

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Title:	Agenda									
Date:	Thursday 8 March 2018									
Time:	6.00 pm									
Venue:	Council Chamber District Offices College Heath Road Mildenhall									
Full Members:	<p style="text-align: center;">Chairman Simon Cole</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Vice Chairman Ruth Bowman J.P.</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"><u>Conservative Members (8)</u></td> <td style="vertical-align: top;">Chris Barker John Bloodworth Ruth Bowman Rona Burt</td> <td style="vertical-align: top;">Simon Cole Brian Harvey Christine Mason Nigel Roman</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"><u>West Suffolk Independent Members (1)</u></td> <td style="vertical-align: top;">David Palmer</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"><u>UKIP Member (1)</u></td> <td style="vertical-align: top;">Reg Silvester</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<u>Conservative Members (8)</u>	Chris Barker John Bloodworth Ruth Bowman Rona Burt	Simon Cole Brian Harvey Christine Mason Nigel Roman	<u>West Suffolk Independent Members (1)</u>	David Palmer		<u>UKIP Member (1)</u>	Reg Silvester	
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<u>West Suffolk Independent Members (1)</u>	David Palmer									
<u>UKIP Member (1)</u>	Reg Silvester									
Substitutes:	Named substitutes are not appointed									
Interests – Declaration and Restriction on Participation:	Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest not entered in the Authority's register or local non pecuniary interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda (subject to the exception for sensitive information) and to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on an item in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest.									
Quorum:	Three Members									
Committee administrator:	Christine Brain Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) Tel: 01638 719729 Email: christine.brain@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>Members of the public who live or work in the District are invited to put one question or statement of not more than three minutes duration relating to items to be discussed in Part 1 of the agenda only. If a question is asked and answered within three minutes, the person who asked the question may ask a supplementary question that arises from the reply.</p> <p>A person who wishes to speak must register at least 15 minutes before the time the meeting is scheduled to start.</p> <p>There is an overall time limit of 15 minutes for public speaking, which may be extended at the Chairman's discretion.</p>	
Disabled access:	The public gallery is on the first floor and is accessible via stairs. There is not a lift but disabled seating is available at the back of the Council Chamber on the ground floor. Please see the Committee Administrator who will be able to help you.	
Induction loop:	An Induction loop operates to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter.	
Recording of meetings:	<p>The Council may record this meeting and permits members of the public and media to record or broadcast it as well (when the media and public are not lawfully excluded).</p> <p>Any member of the public who attends a meeting and objects to being filmed should advise the Committee Administrator who will instruct that they are not included in the filming.</p>	

Agenda

Procedural Matters

Part 1 - Public

- 1. Substitutes**
- 2. Apologies for Absence**
- 3. Minutes** **1 - 4**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2018 (copy attached).
- 4. Public Participation**

Members of the public who live or work in Forest Heath are invited to put one question/statement of not more than 3 minutes duration relating to items to be discussed in Part 1 of the agenda only. If a question is asked and answered within 3 minutes, the person who asked the question may ask a supplementary question that arises from the reply.

A person who wishes to speak must register at least 15 minutes before the time the meeting is scheduled to start. There is an overall limit of 15 minutes for public speaking, which may be extended at the Chairman's discretion.
- 5. Announcements from the Chairman regarding responses of the Cabinet to reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
- 6. Barley Homes Group Ltd Annual Report 2018** **5 - 16**

Report No: **OAS/FH/18/004**
- 7. Lettings Policy** **17 - 60**

Report No: **OAS/FH/18/005**
- 8. Annual Presentation by the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance** **61 - 72**

Report No: **OAS/FH/18/006**
- 9. West Suffolk Information Framework - Report from the Joint Task and Finish Group** **73 - 92**

Report No: **OAS/FH/18/007**

10. Work Programme Update

93 - 98

Report No: **OAS/FH/18/008**

11. Exclusion of Press and Public

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

Part 2 – Exempt

12. Exempt Appendix A - Annual Presentation by the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance

99 - 100

Exempt Appendix A to Report No: **OAS/FH/18/006**

(This exempt Appendix A is to be considered in private under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Scheduled 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as it contains information relating to financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Thursday 11 January 2018** at **6.00pm** at the **Council Chamber, District Offices**, College Heath Road, Mildenhall IP28 7EY

Present: **Councillors**

Chairman Simon Cole
Vice Chairman Ruth Bowman J.P.

