: **Councillors**

Chairman Ruth Bowman J.P.

Vice Chairman Brian Harvey

Ruth Allen	Carol Lynch
Michael Anderson	Christine Mason
John Bloodworth	Robin Millar
David Bowman	Robert Nobbs
Rona Burt	David Palmer
Louis Busuttill	Peter Ridgwell
Simon Cole	Nigel Roman
Roger Dicker	Reg Silvester
Andy Drummond	Lance Stanbury
Stephen Edwards	James Waters
Victor Lukaniuk	

269. **Chairman's Announcements**

Prior to commencing the business on the agenda the Chairman invited the Verse Area Manager to come forward and gave sincere thanks to him, on behalf of the whole Council, for all his help and assistance during the nine years he had worked for the Authority. A farewell gift was awarded and all Members wished him well in his future endeavours.

The Chairman also took this opportunity to highlight that the BBC television programme DIY SOS was coming to Mildenhall in November 2017 to help a local family in renovating their home, in order to meet their needs as a result of a devastating incident.

Members were informed that a 'trades day' seeking tradespeople and suppliers to assist with the build was being held on Thursday 26 October 2017. The Chairman also advised that due to the proximity of the build to the District Offices the Council was working with the BBC to assist them wherever possible.

270. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrew Appleby, Chris Barker, Louise Marston and Colin Noble.

271. **Declarations of Interest**

None were declared.

272. **Public Participation**

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

273. **Referrals Report of Recommendations from Cabinet (Report No: COU/FH/17/028)**

The Council considered the referrals report of recommendations from Cabinet as set out in Report No COU/FH/17/028:

1. Annual Treasury Management Report: 2016/2017
(Cabinet: 12 September 2017)

Councillor Stephen Edwards, Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, presented this referral item and responded to questions as raised by Members.

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

RESOLVED:

That the Annual Treasury Management Report 2016-2017, attached as Attachment 1 to Report No PAS/FH/17/023, be approved.

274. **Single Council: Consequential and Transition Matters (Report No: COU/FH/17/029)**

The Leader explained that following the decision made by St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath Councils in September to submit a business case to the Secretary of State to become a single council for West Suffolk, it was now necessary to consider a number of technical matters that would be required to be included in any subsequent Order to become a single Council.

The Leader gave thanks to those Members who sat on the Future Governance Steering Group for all their efforts and input, and moved that the recommendations set out in Report No COU/FH/17/029 be approved, and this was duly seconded by Councillor David Bowman.

Councillor Lance Stanbury spoke at length in support of the report. He highlighted what an historical decision the two West Suffolk Councils were being asked to make, one which would shape local communities for generations to come.

Councillor Victor Lukaniuk made reference to Appendix 1 attached to the report. He was disappointed that Brandon, as one of Forest Heath's largest towns, was not mentioned by name in the entire document despite Omar Homes (which was located in the town) being referenced. Officers noted this comment and agreed to take it on board.

Upon being put to the vote, and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. Should the Secretary of State be minded to create a single council for West Suffolk, the following matters should be recommended for inclusion within the Order to create the new Council on 1 April 2019:
 - i. Forest Heath District and St Edmundsbury Borough Councils should transition via the means of a Shadow Authority, which will comprise all 72 councillors from both councils;
 - ii. The Shadow Authority should be required to form an implementation executive, to include both the leaders and at least three further councillors from each of Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils;
 - iii. The name of the new Council should be West Suffolk District Council until such time as the Council, or Shadow Council, may resolve otherwise;
 - iv. The Shadow Authority should have equivalent powers granted to authorities by virtue of s.245(4) to apply for Borough Status;
 - v. The proposed Council Size for West Suffolk District Council of 64 members, and the route for determining the final Council Size case, as set out in paragraph 7.4 and 7.5 should be endorsed
2. Forest Heath District Council recognises that both itself, and St Edmundsbury Borough, will have a duty to co-operate with the Shadow Authority; and
3. It be noted that, during the Secretary of State's consultation, the Leader of the Council will respond to confirm the Council's firm commitment to supporting the creation of a new single council for West Suffolk.

275. **Constitutional and Administrative Matters (Report No: COU/FH/17/030)**

Councillor Stephen Edwards, Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, presented this report and sought the agreement of Council to a small number of minor constitutional and other administrative matters.

Councillor Edwards drew attention to recommendation 3 of Report No COU/FH/17/030 and nominated Councillor David Bowman (as Cabinet Member for Operations) to sit on the Shareholder Advisory Group for Verse Facilities Management Ltd.

With there being no other nominations and on the motion of the Cabinet Member, seconded by Councillor Nigel Roman and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. Those matters addressed within Paragraph 1.3 of Report No COU/FH/17/030, be added to the scheme of delegation for the Assistant Director (Planning and Regulatory) and the Service Manager, Housing Standards;
2. The delegated limit for the Service Manager, Shared Legal, to negotiate and settle miscellaneous disputes be increased to £50,000; and
3. Councillor David Bowman (Cabinet Member for Operations) be nominated to sit on the Shareholder Advisory Group for Verse Facilities Management Ltd.

The meeting concluded at 6.22 pm

Signed by:

Chairman

Council



Title of Report:	Chairman's Announcements and Itinerary	
Report No:	COU/FH/17/031	
Report to and date:	Council	20 December 2017

Chairman of the Council's Itinerary for October 2017 (part) to December 2017 (part)

Wednesday	18 October	Extraordinary FHDC Full Council Council Chamber, District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall
Sunday	22 October	HMS Vengeance Freedom Parade Arrive at the Athenaeum for Procession
Friday	3 November	Chairman of South Cambridgeshire District Council's Annual Reception The Old Rectory Restaurant, Wimpole Hall
Tuesday	7 November	Ipswich Mayor's "Women in Local Government" Lunch Mayor's Parlour, Town Hall, Ipswich
Saturday	11 November	Memorial Rose Garden Remembrance Services, Abbey Gardens
Sunday	12 November	Remembrance Parade and Service War Memorial/St Mary's Church, Mildenhall
Sunday	12 November	Remembrance Parade and Service Parade from The Severals to Tattersalls, Newmarket
Thursday	16 November	Carol Service Planning Meeting St Mary's Church Vicarage

Wednesday	22 November	Thanksgiving Eve Service Ely Cathedral, Ely
Thursday	23 November	DIY SOS, Peterhouse Close, Mildenhall
Thursday	30 November	Newmarket Academy Awards Evening Newmarket Academy, Exning Road, Newmarket
Friday	1 December	RAF Mildenhall Yuletide Reception Middleton Hall, RAF Mildenhall
Sunday	3 December	FHDC Chairman's Carol Service St Mary's Church, Mildenhall
Thursday	7 December	Community Christmas Party St Mary's Church of England Academy, Mildenhall
Sunday	10 December	Brig Gen Mark Slocum Open House Event 251 Shippea Hill Road, RAF Mildenhall
Monday	18 December	Awards Ceremony giving Freedom of the Town to Sheikh Mohammed, Newmarket Town Council, Memorial Hall, High Street, Newmarket

Vice Chairman of the Council's Itinerary for October 2017 (part) to December 2017 (part)

Wednesday	18 October	Extraordinary FHDC Full Council Council Chamber, District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall
Sunday	12 November	Remembrance Parade and Service Brandon Leisure Centre to St Peters Church, Brandon
Sunday	19 November	St Edmunds Day Service St Edmunds Catholic Church
Thursday	30 November	Newmarket Academy Awards Evening Newmarket Academy, Exning Road, Newmarket
Sunday	3 December	FHDC Chairman's Carol Service St Mary's Church, Mildenhall

Leader of the Council's Itinerary for October 2017 (part) to December 2017 (part)

(Holiday 21 October - 5 November)

Wednesday	18 October	Extraordinary Forest Heath District Council Council Chamber, District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall
Monday	6 November	Leader & Deputy Leader Meetings West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds
Tuesday	7 November	GCGP Board Meeting Alconbury
Wednesday	8 November	Forest Heath Overview and Scrutiny Committee Council Chamber, District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall
Tuesday	14 November	Joint Cabinet Planning & Joint Cabinet Council Chamber, District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall
Thursday	16 November	Parish and Town Conference Sybil Andrews Academy, Bury St Edmunds
Friday	18 November	Suffolk Public Sector Leaders meeting Ipswich Leaders Briefing with The Rt Hon Matthew Hancock MP West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds
Tuesday	21 November	DCN Autumn Assembly 2017: Local solutions for national prosperity London
Wednesday	22 November	Forest Heath Conservative Group District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall
Tuesday	28 November	Forest Heath Cabinet & Cabinet Planning Council Chamber, District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall
Thursday	7 December	Leader & Officer Meetings District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall
Tuesday	12 December	Forest Heath Cabinet Only, Cabinet Planning & Cabinet Council Chamber, District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall

Wednesday	13 December	Forest Heath District Council Quarterly Scrutiny Meeting District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall
Tuesday	19 December	Forest Heath Conservative Group District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall
Wednesday	20 December	GCGP LA Leaders, LEP/Combined Authority Joint Meeting and Board Alconbury
		Forest Heath Council Council Chamber, District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall

Deputy Leader of the Council's Itinerary for October 2017 (part) to December 2017 (part)

(Holiday 13 – 16 October and 15 - 26 December)

Wednesday	18 October	Extraordinary Forest Heath Council Council Chamber, District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall
Thursday	19 October	LGA Leadership Academy Coventry
Tuesday	24 October	Forest Heath Cabinet Planning & Cabinet Council Chamber, District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall
Monday	6 November	Deputy Leader & Leader Meetings West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds
Wednesday	8 November	Portfolio Holder Meeting West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds
Monday	13 November	Deputy Leader & Officer meetings West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds
Wednesday	15 November	Deputy Leader & Officer meetings West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds
Thursday	16 November	Parish and Town Conference Sybil Andrews Academy, Bury St Edmunds
Monday	20 November	Deputy Leader meeting with Inspector Mark Shipton Newmarket Police Station
		Newmarket Meeting with Jill Korwin Newmarket

Wednesday	22 November	Forest Heath Conservative Group District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall
Friday	24 November	LGA Leadership Academy Coventry
Monday	27 November	Deputy Leader and Officer Meetings West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds
Tuesday	28 November	Forest Heath Cabinet Only & Cabinet Planning Council Chamber, District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall
Tuesday	12 December	Forest Heath Cabinet Planning & Cabinet Council Chamber, District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall
Wednesday	13 December	Forest Heath District Council Quarterly Scrutiny Meeting District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall Forest Heath Conservative Group District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall

This page is intentionally left blank

Council



Title of Report:	Leader's Statement	
Report No:	COU/FH/17/032	
Report to and date:	Council	20 December 2017

Single Council

After much hard work and debate I'd like to welcome the announcement by the Secretary of State for the Department for Communities and Local Government that he is minded to support our proposals for one West Suffolk Council. His announcement is a strong recognition of the compelling and aspirational business case we have put forward to better improve and transform local government while supporting, investing in and championing our communities. What better time of year to also reflect on how councillors from all parties have come together to help shape this. I would like to thank them and our staff who have worked tirelessly on this initiative. While this is a very welcome step forward we still have more to do and I look forward to working with everyone on this.

Strategic Framework

One of our main arguments to the Secretary of State is how we have turned aspirations and the transformation of local Government to benefit business and our communities into a reality. There is no doubt we and West Suffolk is a success story, pioneering new ways of working with communities and bringing investment into our area. Today we will discuss the next Strategic Framework which builds on this work and sets out our vision and aims.