Chris Barker
John Bloodworth
Brian Harvey

Christine Mason
Nigel Roman
Reg Silvester

Also in attendance:

Andy Drummond, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture

195. **Substitutes**

There were no substitutes declared.

196. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Rona Burt and David Palmer.

197. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2017, were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

198. **Public Participation**

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

199. **Announcements from the Chairman regarding responses of the Cabinet to reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and any other updates from the Chairman**

The Chairman attended Cabinet on 12 December 2017, and presented the Committee's report on items it considered on 9 November 2017, which was noted.

200. **Annual Presentation by the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture**

The Committee was reminded that on 12 January 2017, it had received a presentation from the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture, setting out responsibilities covered under her portfolio.

At this meeting, the Cabinet Member had been invited back to provide his annual update, and Report No: OAS/FH/18/001 set out the focus of the update.

The Cabinet Member was also provided in advance of the meeting with some key questions identified by Scrutiny Members on areas they wished to be appraised on during the annual update, which were included in the report along with responses, specifically:

- 1) **Rural Communities:** What proposals does the Portfolio Holder have to ensure leisure and culture is fully inclusive to all within Forest Heath, in particular rural communities?
- 2) **Rural Communities:** How does the Portfolio Holder propose to ensure that rural communities do not become the forgotten few?
- 3) **Rural Communities:** Is there a specific leisure and culture programme for rural communities for 2018?

Councillor Andy Drummond opened his presentation by thanking the Committee for the invitation to update the Committee on matters concerning his Portfolio since January 2017, and welcomed the new format in providing questions in advance. He was pleased that the Committee was interested in the subject of leisure provision in rural communities, and advised that by definition Forest Heath was categorised in DEFRA's Rural and Urban classification system as a Rural District. He highlighted a number of key points in response to the three specific questions highlighted above.

The Committee asked follow-up questions on leisure and cultural provision in rural communities, to which comprehensive responses were provided. Other areas discussed were the spending of S106 monies on leisure and culture, particularly for play areas; the Mildenhall museum which was run by volunteers; the Brecks Partnership and funding received for clearing the river and fen edge along the river Lark; and the early negotiations taking place with Suffolk County Council on the potential purchase of Brandon Country Park.

In particular discussions were held on the following:

- 1) **Renewal of play areas:** Discussions were held about the fact that play areas had a finite life and that there was a need to have some form of replacement programme to ensure that the facilities remained fit for purpose. To standardise arrangements across West Suffolk it was proposed that the council should be asked to consider whether it would be prepared to support and fund a cyclical replacement programme as there was currently no defined budget earmarked for that purpose.

- 2) Brandon new walk/run route: Councillor Silvester had some concerns regarding the new run/walk route and questioned the take-up as users had indicated to him, that they could not find the discs on the posts to follow the route.

In response the officer advised that the launch was well attended, and agreed to check the route and the location of the discs, which were a standard size on posts.

- 3) Parish Forums: Discussions were held on the relationship with leisure through the Parish Forums and questioned whether the council used the Forums to disseminate information on the various wellbeing programmes.

In response the officer advised that he had attended and spoken at Parish Forums about S106 leisure spend, and agreed to taken on board the use of the Forums in future to promote other West Suffolk leisure activities, in particular the West Suffolk Promoting Physical Activity Framework which the Council had adopted.

- 4) One Life Suffolk: Discussions were held on the One Life Suffolk and questioned how this was promoted.

In response the officer advised that One Life Suffolk was predominantly promoted and communicated via General Practitioner surgeries and hospital's but they had their own promotional campaigns and certain courses could be booked directly online subject to applicants meeting certain criteria.

The Committee on behalf of Members wished thank the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture and officers for their attendance, and **noted** the update, subject to the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture disseminating information through the Parish Forums on the "One Life Suffolk" and the West Suffolk Promoting Physical Activities Framework document.

201. **Cabinet Decisions Plan: January 2018 to May 2018**

The Committee received Report No: OAS/FH/18/002, which requested that members peruse the Cabinet Decisions Plan for the period January 2018 to May 2018, for which it would like further information on or might benefit from the Committee's involvement.

The Committee considered the latest version of the Decisions Plan, and noted that a number of items in the Decisions Plans were programmed in the Committee's forward work programme for scrutiny over the coming months.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the contents of the January to May 2018 Decisions Plan.

202. **Work Programme Update**

The Committee received Report No: OAS/FH/18/003, which updated Members on the current status of its rolling work programme of items for scrutiny during 2018 (Appendix 1).

The report also requested the Members identify questions they would like the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance to cover in his annual update to the Committee on 8 March 2018.

The Committee considered the report and at the time of the meeting had not identified any questions they wished to put to the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance. Therefore, the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) would email the Committee asking for questions to be submitted to her by Wednesday 17 January 2018.

There being no decisions required, the Committee **noted** the current status of its work programme.

The Meeting concluded at 6.50pm

Signed by:

Chairman

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	Barley Homes Annual Report 2018	
Report No:	OAS/FH/18/004	
Report to and date:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	8 March 2018
Portfolio holder:	Sara Mildmay-White Lead Cabinet Member for Housing Tel: 01359 270580 Email: sara.mildmay-white@stedsbc.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Julie Baird Assistant Director (Growth) Tel: 07960 868420 Email: julie.baird@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	To provide the opportunity for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to note Barley Homes' Annual report and the Shareholder Advisory Group's view and recommendations and provide any additional comments to inform the preparation of Barley Homes next Business Plan.	
Recommendations:	<p>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that the Committee:</p> <p>(1) Note the Annual Report 2018 for Barley Homes (Group) Limited, as attached as Appendix A to this report, and the progress to date.</p> <p>(2) Note the Barley Homes Shareholder Advisory Group's (SAG) views and recommendations set out in this report, to address the current challenges.</p> <p>(3) Provide any additional comments / recommendations they wish the Barley Homes SAG and Cabinet to consider to:</p> <p>(a) Further inform the preparation of the</p>	

	revised Barley Homes business plan;		
	(b) How best to keep Members informed; noting that the Business Plan will continue to be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for annual review.		
Key Decision: <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i>	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shareholder Advisory Group meeting: 14 February 2018 • Overview and Scrutiny Committee 		
Alternative option(s):	None		
Implications: None			
<i>Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<i>Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<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 type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<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)
Failure to support the proposals results in delay in progressing the business plan and achieving the objectives for the council	Low	Members are provided the opportunity through scrutiny to consider current performance of barley homes and proposed actions / recommendations from the Shareholder Advisory Group	Low
Ward(s) affected:		All wards	
Background papers:		None	
Documents attached:		Appendix A: Barley Homes (Group) Ltd Annual Report 2018	

Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

To enable Scrutiny of the Annual report prepared by Barley Homes (Group) Ltd in the context of the views provided by Shared Shareholders Advisory Group. These include an analysis of the challenges and progress made by the company and recommendations from the Shareholder Advisory Group to be included in the review of Barley Home's Business plan over forthcoming months.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Attached at **Appendix A** to this covering report is the Annual Report of Barley Homes (Group) Ltd, the company established jointly by St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC), Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) and Suffolk County Council (SCC) to build open market housing for sale, housing for private rent and affordable housing. Whilst the Annual Report presents the position from a Barley Homes perspective, the purpose of this covering report is to provide perspectives from the SEBC / FHDC viewpoint, as joint owners (shareholders) of Barley Homes. This covering report outlines the current progress against the agreed Barley Homes Business Plan, key challenges and achievements and a number of recommendations on the way forward, which the Overview and Scrutiny are requested to consider.

1.2 As owners of the Company, SCC, SEBC and FHDC take the role of the Shareholders and have chosen to discharge this through the Shareholder Advisory Group (SAG). There are two members from each of the West Suffolk Councils' on the group Cllrs Sara Mildmay-White, Richard Rout, Lance Stanbury and Brian Harvey. Their respective rights and responsibilities are set out in the SAG Terms of Reference and the Shareholder agreement, which provides that it is to:

- provide strategic guidance to the Company;
- receive and scrutinise reports on the performance of the Company in meetings with the Directors and reporting back key issues on the direction and performance of Barley Homes Group to their respective Councils;
- consider, comment on and suggest content for and amendments to the draft Business and Delivery Plan produced by the Company;
- consider and discuss with Directors how the Company could further the priorities of the Shareholders, in accordance with the Company's primary commercial focus;
- resolve any situations where a deadlock has occurred as set out in the Shareholders Agreement.

2.0 Process for producing annual business and delivery plans

2.1 The Barley Homes first five-year business plan (dated September 2016) was agreed by the shareholders in December 2016 ref: It is expected that each year, the shareholders should receive an annual report against this business plan, and an updated business plan.