Community Chest

Projects to help people recover from alcohol abuse, get young people involved in sports development, tackle mental health issues, assist struggling families and support carers, will receive a welcome boost and Christmas present this month.

We, together with St Edmundsbury Borough Council, as we discuss £370,000 of new Community Chest grants for 2018/19 at our Cabinet meetings this month. The grants all focus on helping families and communities to become more resilient, stronger and caring for each other. This is just part of the great work we are doing through our families and communities work.

Economic Success

There is no doubt that we and West Suffolk is a great place to build or start a business. I was delighted to hear the latest Business Register and Employment Survey for the UK shows the percentage increase in people in employment in West Suffolk has risen more than the national and East Anglian average. Not only that, but the percentage rise between 2015 and 2016 is also above Suffolk and neighbouring areas, such as Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. While we all know there are many factors that make this up it does underline the fact that our aims to manage growth and support the local economy, jobs and skills is the right one.

Mildenhall Hub

Following the Secretary of State's decision not to call in the Mildenhall Hub for his determination planning permission for this vital site has been formally granted. This is an excellent example of us working with partners as part of the One Public Estate work. It will provide excellent new and much needed educational, leisure and health facilities as well as help public services work better together.

Merry Christmas

Once again our area and communities have done a great job of putting on Christmas events, including markets and lights. Not only does it help people get into the festive mood but often helps boost the local economy and brings communities together.

The community spirit and help that has come forward for the Dobbin family as part of the BBC DIY:SOS programme in Mildenhall is particularly apt at this time of year. You may not know that our own council and Screen Suffolk were part of helping make this happen. The response was so strong by the trades the programme turned away 900 offers of help. But it was not just the trades that showed up in strength day after day,

often working in difficult conditions. Residents came with help for those working, baked goods and support. It was a pleasure to welcome back former Mildenhall resident Nick Knowles and the crew. He will have his dignity back said Simon's wife Nicole in a radio interview – I think that is probably one of the best presents you can give someone.

We have had a very busy year making transformational improvements that will directly help our communities. Here is to another good one and I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas.

This page is intentionally left blank

Council



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	Referrals Report of Recommendations from Cabinet	
Report No:	COU/FH/17/033	
Report to and date:	Council	20 December 2017
Documents attached:	Appendix 1: Report No: CAB/FH/17/057 'West Suffolk Operational Hub' Appendix 2: Appendix A to Report No: CAB/FH/17/064 'Draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework'	

(A) Referrals from Cabinet: 24 October 2017

1. West Suffolk Local Code of Corporate Governance

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Stephen Edwards

[Report No: CAB/FH/17/050](#)

Performance and Audit
Scrutiny Committee: 21
September 2017

[Report No: PAS/FH/17/025](#) and
[Appendix A](#)

RECOMMENDED:

That the West Suffolk Local Code of Corporate Governance, attached as Appendix A to Report No: PAS/FH/17/025, be approved.

- 1.1 In 2016, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) / Solace updated their guidance, which strongly advocated the production of local Codes of Corporate Governance by local authorities so that they can review and account for their own individual arrangements to effectively discharge their functions and demonstrate their own compliance with good practice.

- 1.2 In light of this, Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council (the West Suffolk Councils) have taken the opportunity to review their Code which was last produced jointly in 2013.
- 1.3 Members may view the full report and its Appendix on the Council's website via the above links or may request a paper copy from Democratic Services.

2. First Year Review of Performance of the Council's Solar Farm and Future of its Wholly Owned Company Greenheath Energy Ltd

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Stephen Edwards

Report No:
[CAB/FH/17/052](#) and
[Appendix 1](#)

RECOMMENDED:

That:-

- 1. Forest Heath District Council, as the shareholder of Greenheath Energy Ltd, agree to the small company audit exemption being applied and the Council to give financial guarantee over Greenheath Energy Ltd.**
 - 2. Forest Heath District Council, as the shareholder of Greenheath Energy Ltd, support the Directors to apply to strike off Greenheath Energy Ltd on their behalf.**
- 2.1 As part of the West Suffolk Community Energy Plan identified opportunities, the Council became aware of a commercial opportunity to buy a fully operational solar farm at Toggam Farm, Lakenheath. The acquisition took place at the end of July 2016, with the Council taking ownership of what is still one of the largest local authority-owned farms in the UK.
 - 2.2 In relation to the first year performance, overall, the site has outperformed the modelled performance data for this period. This has resulted in a net benefit of £308,000 (compared to a predicted £300,000 net benefit) to be reinvested into the delivery of much valued district wide services.
 - 2.3 As a standalone company, Greenheath Energy Ltd, would be subject to the small company exemption from an external audit, as whilst they had the intercompany asset balance, their turnover was less than £10m and they had less than 10 employees (they have no employees). Therefore, to allow Greenheath Energy to continue to be entitled to the small company audit exemption and in line with the Directors' proposals and having consulted with the Council's Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer, it was proposed that the Council, as the shareholder, agree to the small company audit exemption being applied and the Council to give financial guarantee over Greenheath Energy Ltd and its liabilities.
 - 2.4 The solar farm now sits within the direct control of the Council as Greenheath Energy Ltd is not actively trading. Legal advice has been

sought on the options for Greenheath Energy Ltd and, therefore, based on the advice received and the work undertaken to ensure that there were no residual liabilities sitting within the company, the Directors recommend that they apply to strike off the company on the shareholders' behalf, once the intercompany loan has been removed and any residual proceeds, assets or liabilities are transferred to the Council.

- 2.5 Members may view the full report and its Appendix on the Council's website via the above links or may request a paper copy from Democratic Services.

(B) Referrals from Cabinet: 12 December 2017

(These referrals have been compiled before the meeting of Cabinet on 12 December 2017 and are based on the recommendations contained within each of the reports listed below. Any amendments made by Cabinet to the recommendations within these reports will be notified to the Council meeting)

1. West Suffolk Operational Hub

Portfolio Holder: Cllr David Bowman

Report No:
CAB/FH/17/057
(attached as Appendix
1 to this referrals
report)

RECOMMENDED:

That:-

- 1. Report No: CAB/FH/17/057 and its Appendices, be noted.**
- 2. The allocation of an additional £589,000 to the Council's Capital Programme, funded in line with paragraphs 5.14 - 5.17 of Report No: CAB/FH/17/057, be approved.**
- 3. Subject to receiving a planning consent:-**
 - a) the Council's option to procure land at Hollow Road Farm be exercised;**
 - b) With Suffolk County Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council, a contract be entered into for the construction of the West Suffolk Operational Hub at Hollow Road Farm; and**
- 4. It be agreed for the Council's Section 151 Officer to make the necessary changes to the Council's 2017/18 prudential indicators as a result of recommendation 2. above.**

- 1.1 For ease of reference, a copy of the full Cabinet report (Report No: CAB/FH/17/057) is attached as Appendix 1 to this referrals report.

2. Mid-Year Treasury Management Performance Report and Investment Activity (April to September 2017)

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Stephen Edwards

Report No:
CAB/FH/17/060

Performance and Audit
Scrutiny Committee: 29
November 2017

Report No:
PAS/FH/17/039 and
Appendix 1

RECOMMENDED:

That the Mid-Year Treasury Management Report 2017-2018, attached at Appendix 1 to Report No: PAS/FH/17/039, be approved.

2.1 Following the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee's consideration of Report No: PAS/FH/17/039, which included a summary of the investment activities for the first six months' of 2017/2018 at Appendix 1, the Cabinet concurs with the Committee's examination of this report and has recommended approval of the mid-year treasury management report 2017/2018.

2.2 Below is a summary of those investment activities:

INTEREST EARNED AND AVERAGE RATE OF RETURN SUMMARY			
	Budget	Actual	Difference
Investment Interest Earned	£90,500	£57,852	- £32,648
Average Rate of Return	0.75%	0.58%	- 0.17%

- The purchase of the Solar Farm last year, continues to have a knock on effect on the funds available for investment (as we used cash balances instead of external borrowing to fund the purchase), this in turn has reduced the interest earned this year.
- The reduced average rate of return is due to the reduction in the Bank of England base rate and resulting reduction of interest rates offered by institutions.
- As at 30 September 2017 we held £20,005,000 of investments.

INVESTMENT ACTIVITY SUMMARY	
	2017/18 £
Opening Balance 01 April 2017	18,005,000
Investments made during the year (including transfers to business reserve accounts)	18,850,000
Sub Total	36,855,000
Investments realised during the year (including	16,850,000

INVESTMENT ACTIVITY SUMMARY	
	2017/18 £
withdrawals from business reserve accounts)	
Closing Balance 30 September 2017	20,005,000

2.3 Members may view the full report and its Appendix on the Council's website via the above links or may request a paper copy from Democratic Services.

3. Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2018/2019

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Stephen Edwards

Report No:
[CAB/FH/17/062](#)

RECOMMENDED:

That taking into consideration the consultation and engagement feedback detailed in Section 7 of Report No: CAB/FH/17/062, the following changes to the current Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme be agreed to take effect from 1 April 2018:

- (a) Update the "applicable amounts" to 2015 prices as detailed in paragraph 5.1 of Report No: CAB/FH/17/062;***
- (b) Incorporating changes that have occurred as a result of the Government's welfare reforms, as detailed in paragraph 5.2 of Report No: CAB/FH/17/062, regarding family premiums; dependence allowances where there are two or more children; and eligibility of foreign nationals; and***
- (c) Modernise the scheme, as detailed in paragraph 5.3 of Report No: CAB/FH/17/062, so that claimants in receipt of Universal Credit don't need to make a separate application to qualify for Council Tax Discount.***

3.1 Since 1 April 2013, Forest Heath District Council has operated a Localised Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) to replace the previous, centrally administered Council Tax Benefit (Report D224 provides further background) . Forest Heath's scheme is aimed at:

- making provision to protect vulnerable people; and
- supporting work incentives for claimants created by the Government's wider welfare reform.

3.2 Forest Heath's initial scheme for 2013-14 required working age claimants to pay 8.5% more of the council tax charge than previously. This requirement has been continued over the subsequent 4 financial years,

2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18. Forest Heath also protected War Pensioners (pensioners are protected by the Government changes) from the reduction in maximum benefit and removed Second Adult Rebate for working age claimants.

- 3.3 Forest Heath developed a LCTRS that mirrored the previous Council Tax Benefit rules. The scheme pays maximum benefit of 91.5% for working age claimants, previously 100%, and otherwise is, in most areas, the same as the default prescribed LCTRS scheme applied to pensioners. It should be noted the old Council Tax Benefit scheme and rules complied with protections for vulnerable groups, including the disabled, to mitigate the effects of child poverty, duty to prevent homelessness as well as the Equality Duty (see background paper A 'Vulnerable People Key Local Authority Duties').
- 3.4 Each year the Council is required to review its LCTRS. As a result of the review, as detailed in Report No: CAB/FH/17/062 and following the consideration and rejection of other options for the 2018/2019 LCTRS, the following amendments are proposed, as reproduced from the Cabinet report:

5.1 Uprating benefit rates to 2015 rates for all claimants.

The Benefit rates used in the Scheme have not been uprated in line with the Prescribed Scheme for Pensioners nor Housing Benefit since 2013. The cost to the District is small (under £1k, £4k for County); it should be noted that Benefit rates only require uprating to 2015 rates, as Government determined to freeze rates at 2015 values in 2016 for four years. This would impact positively on all existing claimants.

5.2 Harmonise the Scheme to the DWP Welfare Reforms introduced in the Prescribed Scheme for Pensioners and Housing Benefit for new claimants. *These measures include restricting new claims to two children, removing the family premium and changes to the entitlement rules for persons from abroad. Due to the fluctuating nature and volume of these cases we cannot predict the impact although we believe it to be small. Such changes will align administration and enable a consistent customer service.*

5.3 Introduce links to the award of Universal Credit (UC) for new claimants; *the Council shall be in the UC Full Service from December 2018, meaning all new claims will be affected from 2018-19. The present scheme takes into account the award of UC in a similar way to other DWP Benefits. The proposal is to make LCTRS entitlement conditional upon UC entitlement, thereby removing the requirement to make a separate application.*

5.4 *Those customers not claiming UC who are entitled to do so will be supported to make a claim. Customers not entitled to UC due to their financial circumstances will be in a similar position to existing customers whose income exceeds entitlement to*

LCTRS. Thus, the Council will continue to support customers in work on a low income using existing DWP calculation rates – the support will be tapered, eventually ceasing, once income exceeds DWP levels.

5.5 It is proposed that Forest Heath determine additional classes of applicant who will not be required to satisfy the UC entitlement requirement, that being; War Pensioners, customers receiving Armed Forces payments and customers in receipt of Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit, this list is not exhaustive.

5.6 Changes at 5.2 and 5.3 above will affect people needing to make a new claim either through change in financial circumstances or making a claim for the first time. Existing claimants will have transitional protection until specific changes in their circumstances. We expect the number of people to be effected by these changes to be proportionately small.”

3.5 As amendments to the LCTRS for 2018/2019 are proposed, the Council is required to consult/engage with preceptors and stakeholders in order to inform final scheme design by 28 February of the preceding year. Details of the engagement exercise undertaken is contained in the Cabinet report. Overall, the results of the consultation have indicated a lack of concern for the changes proposed.

3.6 Members may view the full report on the Council’s website via the above links or may request a paper copy from Democratic Services.

4. Council Tax Base for Tax Setting Purposes 2018/2019

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Stephen Edwards

Report No:
[CAB/FH/17/063](#) and
[Appendix 1](#) and
[Appendix 2](#)

RECOMMENDED:

That:-

- 1. The tax base for 2018/2019, for the whole of Forest Heath is 17,964.44 equivalent Band D dwellings, as detailed in paragraph 1.4 of Report No: CAB/FH/17/063.**
- 2. The tax base for 2018/2019 for the different parts of its area, as defined by parish or special expense area boundaries, are as shown in Appendix 2 to Report No: CAB/FH/17/063.**

4.1 The Council Tax Base of the Council is the total taxable value at a point in time of all the domestic properties in its area, plus projected changes in the property base and after applying the estimated collection rate.

- 4.2 The total taxable value referred to above is arrived at by each dwelling being placed in an appropriate valuation band determined by the Valuation Office, with a fraction as set by statute being applied in order to convert it to a Band 'D' equivalent figure. These Band 'D' equivalent numbers are then aggregated at a district wide level and are also sub totalled for parishes. This has to be done by the Council responsible for sending the bills out and collecting the council tax ('the billing authority'). In two tier areas, district councils fulfil this function.
- 4.3 The Council Tax Base is used in the calculation of Council Tax. Each authority divides its total Council Tax required to meet its budget requirements by the Tax Base of its area to arrive at a Band 'D' Council Tax.
- 4.4 The Tax Base for Council Tax collection purposes has been calculated as 17,964.44, which is an increase of 389.11 on the previous year.
- 4.5 The calculations applied to reach this figure are detailed in Report No: CAB/FH/17/063. Members may view the full report and its Appendices on the Council's website via the above links or may request a paper copy from Democratic Services.

5. Draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2018-2020

Portfolio Holder: Cllr James Waters

Report No:
[CAB/FH/17/064](#) and
Appendix A (attached as
Appendix 2 to this
referrals report)

RECOMMENDED:

That the draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2018-2020, as contained in Appendix A to Report No: CAB/FH/17/064, be adopted.

- 5.1 The most recent strategic plan for West Suffolk covered the period 2014-2016. It was then agreed to extend the vision and priorities in that plan until the outcome of the devolution process in Norfolk and Suffolk was clear. It is now considered timely for a new strategic framework document to be agreed, especially given that the both councils have now agreed to proceed with proposals for creating a single council for West Suffolk.
- 5.2 Work has been underway by Portfolio Holders from both Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils since summer 2017 on the development of a revised Strategic Framework for 2018-2020.
- 5.3 In summary, the document contains the proposed:
- (a) **West Suffolk councils' vision:** Supporting and investing in our West Suffolk communities and businesses to encourage and manage ambitious growth in prosperity and quality of life for all.

- (b) **Strategic priorities:**
 - Growth in West Suffolk's economy for the benefit of all our residents and UK plc.
 - Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active.
 - Increased and improved provision of appropriate housing in West Suffolk in both our towns and rural areas.
 - (c) **Projects and actions to support the priorities:** project and actions already underway as well as those that have been agreed but not yet started.
 - (d) **Ways of working:** how the West Suffolk councils will work together in taking forward the ambitious set of projects and activities, in order to support improvements in quality of life in West Suffolk.
- 5.4 For ease of reference, the draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2018-2020 document, attached as Appendix A to Report No: CAB/FH/17/064, is attached as Appendix 2 to this referrals report.

This page is intentionally left blank

Cabinet



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	West Suffolk Operational Hub	
Report No:	CAB/FH/17/057	
Report to and dates:	Cabinet	12 December 2017
	Council	20 December 2017
Portfolio holder:	Councillor David Bowman Portfolio Holder for Operations Tel: 07711 593737 Email: david.bowman@forest-heath.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Mark Walsh Assistant Director (Operations) Tel: 01284 757300 Email: mark.walsh@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	To update Members on project progress, seek approval to secure additional funding, exercise the Council's option on land at Hollow Road Farm and enter into a construction contract.	
Recommendation:	<p>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that, subject to the approval of Council, the Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notes this report and its appendices; 2. Approve the allocation of an additional £589,000 to council's Capital Programme funded in line with paragraphs 5.14 - 5.17 of Report No: CAB/FH/17/000; and 3. Subject to receiving a planning consent:- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Exercises the Council's option to procure land at Hollow Road Farm; b) With Suffolk County Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council, enters into a contract for the construction of the West Suffolk Operational Hub at Hollow Road Farm; and 4. Agrees for the Council's Section 151 Officer to make the necessary changes to the Council's 2017/18 prudential indicators as a result of recommendation 2 above. 	

Key Decision: <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i>		<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> As it is a decision of Council	
<i>The decisions made as a result of this report will usually be published within 48 hours and cannot be actioned until five clear working days of the publication of the decision have elapsed. This item is included on the Decisions Plan.</i>			
Consultation:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two pre-application public consultations have taken place relating to these proposals on 06MAR15 to 20APR15 and 08JAN16 to 19FEB16. A third public consultation has taken place as part of the Development Control process to determine the planning application. 	
Alternative option(s):		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed in previous reports 	
Implications:			
<i>Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See report section 6 	
<i>Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See report paragraph 5.13 	
<i>Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<i>Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legally the project must comply with planning law and guidelines and procurement must comply with EU Procurement Directives. 	
<i>Are there any equality implications? 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)
Once planning consent is granted, objectors seek a Judicial Review leading to delay and additional costs	Medium	Ensure planning process is robust with supporting evidence. Legal advice and external support being sought at key stages.	Medium
Delay in project programme results in additional cost, for example, through tender inflation and longer engagement of project consultants.	Medium	Delays to programme to date have impacted. Continue to monitor throughout the project lifecycle	Medium
Risk that the project does not proceed or is abandoned at some later stage resulting	Medium	Keep Members fully informed of progress and risks. Continue to manage and	Medium

in the council having to fund its share of abortive costs on the project to date from revenue budgets.		mitigate risks through robust project management and appropriate external advice.	
Further design development (inc utilities and services) could lead to increased costs	Medium	Appoint contractor on 2-stage design and build to obtain greater cost certainty earlier in the project lifecycle.	Medium
The decision by SEBC DCC to issue planning consent for the chosen site is called in by the Secretary of State leading to delay, additional costs	Medium	Ensure planning process is robust with supporting evidence. Legal advice and external support being sought at key stages.	Low
Environmental permitting for the chosen site is refused or leads to high mitigation costs and delay.	Medium	Engaging with Environment Agency early in project lifecycle.	Low
Further archaeology finds could result in increased costs and delay.	Medium	Preliminary survey undertaken. Managing contingency for design development	Low
Savings and income targets may not be achieved.	Medium	Estimates based upon identified opportunities which have been valued realistically.	Low
Cost of borrowing may increase when borrowing is required.	Medium	Linked to PWLB rates. Monitor as part of treasury management activities.	Low
Lack of resources, skills and capacity to deliver project	Medium	External support engaged and further support will be called upon as required. Sharing officer resources with SCC.	Low
Ward(s) affected:	All Wards		
Background papers: (all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)	<p>St Edmundsbury Borough Council report F51 dated 30 June 2014</p> <p>St Edmundsbury Borough Council report CAB/SE/15/015 dated 10 February 2015</p> <p>Forest Heath District Council report CAB/FH/015/001 dated 17 February 2015</p> <p>Suffolk County Council report to Cabinet dated 24 February 2015 agenda item 8</p> <p>St Edmundsbury Borough Council report CAB/SE/15/040 dated 23 June 2015</p> <p>Forest Heath District Council report CAB/FH/15/030 dated 14 July 2015</p> <p>St Edmundsbury Borough Council report CAB/SE/15/050 dated 8 September 2015</p> <p>Forest Heath District Council report</p>		

	CAB/FH/15/040 dated 15 September 2015 St Edmundsbury Borough Council report CAB/SE/16/024 dated 14 June 2016 Forest Heath District Council report CAB/FH/16/023 dated 14 June 2016
Documents attached:	Appendix A – What is the West Suffolk Operational Hub project and why is it required? Appendix B – Chronology of Major Events

Glossary of Abbreviations

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

1. BACKGROUND

Previous Report approved by Council

- 1.1 At its meeting on 14 June 2016 Cabinet considered a report on the West Suffolk Operational Hub (WSOH) - report CAB/FH/16/023. Recommendations from this report were subsequently approved by Full Council on 29 June 2016. These included:
- The progression of a project to deliver the West Suffolk Operational Hub;
 - The preparation and submission of a detailed planning application for a West Suffolk Operational Hub on land at Hollow Road Farm; and
 - Approval of a gross budget of £3.5m to fund Forest Heath District Council's portion of the project (this being a partnership project with Suffolk County Council and St Edmundsbury Council)
- 1.2 This previous report set out the context of dealing with our waste across Suffolk which currently costs our taxpayers £35m each year and is set to increase as the number of homes in the county grows. It also outlined the need for a WSOH given the limitations of our current depot facilities, the urgent need for a suitably located Waste Transfer Station (WTS) in West Suffolk and the opportunity to join facilities on a single site for greater efficiency.
- 1.3 As well as clearly setting out all the political and policy factors impacting upon the project, the report outlined the second public consultation undertaken in early 2016. The main elements of the consultation that the public were asked to consider were; the need for a single site, the site selection criteria that had been used (including a call to suggest alternative sites) and a Sustainability Appraisal.
- 1.4 The report made significant reference to key documents in its appendices which were finalised after the consultation. These were:-
- a. **Consultation report** prepared to report back on the second round of public consultation, in;
 - b. **Identification and Assessment of Potential Options and Sites (IAPOS) report** which included the background to the project, a chronology of events to date, the criteria and assessments used to determine whether co-locating services to a single site was the optimal course to take and the most suitable site for that co-location (Hollow Road Farm); and
 - c. **Sustainability Appraisal (SA)** undertaken to test if a single site approach was the most suitable and the sustainability of the most suitable site identified (Hollow Road Farm).
- 1.5 The report also highlighted the clear and urgent need to invest in new waste and street scene services infrastructure in West Suffolk. With the councils more dependent on locally derived income, modern facilities and further capacity will maximise income growth.