- 2.2 The attached Annual Report, prepared in January 2018, outlines Barley Homes' performance in bringing forward the agreed development sites. Implementation from the approved business plan has varied, with one of the sites, Wamil Court, Mildenhall being withdrawn. It is pleasing to note that despite some challenges (discussed below) it is still expected sites will be developed broadly in line with the original timetable. The subsequent development of the next phase business plan over forthcoming months will enable Barley Homes to include proposals which respond to lessons learned/challenges from Overview and Scrutiny, as well as any further direction from Council Leaders and Cabinet.

3.0 Key Challenges

- 3.1 The approved business plan identified that Barley Homes would deliver homes in three sites at Haverhill: Castle Hill, Town Hall car park, Westfield and Wamil Court, in Mildenhall. Subsequently, Suffolk County Council elected to sell Wamil Court to another company, following further market testing to ascertain the best value return for that site on the basis of its existing use as a care home. Members of the SAG expressed their disappointment at the time to colleagues at Suffolk County Council, but it is important that we do continue to evaluate plans as the market changes, and if this does represent the better value to the taxpayer then we should not constrain the County Council who have expressed their firm commitment to ensure Barley Homes succeeds.
- 3.2 There are a number of assumptions and agreed parameters contributing to the financial plans in the approved business case. This includes provision of policy compliant affordable housing, achieving a market level of developer profit and the Councils disposing the site to Barley Homes at "market" land value. The Councils have also introduced guidelines on national space standards, which Barley Homes have agreed that they would seek to comply with. However as more detailed work was undertaken on the sites, taking into account rising built costs, it has become apparent that further work is required with BH to establish new parameters. This is commonly played out in the housing market; housebuilders and developers will apply different variables when undertaking financial appraisals given the individual site circumstances such as size, location and supply and demand of local construction skills/labour. Viability assessments submitted with planning applications demonstrate the complexity of delivering housing in this regard.
- 3.3 The sites identified in the Business case are largely small, brownfield sites which are more expensive to develop out as it is difficult to achieve economies of scale and address their site constraints. It is commonly accepted that SME housebuilders such as Barley Homes have financially struggled over recent years in bringing forward viable sites, resulting in compromise on what can be delivered when they are built out.
- 3.4 The Government's White Paper (Fixing our Broken Housing Market 2017) acknowledges this and promotes that more needs to be done to support SMEs, particularly given they play an important role in increasing annual delivery rates which is not always possible on larger housing sites alone.
- 3.5 In this context it is important to ensure that Barley Homes has the right skills and expertise to support it. Members have previously referred to potential benefits of having a non-executive Director who can bring different experience

to existing directors. This will be explored with other roles over forthcoming months as we evaluate the skills needs to deliver the revised business plan.

- 3.6 The business plan identified the Town Hall car park site as a less risky site to take forward as it already had an approved Development Brief. Notwithstanding this there were significant discussions with local stakeholders on possible variations of the scheme at pre-application stage. Whilst Barley Homes wishes to achieve the right outcomes for each site, in behaving more commercially Barley Homes will need to balance what is achievable considering all other aspects of delivering housing on the site. There is an important role however for Barley Homes to play in bringing forward sites such as the Town Hall car park, a commercial developer may not be in position to bring forward the levels of desired affordable housing and space standards.
- 3.7 Recognising this challenge, meetings have been held between representatives from the three Councils to assess the way forward. Ultimately, Barley Homes was established to deliver a financial return, but it is also critical that we seek to provide the housing our communities need and that this should be the key driver in assessing sites. With this in mind, it was also recognised that it is the role of the Council partners to identify and appraise sites, as part of their Asset Management Strategies, and then for Barley Homes to determine whether it is viable for it to take forward the sites, or an alternative approach to development should be taken.
- 3.8 This does mean that Barley Homes may not always be the best vehicle to take forward sites. However, this is ultimately about achieving the Council partner aims, and evaluating what is the most effective model to do so. The three Councils are continuing to work together to determine what this may mean for the "pipeline" sites that are emerging in addition to the three sites currently allocated. It is however agreed that all Council owned sites to be developed for housing will be continue to be offered to Barley Homes to develop in the first instance.
- 3.9 Barley Homes has produced a communications plan, however it recognises that there is always scope to improve communications. SAG would welcome feedback from Overview and Scrutiny in how to keep Members best informed moving forward.
- 3.10 Similarly, in order to ensure that Barley Homes develops as a company in the most efficient, effective and transparent way, we would welcome any additional comments which Overview and Scrutiny might wish to make on building on effective Scrutiny moving forward.

4.0 Key achievements:

- 4.1 The benefits which can be achieved in operating a housing company with the above remit in partnership with the County Council still stand; these are:
- Access to the wide range of skills and insights which can be provided by each partner authority, who understand the local housing requirements and specialist needs which need to met across the local government system in West Suffolk.

- Access to a wider pool of Councils Assets and land which can be explored to support the pipeline of sites in the future.
- 4.2 Barley Homes has invested time in developing its brand and market focus. This has included additional work in understanding the local market conditions, particularly in Haverhill, which has been fed into the proposed housing mix and will ensure that the schemes brought forward are not only marketable but also help meet local housing need.
- 4.3 The company has secured a Development Manager with commercial experience in housebuilding, who understands the local housing market and brings experience of working with other local authorities in a similar capacity. That mix of skills has been important in identifying some of the issues with the financial constraints presented for the development sites. In addition it has enabled some of the preparation work to be done for implementation of the schemes in parallel with working the schemes up to submit for planning. It is anticipated that this will reduce the estimated timeframe for implementation meaning that the overall delay in delivering on site is minimised. Completion dates for Castle Hill and Westfield are similar to those quoted in the business plan, although there is an estimated three month delay in completion on Town Hall car park.
- 4.4 Barley Homes has undertaken work to identify a future pipeline of sites, which will enable it to build momentum beyond delivery of the three remaining committed sites. This work is particularly important as Barley Homes is presently taking forward only three of the four originally earmarked sites.

5.0 Shareholder considerations

- 5.1 Similar to the One Public Estate model; all partners Councils continue open and transparent conversations about land disposals, profiling potential housing sites to offer to Barley Homes in the first instance through mechanisms such as Asset Management Strategies.
- 5.2 That partner Councils continue to develop their role in preparing the pipeline of sites which build in local and professional expertise and have sufficient information to enable Barley Homes and the Councils to enter into an active dialogue to ultimately determine whether Barley Homes will take forward the sites.
- 5.3 That a new business plan is prepared based including details on future pipeline
- 5.4 That we review the skills and roles which are needed to support the revised Business Plan as it is developed over forth coming months.



Annual report 2018

1. Introduction

Barley Homes (Group) Limited was incorporated in March 2016 as a company limited by shares, jointly owned by Forest Heath District Council (25%), St Edmundsbury Borough Council (25%) and Suffolk County Council (50%). The Barley Homes first five-year business plan (dated September 2016) was agreed by the shareholders in December 2016. The business plan sets out the delivery of initial sites over the first five years of activity. Since approval the Directors of Barley Homes have sought to manage the company to deliver the business plan aspirations of the shareholders.

This first annual report from the Directors covers the period January 2017 to January 2018 and outlines the progress made towards delivering the business plan. A new business plan for future sites will be prepared over the coming months and will be subject to consideration and approval by the Shareholders.

2. Purpose of the company

The primary function of Barley Homes, as set out in its business plan, is to generate capital and revenue income for its owners through development of new housing for sale and rent, initially in West Suffolk (Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury area).

The intention is that Barley Homes will initially acquire land from the councils and add value through the development of housing for sale and rent, and that it retains the rental housing. Financial returns to the councils will be through a combination of:

- **Land sale receipt** – with BH paying market value for land it buys
- **Interest receipts** – on loans provided to BH
- **Dividends** – from profits generated by BH

The delivery of the sites is subject to viability.

3. Development progress

First tranche sites

The following four sites were identified in the business plan as the first tranche sites to be developed.

1. Wamil Court, Mildenhall
2. Part of Town Hall car park, Haverhill
3. Westfields, Haverhill
4. Castle Hill, Haverhill

Illustrative schemes were designed for each site to deliver new homes that would enable Barley Homes to meet its primary objectives. Red Book valuations were obtained for each site to establish a minimum land value that would be paid to the land owners. As the sites have been progressed in more detail, discussions have continued with the landowning councils relating to what can be achieved from each site including land value for the councils, housing tenure mix and sizes that are planning policy compliant as well as company profit.

The indicative development timescale contained in the business plan is included in Appendix one, alongside a comparison with the timescales as at January 2018. This shows that despite the delays in agreeing the final scheme designs, it will be possible, subject to planning permission, to be close to the original timescales set out in the business plan. However, these timescales will be kept under review and are likely to change as site development progresses. Below is a summary of progress towards the development of each site. The key theme running through each site has been the increased construction cost since the business plan was produced in 2016. The construction market is very fluid and there is uncertainty of costs which have increased and are likely to continue to fluctuate in the short and medium term.