- 1.6 A brief description of the west Suffolk Operational Hub project and the reasons why it is required can be found at appendix A. Full details can be found in the background papers referenced above.
- 1.7 A chronology of the major milestones on the project, up until the submission of a planning application, can be found at appendix B.

2. RECENT PROGRESS

Community Liaison Group

- 2.1 Throughout the project partners have continued to meet with local interest groups through a Community Liaison Group. Membership of the group is made up of local Parish Council chairs, a local resident with waste industry experience and local companies (Steve Lumley Planing and British Sugar). This group has convened at key stages of the project and provides a forum for information to be exchanged. Over the last year or so meetings have taken place to discuss consultation feedback and changes to the proposed scheme designs (26 September 2016 and 9 December 2016) and the detailed planning application (15 March 2017).

Design development

- 2.2 Site design resumed in July 2016 after a period of over a year was taken to undertake the second round of public consultation and review. Significant changes included a re-orientation of the transfer station building, further development of the site access / egress and moving buildings to the bottom of the site to minimise visual impact. Designs were also developed for hard and soft landscaping, re-sizing of the waste transfer station (due to new legislation), the depot and workshop building, the landscapes building, fire and security measures, vehicle parking and circulation, vehicle fuelling and cleansing areas, the drainage strategy and off-site highways work.

Planning application

- 2.3 Following a procurement process, the project team was re-cast and work began on preparing a detailed planning application from the autumn of 2016. A full planning submission was made on 13 March 2017 which included the following elements:-

Planning Statement	Odour Management Plan	Flood Risk Assessment
Drainage Statement / Plan	Heritage and Archaeology	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
Lighting Assessment	Noise Assessment	Air Quality Assessment
Biodiversity and Ecology Assessment	Statement of Community Involvement	Transport Assessment
Topographical Surveys	EIA screening opinion request / response	Architectural Plans and Elevations
Land Ownership Plan	Design and Access Statement	Sustainability Statement

- 2.4 Following a short period of validation by the Planning Development Team, information was placed in the public domain and a further public consultation on the planning application got underway in late March 2017. This was the project's third period of public consultation. The consultation period was extended and a special SEBC Development Control Committee meeting to determine the application was scheduled for 19 July 2017.
- 2.5 At the SEBC Development Control meeting on 19 July 2017, Members of that committee considered for the development on Land North of Hollow Road Farm, Hollow Road, Fornham St Martin, as contained in Report No: DEV/SE/17/031, the Committee agreed that the decision be deferred to enable officers to source further information on the following matters for reporting back to the Committee:
- 1) Whether provision of the proposed shared path could be removed from the application;
 - 2) Whether vehicular access to the proposed development could be facilitated from the southern roundabout at Compiegne Way; and
 - 3) Whether in the interests of pedestrian and highway safety, any traffic calming measures could be introduced along the A134 and C735 Fornham Road.
- 2.6 These matters were duly considered by the joint applicants and revisions to the application and further supporting information were submitted to planners on 10 August 2017. The revision to the application included removing the shared path from the A134 roundabout down Barton Hill (including the revised drawings and documents to reflect this). Information was also provided detailing:-
- a. Why access could not be facilitated from the southern roundabout at Compiegne Way;
 - b. The measures and signs to calm traffic around the development;
 - c. Further information on the provision of electric vehicle charging points and future proofing for increased numbers in future; and
 - d. Additional information on routes and vehicles;
- This additional information was subject to an additional 17 day consultation period and the deferred meeting of Development Control took place on 21 September 2017.
- 2.7 At a reconvened SEBC Development Control Committee meeting on 21 September 2017, Members of that committee again considered application reference DC/17/0521/FUL including the further information they requested outlined in 2.6 above. During the meeting a challenge was raised for the first time concerning the planning policies against which Members were determining the application and seeking to make a decision. Following the meeting and on the advice of planning officers, the Chairman requested that further information

is provided to the committee regarding this challenge and the Development Plan.

- 2.8 A third special meeting of the SEBC Development Control Meeting was convened on 2 November 2017 to consider afresh application DC/17/0521/FUL. At this meeting, subject to the Secretary of State (upon consultation) confirming he does not intend to call in the planning application for his own determination, Members of the Development Control Committee granted planning consent for the West Suffolk Operational Hub at Hollow Road Farm. 38 separate Planning Conditions have been applied to this consent.

3. PROGRAMME DELAY

- 3.1 Work on the Hollow Road Farm scheme for the WSOH stopped in the spring of 2015 when, in response to public concerns, the decision was made to undertake a second, non-site specific consultation for the project. Work on the Hollow Road Farm scheme did not resume again until over a year later.
- 3.2 Having re-cast the project programme in the autumn of 2016, the anticipated date for submission of a planning application was February 2017 with approval in June. There was a slight delay in the development of the planning application which meant that the planning application was actually submitted in mid-March. However, the planning process has been lengthy with the application being considered at three Development Control Committees, approval to grant planning permission was finally granted (subject to Secretary of State call-in) given by the committee on 2 November 2017. The project will not proceed in terms of land acquisition and entering a construction contract until such time that the recommendations in this report are approved by Full Council, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has considered the application and confirmed that he will not be seeking to call it in for his own determination and formal planning consent is issued (per 2.8 above).

4. PROCUREMENT

- 4.1 The design and construction of the WSOH at Hollow Road Farm is being awarded on the basis of a 2-stage design and build contract off a framework arrangement. For the clients this approach provides advantages in terms of the programme, competitive pricing, a higher level of cost certainty as early as possible and is relatively low risk on a project where functionality is considered more important than architectural presence.
- 4.2 A compliant Suffolk County Council Construction Framework is being utilised rather than using an open or restricted OJEU process. A framework process is quicker and less costly whilst maintaining strong competition between the bidding contractors. As employer, the partner councils provided the tenderers with an Employer's Requirement against which stage 1 quantitative and Qualitative assessments were made. In May the partner councils entered into a Pre-Construction Services Agreement with one of the framework contractors to develop the scheme design and costs. We are now ready for stage 2 and this report seeks Member permission to enter into a full construction contract in order for the construction of the WSOH to get underway.

5. FINANCE

Previous report and implications

- 5.1 The previous report CAB/FH/16/023 dated 14 June 2016 set out the finances for the project in terms of its anticipated capital cost, the project financing and the impact on annual revenue budgets for FHDC. In considering the financial implications of the project the report contextualised the position. Specifically, it outlined the fact that many of the services provided from the proposed WSOH are statutory, in other words we have a legal obligation to provide them and therefore must invest in the appropriate plant, equipment and facilities to support their delivery. We also know the cost of that statutory obligation is going to increase significantly due to the growth of housing (and with it bins to empty, streets to clean and grass to cut) of more than 20%. Normal return on investment thinking is therefore not wholly appropriate in this case.
- 5.2 The previous report set-out the estimated capital cost for West Suffolk's share of the WSOH and stated the specific share of this for FHDC. Full Council approved a gross capital budget allocation of £3.453m for FHDC's share of the capital cost. The report outlined the anticipated impact on the council's revenue position in terms of savings and costs (including the cost of borrowing). It also outlined the risk of losing the support of partners and their funding and having to spend considerable sums maintaining a depot that would have to be vacated at some point in any event.
- 5.3 The project has long term implications for the collection and disposal of waste, the delivery of other street and grounds services and fleet management in West Suffolk and beyond. The financial case therefore needs to be considered alongside other factors and drivers for the project, which include:
- Our statutory obligations in terms of the services we have to deliver;
 - Future housing, population and business growth in the area and the pressure this will place on the existing Bury depot (which provides services such as fleet maintenance for all of West Suffolk);
 - The development opportunity on the Bury depot site following its relocation;
 - The changing nature of waste collection and disposal; and
 - The benefits of co-locating and operating waste facilities currently controlled by separate tiers of local government on dispersed sites.

Expenditure on the project to date

- 5.4 Work has been ongoing on this project for over three years. This has included significant external support on technical design and professional services. The nature of this work has changed throughout this period as the project has moved from options appraisal, site review, securing a land option, developing specific site designs, public consultation, review, further public consultation, review, design development and planning. Funding for feasibility work on the project was initially approved by SEBC on 30 June 2014 (£100,000). At their Cabinet on 24 February 2015, SCC approved match funding for the project and

on 22 September 2015 and 14 October 2015 SEBC and FHDC respectively approved further funding to the project of £220,000 which was further match funded by SCC.

- 5.5 The total approved feasibility funding for the project from the three partner councils of £640,000 has been spent along with an additional £20,000 funding allocated as part of the LGA / Cabinet Office OPE programme. As the project has progressed current expenditure is coming from the capital allocation which has an element for professional fees. The notional split of feasibility funding between the three partner councils is on a ratio of 50:32.5:17.5 for SCC:SEBC:FHDC respectively.
- 5.6 The total expenditure on the project to date across the three councils amounts to £940,000. This includes costs for reviewing options, developing the project, public consultations, site surveys and investigations, preparing and submitting a planning application, procurement and detailed scheme design. If the project were not to proceed, abortive costs would likely exceed this amount.

Capital costs

- 5.7 The capital costs quoted in the previous report were based upon high level estimates provided by a Quantity Surveyor engaged to support the project in its early stages. Land costs were assumed as those fixed through the Hollow Road Farm land option agreement that the councils have in place and estimates were also obtained for specialised fit-out. Costs were apportioned on the basis of the transfer station and HWRC (SCC) and the depot (West Suffolk) and the associated land take for these elements.
- 5.8 With further delay and the refinement of design, the project’s current Quantity Surveyors had advised that the previous estimate may need to increase. This information has now been augmented by costs from the marketplace via our proposed construction contractors as well as firm costs from a number of specialist fit-out contractors. Capital costs for the West Suffolk elements of the WSOH project that were previously reported in June 2016 are shown below in table 1 below:-

Estimated cost at June 2016	West Suffolk £000
Previous construction estimate (04/16)	13,164
Land cost	2,052
Fit-out allowance	900
Previous total	16,116
Previous FHDC capital allocation	3,453
Previous SEBC capital allocation	12,663

Table 1 – Previous capital cost estimate reported June 2016

- 5.9 The current capital requirements for the West Suffolk elements of the WSOH based on costs from our contractor and Quantity Surveyor are shown below in table 2 below:-

Estimated cost at October 2017	West Suffolk £000
Current construction estimate	15,248
Land cost	2,052
Fit-out allowance	500
Total	17,800
FHDC capital allocation	4,042
SEBC capital allocation	13,758
Additional FHDC capital allocation	589
Additional SEBC capital allocation	1,095
Total additional capital allocation	1,684

Table 2 – Current capital cost estimate

- 5.10 The major elements of the cost increase attributable to West Suffolk's parts of the project are further detailed in table 3 below. These are a combination of costs associated with project delay and specific scope changes through design development, statutory authority requirements and utility provider input:

Reason	Description	£000
Further project delay	The original high level cost estimate was based upon a Tender Price Index (TPI) of 293 for 3 rd quarter of 2017. The current BCIS TPI is 302 which adds £400,000 to the cost of the project.	400
Ground and foundations	Ground investigation, ground water monitoring, geophysical survey leading to a piled foundation solution to main buildings.	511
Walls	Additional retaining and push wall structures due to site contour modelling.	107
Drainage	Developed surface water and foul drainage solution. Drainage strategy not previously known and noted as provisional in previous cost plan estimate.	683
Sprinkler design	Full sprinkler capability in line with insurer's requirements.	24
CCTV & security	Performance specification produced by our security consultant – details not previously known	38
Additional overheads and fees	Additional overheads applied to increased construction costs. Additional professional fees supporting extended programme.	90

Table 3 – Elements of cost increase

Options to reduce specification and Value Engineering (VE)

- 5.11 Opportunities to decrease the specification have been reviewed throughout the course of the project. These include fit-out items (workshop) which have enabled this budget to be reduced from the previous £900K to the current

£500K. Further VE is likely to compromise the site design and reduce its potential in the medium to long term. This may result in further costly delays for redesigned and potential changes that need to be cleared through planning and other statutory authorities.