Wamil Court, Mildenhall

The appraisal for this site and the Red Book valuation produced a land value that was not acceptable to Suffolk County Council (SCC) as the landowner. The county council therefore made the decision to market the site for sale. SCC subsequently received an offer for the land from a third party which is proceeding to contract. Barley Homes therefore have no further interest in this site. This has resulted in the loss of 20 housing units which were envisaged in the business plan.

Part of the Town Hall car park, Haverhill

A scheme for 15 homes, an increase from 12 which was envisaged in the business plan, was drawn up broadly in line with the Haverhill town centre master plan for the site and discussed with the planners, highways and other agencies. During the pre-application discussions, the scheme was considered acceptable by the planners and was then subject to public consultation in September 2017. During this consultation period, we received a number of representations from members of the public, Town Councillors, Borough Councillors and County Councillors representing the Haverhill area. This feedback was taken into account and the scheme adapted to better address the comments raised during this process. As a result, a planning submission has been prepared which is based on the original scheme but reduced from 15 to 14 homes and from four storeys to three. If permission is granted a start on site could be achieved in summer of 2018 with a completion 12 months later.

The recent rise in indicative construction costs, since the business plan was prepared in September 2016, means that viability on this site remains very challenging. Whilst a scheme has been prepared which is planning policy compliant, there may be some impact on potential land value or site profitability to achieve this level of compliance.

Westfield, Haverhill

It has always been clear that this is a redundant school site that has significant development abnormalities that will increase the cost of developing the site. The site slopes considerably, has a large quantity of mature trees and an issue with water logging and drainage at one end.

This site had an existing development brief that laid out how the site should be developed. The principal restriction on the site is the requirement to retain as many of the trees as possible. This restricts the land available on which new homes can be built. Options have been prepared which take into account the balance to retain some of the trees on site, whilst ensuring that the overall scheme is of a good design standard and meets planning policy compliance in terms of affordable housing provision. Barley Homes has now submitted for a pre-application meeting with a scheme of 38 homes, a slight increase on the 37 homes envisaged in the business plan.

Again, indicative high construction costs have impacted on the viability of this site and will require further consideration.

The scheme will be ready for a planning submission in March 2018 with a projected start on site in November 2018 and completion in Spring 2020.

Castle Hill, Haverhill

Castle Hill is also a redundant school site. The local plan for the site requires that a development brief is agreed for the site before a planning application will be considered. Normally the development brief process would take 12 months to conclude however we have agreed in principle with the planning authority that once the initial public consultation process of the brief has been completed we will run a planning application alongside the development brief process to try and obtain a planning consent at the end of the development brief process rather than make an application at that point.

The agreed brief will ultimately inform the layout that will be submitted for planning however we have drawn an indicative scheme for 25 homes to allow the site to be appraised. Again, increased indicative construction cost are likely to make the development of this site challenging.

Detailed costs associated with the development of the public open space element of this site are still unknown. The requirements for the open space will be identified during public consultation as part of the development brief process.

Commencing in March 2018, the development brief and planning process could be concluded by February 2019. A start on site could then be Summer 2019 with a completion date Autumn 2020.

4. Other activity

Appointment of Development Manager and independent advisor

Barley Homes Group commissioned the support of Savills to prepare its first business plan. Following the business plan approval, the Board identified what support was needed in order to develop the sites in the form of a Development Manager Service. After a competitive process, Savills were retained to provide the Development Management advice using local expertise where appropriate.

There was recognition that the Board needed the expertise of an independent advisor to manage and challenge the work being undertaken by Savills, with knowledge of the local market. Following a competitive process, Paul Bonnet was appointed as an independent advisor to support Board.

In June 2017, a review of the above arrangements was carried out and at that point it was agreed to change the arrangements with Savills. This was largely due to the need to have more local advice and support which could react and prioritise the work as required by the Directors. Since September 2017, the Development Manager role has been carried out by Paul Bonnet using locally-based specialist services.

Website

A website has been developed in 2017 in order to ensure that the company has an online presence. This is important during public consultation exercises so that interested individuals can find out more about plans. Limited information is currently available on the site but more functionality will be activated as the sites are developed.

Shareholder Advisory Group and meeting with shareholder representatives

The Shareholder Advisory Group has met twice in 2017 and received regular update from the Board after its meetings. In September 2017 the Board raised concerns about the viability of sites as detailed analysis of the plans were undertaken. These concerns led to discussions with the shareholding councils, in particular the Chief Executives and Leaders.

5. Pipeline

The pipeline of sites originally identified for consideration by Barley Homes has been assessed continuously over the last year. Further information in relation to the future pipeline will be included in a new Business Plan to be developed.

6. Financial information

A summary of financial information is contained in Appendix 2.

Board of Directors:

Duncan Johnson, Chair
Louise Aynsley
Davina Howes
Simon Phelan

January 2018

Barley Homes Group Ltd
West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU
www.barleyhomesgroup.co.uk
Company No: 10062735

Appendix 1: Barley Homes development timetable comparison of business plan with situation as at January 2018

Sites (Indicative Numbers)	Q2 2017 April- June	Q3 2017 July- Sept	Q4 2017 Oct- Dec	Q1 2018 Jan - Mar	Q2 2018 April- June	Q3 2018 July – Sept	Q4 2018 Oct – Dec	Q1 2019 Jan- Mar	Q2 2019 April - June	Q3 2019 July – Sept	Q4 2019 Oct- Dec	Q1 2020 Jan- Mar	Q2 2020 Apr- June	Q3 2020 July- Sept	Q4 2020 Oct- Dec	Q1 2021 Jan - Mar
Town Hall Car Park (12) Business plan	Submit planning application June 2017					Start on site Feb 2018			Completion June 2019	Completi n June 2019						
Town Hall Car Park (14) As at Jan 2018				Subject to leaders agreement Submit planning application March 2018		Developme nt Control (DC) Committee July 2018	Start on Site Nov 2018				Completi on Nov 2019					
Westfield (37) Business plan		Submit planning application Sept 2017						Start on Site Feb 2019								March 2021 Completion
Westfield (38) As at Jan 2018					Submit Planning April 2018	DC Committee July Aug 2018	Start on site Nov 2018								Completion Nov 2020	
Castlehill (27) Business plan		Submit planning application Sept 2017						Start on Site Feb 2019							Dec 2020 Completion	
Castlehill (Circa 25) As at Jan 2018				Start development brief process Consultation March 2018		Start Planning process to run alongside Dev Brief 2018	Submit Planning Applicatio n Oct 2018	DC Committe e April 2019 subject To Dev Brief Approval			Start on Site Nov 2019					Completion April 2021

Appendix 2: Financial Information relating to Barley Homes 31 January 2018 (17/18 financial information)
Profit and Loss account
Contract Costs

Professional Fees	63,092.47	
Development Manager	18,750.00	
sub total contract costs		81,842.47

Other Costs

Consultants	50,993.70	
Directors Recharge		
Insurance		
Room Hire & Refreshments	37.50	
Companies House		
Legal Fees	4,831.70	
Bank Charges	34.36	
Interest Receivable	-57.17	
Interest Payable	12,341.81	
sub total other costs		68,181.90