The estimated impact on annual revenue budgets

5.12 Annual revenue cost savings and income include are largely unchanged from those previously reported in June 2016 and include:

- Premises savings;
- Management savings;
- Staff savings;
- Remodelled collection rounds (vehicle, staff and fuel savings);
- Additional income from commercial services (including fleet);
- Shared site supervision and administration;
- Haulage cost savings;
- Equipment savings; and
- WDA recharges to WCA.

5.13 Premises savings include a reduction in building maintenance costs through having fewer sites and sharing assets. They also include energy savings through building to the latest environmental standards and utilising green technology like roof-mounted photovoltaic cells. Premises savings also include negating the running costs for the Mildenhall depot and realising an annual income from leasing the building.

REVENUE	TOTAL £,000	FHDC £,000	SEBC £,000
West Suffolk savings	371	129	241
West Suffolk income	235	83	153
West Suffolk Sub-Total	606	212	394
Suffolk CC net savings	450		
Suffolk Total	1,056		
CAPITAL COSTS			
West Suffolk capital cost	17,800		
Unallocated capital receipt	-6,250		
Notional West Suffolk capital borrowing requirement for illustrative purposes	11,550	4,042	7,508

Figure 4 – Table outlining the financial case

Financing the project

5.14 This section sets out the proposed project financing for FHDC only. In line with the council's Investment Framework, this project has been assessed on the basis of prudential borrowing (for the life of project) for the residual borrowing

requirement of £4.042 million. This takes due account of the capital contribution from SEBC.

- 5.15 It should be noted that although this section looks at this project on the basis of investment principles to cover borrowing requirements, the project’s drivers and factors (set out at appendix A paragraph 2) are primarily linked to the councils’ statutory service delivery obligation and to address the medium to long term pressure on the current depot location from future housing, population and business growth. This project also removes the risk to the West Suffolk councils of a reliance on a ‘tipping away payment’ from SCC (initially estimated at £240,000 per year).
- 5.16 The table in figure 5 below includes the full cost of prudential borrowing, however actual borrowing would only take place when the council’s treasury management activities identify such a need. For example, this could be when the council’s cash flow management activities anticipate that an external cash injection is required to maintain the appropriate level of cash balances for the council to operate and fulfil its budget and service delivery requirements. The cost of borrowing is currently lower than it was in June 2016, and this has been reflected in the table below.

Borrowing Costs	£
Interest @ 2.75% (40 year PWLB rate)	111,000
Minimum Revenue Provision (over 40 year - 2.50%)	101,000
Total FHDC Borrowing Costs	212,000
Total FHDC Savings/Income share	212,000
Net financial benefit / (cost)	0

Figure 5 – Table outlining the project borrowing costs

6. PROJECT TIMING

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

Name	End
Development Control Committee meeting	02NOV17
Obtain formal planning approval	15DEC17
Obtain Council approvals	20DEC17
Enter into LoI / contract with contractor	FEB18
Conclude Archaeology	APR18
Discharge pre-commencement planning conditions	MAY18
Construction start	MAY18
Construction end	JUL19
Site operational	AUG19

Figure 6 – Outline project timing programme

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 There remains a clear need to urgently invest in new waste and street scene services infrastructure in West Suffolk. Current arrangements for the transfer and haulage of waste are unsustainable and costly to the taxpayer. Significant growth is planned for West Suffolk which will see a considerable increase in housing and business activity over the next 10 to 20 years. This will result in

increased demand for our frontline services. The current facilities from which these services are delivered are at capacity and we are already facing the need to relocate. The condition of the SEBC depot and workshops in particular is such that they are costly to run and will require significant investment in the short term to maintain existing service levels. With the reduction in funding from central government, the councils are more dependent on locally derived income. Modern facilities and further capacity will be required to maximise income growth potential.

- 7.2 Whilst the planning process has been underway, detailed design has continued to develop which has informed the cost of the project. This has been informed by further technical site surveys and input from the construction contractor and their technical team, the statutory authorities (including Highways and the Local Planning Authority) and utilities providers.
- 7.3 Whilst costs have increased, these are shared with our partners who will also share in the benefits of the scheme. Taking the cost of borrowing into account, the known benefits for the scheme still breakeven with the status quo financial position whilst providing modern facilities and capacity for significant future growth. The scheme also relocates the current St Edmundsbury depot allowing the delivery of further development at Western Way.
- 7.4 Approval of the recommendations in this report will allow the project to proceed to the construction phase.

Appendix A - What is the West Suffolk Operational Hub project and why is it required?

1. The West Suffolk Operational Hub is a partnership project that proposes combining the facilities needed for waste and street services on a single site near to Bury St Edmunds. The partner councils are those involved in collecting waste, Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council, and disposing of it, Suffolk County Council. The proposal is that FHDC and SEBC vacate their depots at Holborn Avenue in Mildenhall and Olding Road in Bury St Edmunds and relocate to a single site shared with a new SCC waste transfer station and a new Household Waste Recycling Centre relocating from the existing facility at Rougham Hill, on the edge of Bury St Edmunds. The project does not include the closure or relocation of the existing SEBC depot in Haverhill nor the closure / relocation of any other HWRCs.
2. Key drivers for the WSOH project include:-
 - a. Significant housing growth in West Suffolk over the next 20 years or so with an estimated increase of more than 22% (from around 75,000 to 92,000 households), the increased demand meaning the existing Depots are not fit for purpose;
 - b. Buildings at the Olding Road depot are ageing and require significant investment in the short term (estimated at around £2.25 million) with more significant development and sums likely to be required in the long term;
 - c. Savings through co-location of the current FHDC and SEBC depot facilities;
 - d. Increased efficiency would also be gained through the potential sharing of facilities with SCC's waste transfer station and HWRC;
 - e. Reduced waste miles, fewer trips, more efficient collection rounds, fewer staff and vehicles (or increased capacity needed for future growth): and
 - f. Better facilities, and the flexibility to reconfigure them to deal with future demand, would bring significant opportunities to increase commercial income to the Council to the benefit of our taxpayers.
 - g. The project supports political and policy factors like the One Public Estate (OPE) Programme as well as the national and local waste strategies detailed in the IAPOS document.
3. Further information on the need for this project can be found in the 'background papers' section above and the project web pages at www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/wsoh.
4. It is worth noting that the current buildings at the Olding Road depot are situated within the approved Western Way Masterplan area and their relocation are a critical milestone to releasing the land for future development. This will support the Councils masterplan aspirations for the site, including the further co-location of public sector services.

Appendix B - Chronology of Major Events

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

residents and statutory consultees. It took place from 6 March 2015 to 20 April 2015.

8. This phase of pre-application public consultation generated a significant number of concerns and objections. Key concerns and options expressed included:
 - Concerns about the location;
 - Loss of agricultural land;
 - Highways and traffic impact;
 - Noise, odour, landscape and visual impact;
 - Planning policy;
 - Justification for a single site option;
 - Site selection criteria; and
 - Site selection process.
9. In response to this feedback the councils agreed to put the planning application for Hollow Road Farm on hold, and undertake a second phase of public consultation.
10. The second round of public consultation took place between 8 January 2016 and 19 February 2016. The councils wanted to ensure everyone with an interest in the project across West Suffolk had the opportunity to scrutinise the process that the councils had gone through so far, and the research they had carried out, so that the most suitable site for a WSOH could be identified. The consultation included an invitation to suggest alternative sites for consideration.
11. The outcome of the second round of public consultation was reported to respective Cabinet and Council meetings in June 2016. Both councils approved the recommendations outlined in 1.1 in the main report.
12. Following the decision of the respective councils, the project team was revised to work on the preparation and submission of a planning application for the development at Hollow Road Farm. This was carried out through the latter part of 2016 and into early 2017.
13. A Planning Application was submitted to SEBC as the Local Planning Authority on 13 March 2017.

This page is intentionally left blank

Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury councils

West Suffolk
working together

West Suffolk Strategic Framework

2018-20

Contents

Foreword from the Leaders of the Councils	3
West Suffolk Councils' role in transforming local places	4
About West Suffolk: current challenges and opportunities	5
Vision and strategic priorities	10
Ways of working	11
Our plans for 2018-2020	12
Measuring our progress	21

Foreword from the Leaders of the Councils

This is West Suffolk Councils' second strategic plan, cementing our place nationally as transformational councils. Since the last plan we have concentrated our efforts on delivering high quality services while investing in growth and working alongside businesses, residents and partners to create opportunities, jobs and prosperity. We have pioneered new ways of working with communities, aiding local solutions and opportunities to be created by residents to meet their aspirations.

This new framework sets out our vision and aims that the councils and the new West Suffolk Council¹ will be working with others to achieve over the next two years, as follows:

Supporting and investing in our west Suffolk communities and businesses to encourage and manage ambitious growth in prosperity and quality of life for all.

West Suffolk is a national success story – a place people love to live and support their families and businesses to grow. With unique countryside, good quality of life and part of the UK economic engine bound together by communities, good neighbours and local groups that look out for one another.

We have been at the forefront nationally of changing the way local government works for its communities and economy. We are making sure our area can meet the challenges such as reduced funding, pressures on housing, increasing demand on health services and the need to attract investment, while being in a better position to bring jobs and prosperity and still deliver vital services. We are also mindful the needs and opportunities for our rural villages and areas as well as supporting our market towns.

To make sure West Suffolk continues its success story onto the next chapter we will focus our energies on three main strategic priorities.

We believe our communities want to see:

- Growth in West Suffolk's economy for the benefit of all our residents and UK plc.
- Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active
- Increased and improved provision of appropriate housing in West Suffolk in both our towns and rural areas.

It is truly an exciting and ambitious time in West Suffolk with the creation of a new single council giving us a louder voice to champion our area; better ability to take advantage of commercial opportunities but being the right size to concentrate locally on place and communities, supporting both our rural and urban residents and businesses.

This framework document is likely to also cover the creation of the West Suffolk Council between 2018 and 2020. Our priorities flow from what we have achieved so far and our approach will see us behaving more commercially while supporting our families and communities and delivering inclusive growth. We will be using data to give us a greater focus on place to help achieve these aims with our communities and partners.

But we cannot achieve these aims alone. That is why we have pioneered new ways of working with communities, partners, businesses and local groups to achieve these ambitions together. We will continue to work in this innovative way to ensure the people and businesses of West Suffolk continue to thrive and champion our communities locally, nationally and internationally.



Councillor James Waters
Leader, St Edmundsbury
Borough Council



Councillor John Griffiths
Leader, Forest Heath
District Council

¹NB To avoid undue complexity, the document refers throughout to West Suffolk Councils. In the event of a new West Suffolk Council being formed in May 2019, all references would then refer to West Suffolk Council.

West Suffolk Councils' role in transforming local places

West Suffolk Councils – Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council – are uniquely placed to support our local places as they seek to grow and prepare for the next decade, and to improve quality of life for all.

As district councils, we play a central part in shaping the future in west Suffolk, alongside residents, businesses, the third sector and other public sector partners.

Our role includes the following:

Role of West Suffolk Councils		
invest	enable	influence
partner	regulate	prevent
deliver	communicate	fund
support	lobby	protect

Using evidence and insight (see following section) the councils have identified the most significant challenges and opportunities that are facing West Suffolk's towns, villages and other rural areas over the next few years. Based on this, and on our vision for what we believe a future West Suffolk should look like, we have identified those areas of West Suffolk Councils' responsibility where we can have the greatest impact and make the biggest difference in our local areas, using the resources that have been entrusted to us. In doing so, we have been mindful of the role of other partners and their plans and strategies, for example, Suffolk County Council, the two Local Enterprise Partnerships covering West Suffolk, parish and town councils, the third sector, community and representative groups and other public sector partners.

This document describes this strategic framework which will shape our resourcing and decision-making over the period 2018-2020.



About West Suffolk: current challenges and opportunities

West Suffolk Councils are committed to making decisions about the future based on evidence and insight. The priorities described in this document are therefore based on analysis that has been carried out to determine what are the most significant challenges and opportunities facing the area. Our approach has drawn on:

- published national data sources
- data from public sector partners
- internal operational data
- insight from local communities, residents, councillors and staff

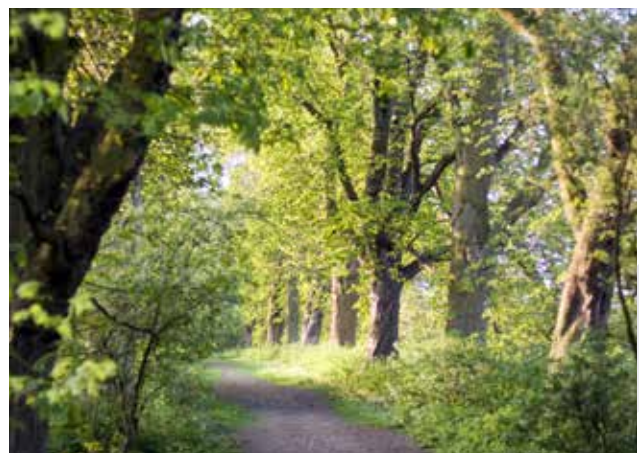
About West Suffolk

The area of West Suffolk comprises the council areas of Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury, two predominantly rural districts in the heart of East Anglia. Well-connected with London, the rest of East Anglia and the Midlands, West Suffolk is a safe and comparatively prosperous place in which to live. West Suffolk has a thriving and diverse economy, embracing a



number of business sectors, including several that support the two major US Air Force bases at RAF Mildenhall and Lakenheath. It also has some beautiful and accessible countryside areas, including grassland, heath and forest. At the same time, some areas of West Suffolk are facing challenges such as rural isolation, a lack of skills or qualifications, an ageing population in need of more specialist housing or care, poverty, ill-health or deprivation.

The charts and graphs on the following pages summarise some of the attributes of West Suffolk, and the challenges and opportunities faced by residents, businesses, the councils and other partners. To see more statistics about life in West Suffolk, please visit: www.suffolkobservatory.info



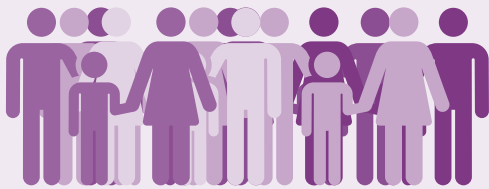
POPULATION

West Suffolk's population is set to grow significantly in the future, and to become older. This poses challenges for the councils in ensuring the right kinds of housing, jobs and infrastructure for our growing population in both urban and rural areas.

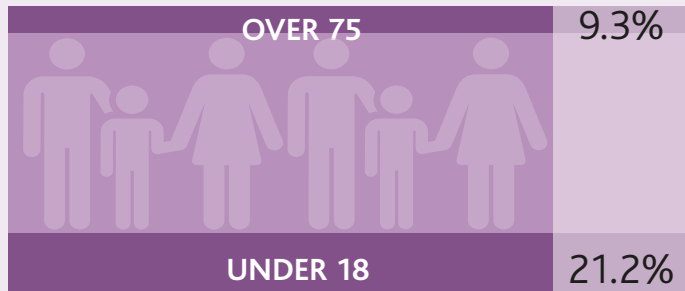
Population

In 2016, the total population of West Suffolk was

177,385



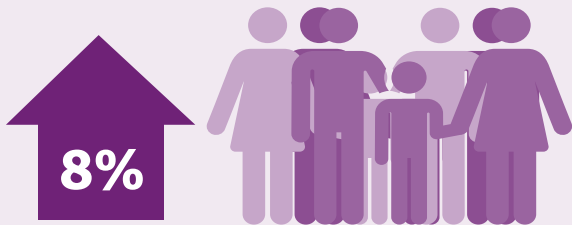
Source: ONS 2016 Mid Year population estimates



21.2% of West Suffolk's population was under 18 (compared to 21.3% of England's population).

9.3% of West Suffolk's population was over 75 (compared to 8.1% of England's population).

Population growth



Between 2017 and 2030, the population of West Suffolk is predicted to grow by 8% (compared to 9% in England as a whole).



The under 18 population is predicted to grow by 5% (England – 7%)



And the over 75s population is predicted to grow by 55% (England – 47%)

Source: ONS 2014-based Sub-national population projections

Number of households

By 2039, the number of households in West Suffolk is predicted to have increased by 20% compared to 2014 figures



Source: www.gov.uk. 2014-based Household projections for England and Local Authorities

Rural / urban balance

Approximately 40% of the population of West Suffolk live in rural locations



Source: Defra Rural/urban classification 2011

ECONOMY

West Suffolk’s workforce is growing faster than surrounding areas and the country as a whole, and employment among young people in particular is healthy. However, wage levels remain below the national average, leading to a renewed focus by West Suffolk councils on attracting high quality employment to the area, supported by training and skills development.

Main economic sectors

In 2016 workers in West Suffolk were employed in the 5 following main sectors:



Business admin & support services



Manufacturing



Health



Retail



Accommodation & food services

	Business admin & support services	Manufacturing	Health	Retail	Accommodation & food services
West Suffolk	15.6%	11.9%	11.9%	9.7%	7.4%
England & Wales	9%	8.2%	12.9%	9.5%	7.4%

Source: Business Register and Employment Survey

These figures exclude farm agriculture (SIC subclass 01000)

Income levels

Weekly median pay (gross) for full time workers





Year	Forest Heath	St Edmundsbury	England
2007	£376.60	£413.60	£464.00
2017	£506.70	£536.40	£555.30

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings

Employment

% increase in the number of people in employment 2015 - 2016

West Suffolk	3.98	 
Cambridge City	0.97	
East Suffolk	0.76	
Mid Suffolk and Babergh	1.91	
Ipswich	2.62	
Suffok	2.32	
Cambridgeshire	3.81	
United Kingdom	3.12	

Source: Business Register and Employment Survey

Young people not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

In April 2017, 4% of the 16-18 year old population in West Suffolk were not in Education, Employment or Training (England: 8.4%)

4%

Source: Labour Force Survey

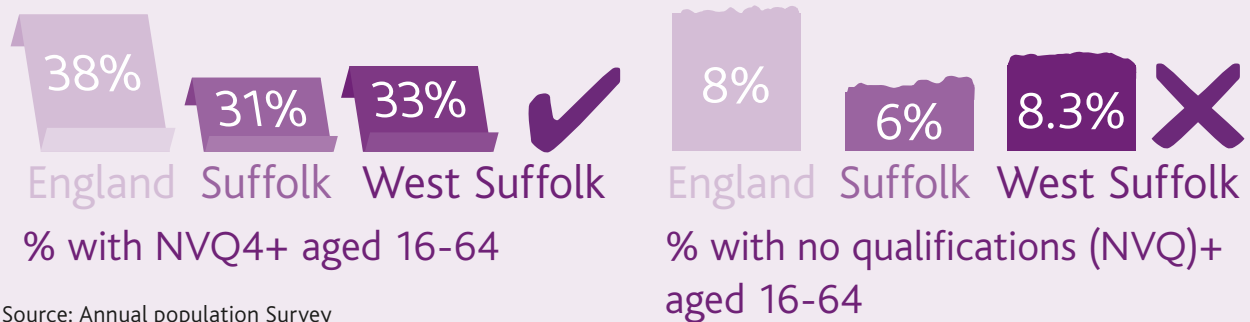
EDUCATION, SKILLS AND TRAINING

West Suffolk faces challenges with increasing skills and attainment levels for our residents, in order to ensure businesses can continue to make the area their home and take hold of new opportunities to expand and innovate.

Qualifications

Reference period
Jan - Dec 16

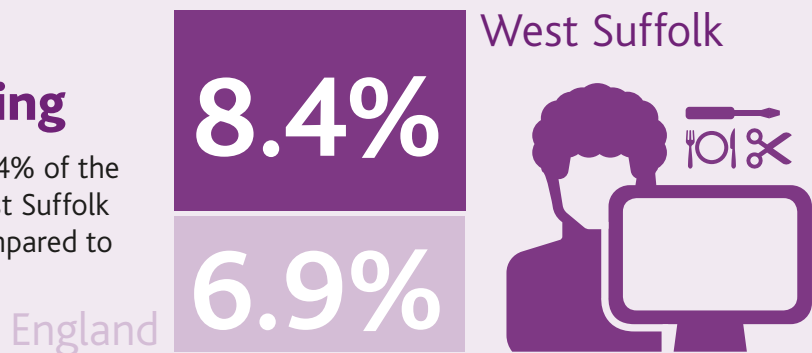
The proportion of 16-64 year olds with no qualifications is higher than the national average. Meanwhile, the proportion of 16-64 year olds with NVQ level 4+ is lower than the national average.



Young people in work-based learning

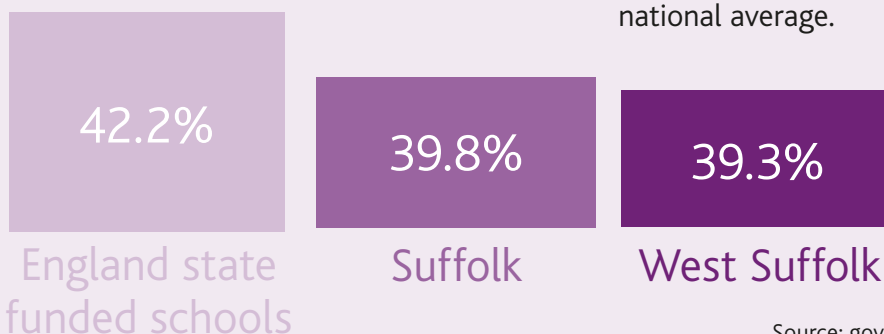
At the end of December 2016, 8.4% of the 16-18 year old population in West Suffolk were in work-based learning, compared to 6.9% for England as a whole.