Total Costs
150,024.37
Balance Sheet
Current Assets

Bank	28,258.94	
VAT to be recovered	3,602.49	
Total Current Assets		31,861.43

Creditors

-13.00

Total Current Liabilities

-13.00

Amount owed to SCC

-147,500.00

Amount owed to FH

-73,750.00

Amount owed to St Eds

-73,750.00

Total Long Term Liabilities

-295,000.00

Net Liabilities
-263,151.57
Retained Loss b/f

113,127.20

**16/17 financial
year**
-150,024.37
Outstanding Commitments

Recharge of Directors Time - WS

Recharge of Directors Time - SCC

P Bonnet Invoice January

Savills

Zero Above Management Fee & Retainer

Legal Advice - Trowers

Legal Advice - M Tills

Grant Thornton

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Title of Report:	Lettings Policy	
Report No:	OAS/FH/18/005	
Report to and dates:	Overview and Scrutiny	8 March 2018
	Cabinet	3 April 2018
Portfolio holder:	Councillor Sara Mildmay-White Lead Portfolio Holder for Housing Tel: 01359 270580 Email: sara.mildmay-white@stedsbc.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Davina Howes Assistant Director (Families and Communities) Tel: 01284 757070 Email: davina.howes@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	To advise Overview and Scrutiny of proposed revisions to the Lettings Policy. These revisions are required as a result of recent case law and to ensure that the Lettings Policy is compliant with the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which comes into force on 3 April 2018.	
Recommendation:	It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Scrutinises the contents of the report and recommends to Cabinet the <u>approval</u> of the revised Lettings Policy attached at Appendix 1.	
Key Decision: (Check the appropriate box and delete all those that <u>do not</u> apply)	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Consultation:	Partners within the Cambridge Housing Sub-Region have been consulted and proposed revisions have been agreed by the Home-Link Management Board
Alternative option(s):	To continue with the current Lettings Policy. This means we would not be compliant with the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 or consistent with other councils within the Home-Link scheme.
Implications:	
Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •
Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •
Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> • Some changes to the IT system will be required and the sub-region is working with its IT provider to ensure that the necessary changes are made. This will create additional costs which will be funded from existing budgets and the new burdens funding that local authorities have been allocated to implement the Homelessness Reduction Act.
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> • The council is required under the Housing Act 1996 to have a scheme for the allocations of social housing. This revised Lettings Policy fulfils that requirement. The Cambridge sub-region sought advice from Chambers during the review of the policy. On behalf of the Home-Link Management Board, the Cambridge City Council (CCC), Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) and South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) shared legal service has confirmed that the revised policy is compliant with the Homelessness Reduction Act. Advice of the West Suffolk legal team has also been sought.
Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> • An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been carried out and its findings are included in paragraph 1.1.5. •

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)
Policy not aligned with others in Home-Link	Medium	Sub-regional consultation and agreement of revisions to policy	Low
Policy not compliant with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017	Medium	Sub-regional consultation on the implications of the Homelessness Reduction Act and agreement of revisions to policy	Low
Ward(s) affected:		All wards	
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		None	
Documents attached:		Appendix 1 - Revised Lettings Policy	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Home-Link is the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme for the Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk sub-region. Introduced in February 2008, the scheme operates across seven local authority areas in the sub-region. Available affordable housing properties are advertised on a regular cycle agreed by the partners. Applicants on the housing register are asked to express interest in available properties. The properties are offered to the applicant in the highest need who has been waiting longest in that needs band. The scheme also operates a shared housing register.
- 1.1.2 Each council within the sub-region has its own Lettings Policy and is responsible for implementing any changes to that policy. Many elements of the policy have been agreed across the sub-region. Those elements cannot be amended in any Lettings Policy without agreement sub-regionally by the Home-Link Management Board and include, eligibility criteria, banding structure and assessment of need, local connection criteria, sub-regional allocations, intentionally worsening housing circumstances, registration date and date in band definitions, the shortlisting process.
- 1.1.3 The Home-Link Management Board recognised that the councils' lettings policies needed to be updated to take account of recent case law and to ensure that they are compliant with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which comes into force in April 2018.
- 1.1.4 The draft Homelessness Code of Guidance provides direction on how local authorities should meet the requirements of homelessness legislation and has been updated to include information on the Homelessness Reduction Act. The revised draft guidance was open for consultation until 11 December 2017 and it is due to be finalised for publication in spring 2018. It should be noted that the Lettings Policy has had to be amended before the final Code of Guidance has been published. Whilst significant changes are not expected in the final version of the Code, the council will need to ensure that the Lettings Policy is compliant with the published version of the Code.
- 1.1.5 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been written on behalf of the Home-Link local authority partners. The EqIA was an assessment of any impact there might be on people who live, work or visit the area, as well as their staff, as a result of the changes to the Lettings Policy. It was concluded that, as the proposed changes are editorial rather than significant amendments to the substance of the policy, there will be no significant impact on any particular group of applicants.
- 1.1.6 It should be noted that the Board has agreed the minimum changes required to ensure that the Lettings Policy is compliant with the new legislation and it is likely that further amendments will be required to the policy once each council has begun to operate under the new Homelessness Reduction Act and as case law evolves. At this point, practical operations issues will emerge, as well as case law, which are likely to require further, more extensive changes in due course. At this time, it is anticipated that future changes might need to be made and could require further consultation, and

approval by each councils' Cabinet.

1.1.7 The proposed changes to the Lettings Policy (**Appendix 1**) are summarised in the table below. A four week consultation has been carried out with registered providers operating across the sub-region.

1.1.8 Lettings Policy section	Summary of change
1.5 – equal opportunities and diversity	Section updated to refer to Equality Act 2010.
3.4.1 d local connection	Connection to the local area Change of relevant legislation sections applicable.
3.4.1 k special circumstances	This relates to proposed changes to allow applicants in one of the reasonable preference groups, but with none of the local connection reasons listed, to be considered.
4.6 b Current Supported Housing Resident	Proposed change to remove the requirement to demonstrate that an applicant needs to demonstrate that their housing need is for social housing.
4.6 g