Source: gov.uk/government/collection/statistics - neet



Educational attainment

The percentage of year 11 students in West Suffolk achieving Grade 5 or above in England and Maths GCSE in 2017 was below the national average.



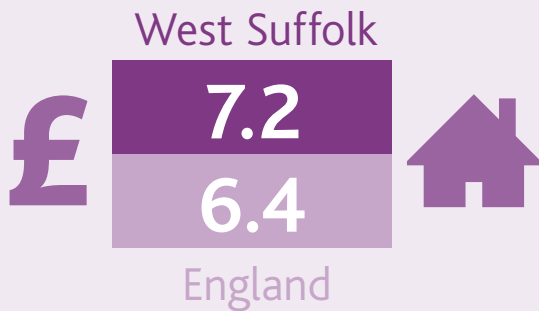
Source: gov.uk - compare-school-performance

HOUSING

Buying or renting a home in West Suffolk is challenging, given average prices and local wage levels. Like the rest of the UK, increasing homelessness poses challenges to families, communities and West Suffolk Councils and its partners. We have invested significant resources in addressing these issues, but the overall housing challenge continues.

Affordability

The estimated ratio of average earnings to average property price in West Suffolk in 2017 was 7.2, compared to a ratio of 6.4 for England as a whole.

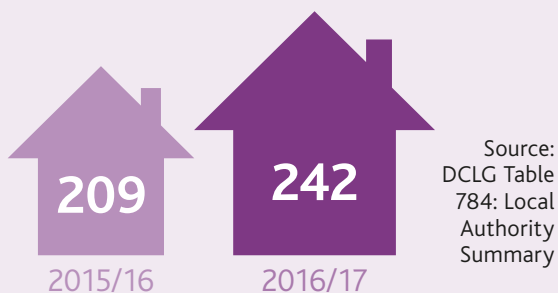


(Ratio of average earnings (full time workers' mean gross annual pay) : Mean semi-detached property price)).

Source: Wage levels - Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings. House prices - Gov.uk - UK House Price Index: data downloads Aug 2017

Homelessness

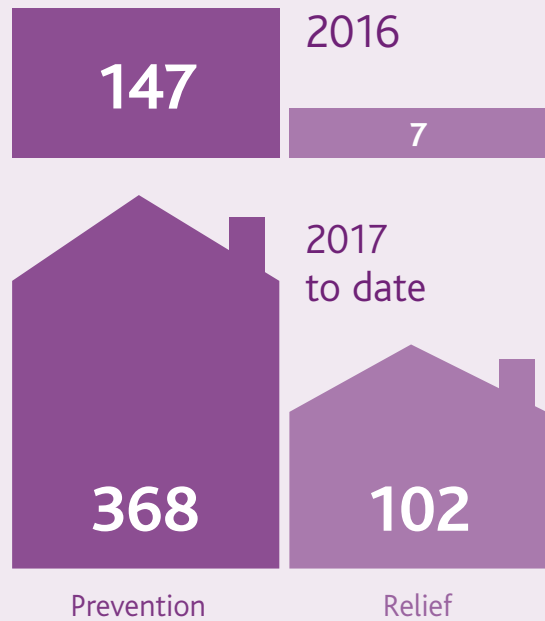
The number of people accepted as homeless (i.e. in priority need and not intentionally homeless) in West Suffolk in 2016-17 increased significantly from 2015-16 levels.



Source: DCLG Table 784: Local Authority Summary

Homelessness prevention and relief

The number of cases of homelessness prevention and relief dealt with by West Suffolk Councils increased significantly between 2016 and 2017.



Homelessness prevention involves providing people with the ways and means to address their housing and other needs to avoid homelessness. This is done by either assisting them to obtain alternative accommodation or enabling them to remain in their existing home.

Homelessness relief occurs when an authority has been unable to prevent homelessness but helps someone to secure accommodation even though the authority is under no statutory obligation to do so.

Vision and strategic priorities

From 2018-2020, Councillors and staff across West Suffolk Councils are committed to:

Supporting and investing in our west Suffolk communities and businesses to encourage and manage ambitious growth in prosperity and quality of life for all.

In practice, this will mean continuing to focus our energies and resources on the following strategic priorities:

Growth in West Suffolk's economy for the benefit of all our residents and UK plc.	Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active.	Increased and improved provision of appropriate housing in West Suffolk in both our towns and rural areas.
<p>We will use our influence, investment, partnerships and regulatory powers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lobby for a better connected West Suffolk, in terms of transport and digital connectivity • promote West Suffolk as a place to do business, so as to attract investment and innovation that increases salary levels and encourages the right mix of jobs to grow our economy • invest in and promote our local places by building on their unique qualities through specific local strategies, projects and environmental services • develop our current and future local workforce through education, training and opportunities for all. 	<p>We will use our leadership, local connections, commissioning role and assets to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • foster supportive networks to improve and sustain the lives of individuals, families and communities • use our community, leisure, open space and heritage assets to support wellbeing and education • work with and influence partners including the voluntary sector in our shared endeavour of improving the health, wellbeing and safety of families and communities. 	<p>We will use our roles as a local housing and planning authority, a regulator, an investor and local influencer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan for housing to meet the needs of current and future generations throughout their lifetimes, that is properly supported by infrastructure, facilities and community networks • improve the quality of housing and the local environment for our residents • enable people to access suitable and sustainable housing.

Ways of working

In carrying out our work, West Suffolk councillors and staff are committed to a number of 'ways of working' that, when taken altogether, represent a set of distinctives of our organisation. These ways of working govern the way in which we carry out our business and choose those opportunities that are important to pursue. They are based on the values that drive our approach, coupled with the circumstances facing local government in the 21st century.

"The West Suffolk Way"	Empowering families and communities to create positive and healthy futures. Working in a way which helps to create safe places, recognises individuals and their needs and strengths, understands relationships and connects people. Finding out what communities care about and supporting them to achieve their goals.
Place focus and subsidiarity	Distinctively local, not generic solutions, that are shaped and delivered locally and reflect the different challenges and opportunities of West Suffolk's towns, villages and countryside areas.
Collaboration and integration	Ambitious and comprehensive cross-system partnerships that join up resources around communities and individuals
Inclusive growth	Encouraging and investing in ambitious growth and good quality housing that all can access and benefit from, and that is good for local people and the environment
Financial self-sufficiency	A shift from reliance on grants to self-generated income, returns on investment, and business rates growth
Behaving more commercially	Taking a business approach to our operations, within our public service remit
Digitally enabled	Maximising the potential of data and technology to transform decisions and transactions

In everything we do, we will be guided by our commitment to promoting equality and diversity by seeking to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimization, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different groups of people through all aspects of our work across West Suffolk. Where appropriate, we will assess the impact of our policies and projects as they develop, in order to ensure they support our commitment to equality and diversity. We have also identified some particular areas within the priorities on p x where focused action is needed to improve equality of opportunity for people in West Suffolk. These are shown below:

Equality objectives

- develop our current and future local workforce through education, training and opportunities
- work in partnership with, and influence, other organisations including the third sector to support families and communities in improving their health, wellbeing and safety.
- enable people to access suitable and sustainable housing.

The following pages of this document explain in more detail the actions and projects we will undertake in relation to our vision and priorities over the next two years.

Our plans for 2018-2020

Growth in West Suffolk's economy for the benefit of all our residents and UK plc

We will use our influence, investment, partnerships and regulatory powers to:

- lobby for a better connected West Suffolk, in terms of transport and digital connectivity
- promote West Suffolk as a place to do business, so as to attract investment and innovation that increases salary levels and encourages the right mix of jobs to grow our economy
- invest in and promote our local places by building on their unique qualities through specific local strategies, projects and environmental services
- develop our current and future local workforce through education, training and opportunities for all

Why is this a priority?

Without 'good growth' in West Suffolk, our residents, families and communities have little prospect of achieving the goals they want to achieve. A strong economy that is capable of growing, sits at the heart of this growth, and West Suffolk Councils hold a number of key levers in driving forward economic change.

West Suffolk Councils need to use our resources to foster good growth in West Suffolk because there are areas where the potential of our places and people is not being maximised and where more could be achieved. For example, we need to direct our energies towards projects and activities that will help bolster productivity, improve educational attainment and increase wages, which are currently lagging behind national trends. We also need to work with others to improve infrastructure, which is so critical in rural areas such as ours.

As we look towards the next decade and the significant social and economic change that we are likely to experience, West Suffolk Councils need to be leading the way in ensuring that our local economies are resilient and growing in an inclusive way.

During 2018-2020, we will:

1. Ensure an up-to-date strategic planning framework is in place across West Suffolk, including an Infrastructure Development Plan. Our work will include the preparation of a joint local plan timetable, supported by supplementary planning documents; a review of the Statement of Community





- Involvement; and work with parish and town councils on neighbourhood plans.
2. Give West Suffolk a louder voice in the growth agenda at the national and regional levels, in particular through the Local Enterprise Partnerships, Suffolk Growth Programme Board, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and wider networks covering the East and South East of England. This will include ensuring West Suffolk gets a fair share of available funding to support growth.
3. Make opportunities for growth available through land, premises and Enterprise Zones, for example, the development of the Cambridge – Norwich tech corridor, Suffolk Business Park, Haverhill Research Park and Epicentre. We will also continue to work with central government on the future of the RAF Mildenhall site in anticipation of the United States Air Force leaving the site in 2024 (at the earliest).
4. Work with partners and developers to secure, improve and increase infrastructure provision to enable West Suffolk to continue to flourish. In particular, the A1307 corridor, A11, A14, Ipswich to Cambridge rail services (including East-West rail, Eastern Section), a potential light rail link between Haverhill and Cambridge, and broadband provision.
5. Develop insight-based bespoke strategies for investment and other activities in our local places. Our approach in each of our places will promote inclusive growth, which enables residents, families and communities to improve their quality of life, while also growing the economy and safeguarding and enhancing the natural and built heritage and environment.
6. Drive forward improvements in our town centres, including improving markets provision. We will continue to implement the Haverhill masterplan and to finalise the masterplan for Bury St Edmunds as well as work on masterplanning in Newmarket and Mildenhall.
7. Understand our local businesses and provide them with targeted support to enable them to expand and flourish, for example, through small grants or loans and signposting to support agencies. This will include working with Chambers of Commerce, the New Anglia Growth Hub, Business Improvement Districts and others such as West Suffolk College.



8. Provide focused support for our key growth sectors of advanced manufacturing; digital and creative; biotech; tourism; film; and food, drink and agritech. Our support will include encouraging businesses to implement environmental improvements and to adopt a culture which nurtures employee health and wellbeing as well as their talents, ambitions and innovation.
9. Promote West Suffolk's brand through inward investment activities and events, for example the West Suffolk Business Festival, and by raising our local profile through the Destination Management Organisation. We will use these opportunities to retain and attract talented people, especially young people, to choose to live and work in West Suffolk.
10. Develop an Asset Management Plan to ensure the operational and other assets owned by West Suffolk are used for maximum public benefit, including our office buildings, waste facilities, car parks, investment properties and energy assets such as Toggam Solar Farm. This will include joint initiatives such as the delivery of the West Suffolk Operational Hub and Mildenhall Hub, as part of the One Public Estate programme



11. Support the development of higher level skills in West Suffolk so as to support individuals in achieving their goals and attract higher paid jobs to the area. We will do this by working with employers, the county council, West Suffolk College and other local training providers to promote training opportunities and apprenticeships, including in-house.

Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active

We will use our leadership, local connections, commissioning role and assets to:

- foster supportive networks to improve and sustain the lives of individuals, families and communities
- use our community, leisure, open space and heritage assets to support wellbeing and education
- work with and influence partners including the voluntary sector in our shared endeavour of improving the health, wellbeing and safety of families and communities.

Why is this a priority?

Many of the difficulties experienced by West Suffolk residents could be prevented or tackled



early if support and potential solutions were available close to home, for example, from within family, neighbourhood or community networks. This would then result in a different role for public services, namely being an option of last resort, rather than the first port of call.

We are already developing the foundations of a more preventative approach, working across groups and organisations, listening to and working within and with our communities. Crucial to this approach is encouraging them to explore their strengths and assets, and tailoring our support and responses accordingly. Traditionally we think of assets as being buildings or places but in this approach references to assets also means local people who care enough about an issue in their community that they are prepared to do something about it.

Each locality's social, economic and demographic make-up is different, as well as the challenges faced, and understanding these will be fundamental to the success of our work. This is particularly true as we see long-term trends in demographics, families, the make-up of communities and priorities changing across Suffolk. For example, a third of newborns will live to 100 years of age². Increasingly, those approaching retirement age are still caring for their parents, which has an impact on housing choices, where people decide to live and work, and their lifestyles.

In practical terms this means rethinking what public services do. Prioritising the role of families and communities in society will mean that West Suffolk councils will advocate, empower and enable people to spot, prevent and address emerging problems, rather than waiting until they become serious and manifest themselves as worklessness, anti-social behaviour or poor health.

² ONS Period and cohort life tables, 2012 release (Dec 2013)

During 2018-2020, we will:

1. Continue the direction set in 2011, updating our strategy where appropriate
2. Work closely with councillors to identify groups, community connectors and other individuals able to provide support within their communities, such as lunch clubs and pre-school provision.
3. Continue to strengthen our relationships with parish and town councils through Town and Parish cluster meetings, Forum and the West Suffolk conference.
4. Support groups and organisations to build capacity by making the best use of community grants and locality budgets
5. Maximise the value to communities of external funding streams by monitoring and influencing the distribution of funding and ensuring the West Suffolk community grants do not duplicate other arrangements.
6. Help communities to take more ownership of community assets, for example the Guildhall transfer in Bury St Edmunds and the Newbury Community Centre transfer.
7. Review and understand our diverse cultural assets and opportunities with a view to work with partners to develop a 21st century cultural strategy. The strategy will set out how the value of the assets can be maximised in terms of, for example, celebrating and safeguarding heritage assets; tackling social isolation; promoting tourism; or generating commercial income. It will build on previous work and take account of assets such as the Home of Horseracing and the ambition for a cinema in Newmarket to provide leisure opportunities for families and communities.
8. Support the development of the Mildenhall Hub to achieve maximum benefits for local communities from the co-location of public sector services, leisure centre, school and swimming pool.
9. Build on the relationship with our strategic leisure partner to support the delivery of the Physical Activity Framework.
10. Develop the model of working with housing staff, health visitors and community nurses in discussion with agencies, building stronger



partnerships to address 'hotspots' and 'super users' of public services.

11. Work closely with statutory and voluntary sector partners and communities, including ONE Haverhill, to identify key areas and causes of demand on public services and enable community-based solutions
12. Work alongside partners to implement a multi-agency team in West Suffolk to support communities to become more resilient and sustainable.
13. Utilise and build on the specialist skills and knowledge in the West Suffolk officer team, including community safety, anti-social behavior, health, arts and culture, vulnerable groups, children and young people and community grants, using a variety of approaches
14. Work with our partners to identify the cost/benefit of the West Suffolk approach and develop measures to monitor progress and outcomes.

The West Suffolk Way

The West Suffolk approach sets out the five key elements we believe are the building blocks for resilient and thriving communities.

Element 1: **A Safe Place** – is about working in a way which increases the safety of a place and people’s sense of the place in which they live, work or visit. It can apply to emotional safety as well as physical.

Element 2: **Recognising Individuals** – is about working in a way which recognises people’s individuality, that differences matter and that each person has different needs and strengths. It applies to the development of, and respect for important concepts such as self-identity, self-esteem and self-worth. It embraces culture and values.

Element 3: **Understanding relationships** – is about working in a way which recognises the context of relationships and the connections that exist between people, in spite of difference, be they transactional, nurturing, emotional, practical etc.

Element 4: **Encouraging agency** – is about working in a way which encourages people to help themselves, validating their own ability, recognising that taking action is an important step to change, development and improvement. At a personal level, this increases people’s ability and capacity to demonstrate power, influence and control over their lives.

Element 5: **Developing vision** - is about working in a way which builds positive goals and an understanding of what is being worked towards.



Increased and improved provision of appropriate housing in west Suffolk in both our towns and rural areas.

We will use our roles as a local housing and planning authority, a regulator, an investor and local influencer to:

- plan for housing to meet the needs of current and future generations throughout their lifetimes, that is properly supported by infrastructure, facilities and community networks
- improve the quality of housing and the local environment for our residents
- enable people to access suitable and sustainable housing.

Why is this a priority?

We know that good housing can play an important role in improving the health and wellbeing of people in our area, and it is vital to realising our ambitions for economic growth. Without suitable and affordable housing, West Suffolk's residents will not be able to

achieve their ambitions, whether for family life, career development, a fulfilling retirement or other goals. The local conditions in West Suffolk makes housing particularly difficult to afford, given relatively high house prices and low wages. The councils therefore have an important role to play in seeking to address this situation, and also to ensure housing is suitable for the increasingly ageing population. At the same time, the councils continue to work to improve the quality of housing, so as to ensure it supports the health and wellbeing of residents, families and communities, both in our towns and in our rural areas. In recent years, as well as focusing on increasing the supply of appropriate housing, the councils have also responded to rising homelessness in West Suffolk by investing resources in preventing homelessness and securing suitable accommodation for those in crisis.



During 2018-2020, we will:

1. Promote and facilitate the provision of new housing, supported by infrastructure, and in line with the Government's approach. We will do this by working with a range of partners including registered providers, infrastructure providers, private developers and parish councils.
2. Bring forward growth on the strategic sites at North West and North East Haverhill, North East Bury St Edmunds, Bury St Edmunds East and Bury St Edmunds West. Plus, depending on the outcome of the Forest Heath Local Plan examination North Lakenheath, North Red Lodge and West Mildenhall.
3. Ensure there is sufficient mix of housing types to meet the needs of our local communities, including delivering 30% affordable housing on any private development. We will also work with registered providers to ensure that levels of social rented homes are maintained so there are sufficient affordable homes for individuals and families on low incomes.
4. Seek to encourage developers to build homes to the national minimum space standards to promote healthy living.
5. Develop new housing for sale and rent through the delivery of Barley Homes' first five year delivery plan. Barley Homes is the councils' housing company, jointly owned by West Suffolk councils and Suffolk County Council. Income from Barley Homes will also generate revenue to support West Suffolk Councils in becoming self-sufficient.
6. Promote the development of lifetime homes which meet the needs of people throughout their lives, as well as providing specific adaptations to housing through Disabled Facilities Grants.
7. Continue to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and where appropriate allocate land to meet those needs.
8. Work with private landlords, tenants and the voluntary and community sector to ensure privately rented accommodation is up to standard. This will include provision of advice and support as well as formal inspections, particularly in Houses in Multiple Occupation. We will also implement policy changes to allow West Suffolk Councils to impose financial penalties on rogue landlords whose properties are in poor condition.
9. Support owners of empty properties to enable them to bring homes back into use.
10. Work in partnership with residents, communities, registered providers and other partner organisations to prevent homelessness and ensure families and individuals are appropriately housed. This will include implementing the new duties on placed councils by the Homelessness Reduction Act, through our Homelessness Strategy and Lettings Policy, and promoting housing related support.
11. Implement the Positive Pathway model for tackling homelessness, including identifying risks early, promoting self-help and resilience for those who are able to help themselves and proactive help for those who are too vulnerable to help themselves.
12. Explore options for the provision of more temporary accommodation, in order to house individuals and families, including those who have experienced domestic abuse.
13. Use dedicated support to work with rough sleepers and try to address the problems that lead to rough sleeping and being at risk of sleeping rough, including through the 'No Second Night Out' partnership.
14. Deliver excellent services for those who are homeless. Our work will recognise that some people have more than just 'the need for a roof' and will involve working in partnership to provide support and stabilisation, with the aim of breaking the cycle of homelessness.
15. Work with the Anglia Revenues Partnership, Citizens Advice Bureau and Registered Providers to support the roll out of Universal Credit
16. Continue to explore innovative ways to use good housing to promote the health and wellbeing of our families and communities, including through our role in the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board.

Further detail of our planned projects and activities is available in our specific strategy documents available on our website at www.westsuffolk.gov.uk

Resourcing our priorities

Alongside our Strategic Framework, the Councils' Medium Term Financial Strategy and annual budgets set out how our activities will be resourced. Our Medium Term Financial Strategy www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/mtfs is based on the following six themes:

1. Aligning resources to the West Suffolk 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 (eg 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 (eg business rate retention).

Improving how we work

Supporting our ambitious agenda of enabling change in our local communities requires us to 'lead by doing' and is reliant on significant supporting infrastructure, for example around communications, policy development, information management, estate and resource management, customer access, workforce and organisational development and improving our governance and democratic arrangements.

We have a number of plans in place to drive forward change in these areas over the period 2018-2020, many of which are available to view at www.westsuffolk.gov.uk

Focus on West Suffolk Councils' workforce

A committed and effective workforce is key to the successful delivery of our strategic priorities. Our people policies support the health and wellbeing of our staff in order that they are able to achieve the ambitions set out by West Suffolk councils.

During 2018 – 2020 we will focus our workforce strategy on 5 key areas:

Skills and behaviours – train, develop and grow our workforce in multi disciplinary settings to ensure they have the skills for their role and able to work across the organisation and ensure our staff are fully engaged at all levels.

Pay, reward and recognition – develop affordable pay and reward strategies balanced with the employer of choice vision.

Recruitment and retention – recruit and retain staff with the right skills at the right time to deliver our vision

Workforce planning and data – having a workforce that reflects the right people, with the right skills, with the right potential to develop in order to deliver our vision.

Health and wellbeing – a fit and healthy workforce able to deliver the services supported through the commitment and framework of the Suffolk Workplace Wellbeing Charter.

Measuring our progress

Over the period of this framework, we will use our performance management arrangements to track our progress.

The West Suffolk Councils' performance framework uses a mix of operational, financial, staff performance, customer feedback and contextual information to build a picture of progress in achieving the vision and objectives outlined in this document. The business intelligence gathered in this way supports staff Councillors to spot risks and opportunities and to continuously improve.

In addition, in order to measure overall change and transformation in our places, we will measure progress against the following six outcomes, using our own data alongside data from our partners:



Safe and clean	Healthy and well	Inclusive
Economically vibrant	Resilient and strong	Aspirational

A range of organisations, as well as residents and businesses themselves, will determine how well local places are performing against these outcomes. And so we will also measure West Suffolk Councils' specific contribution by monitoring the specific outcomes and outputs from our activities. Our performance management framework also considers our financial performance and that of our staff.

We will report our progress through regular reporting to the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committees, as well as through our Annual Reports.

Residents, businesses and other stakeholders can access information about our performance and our use of resources through our committee reports, which are made public, and through the transparency pages of our website.





Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury councils

West Suffolk
working together

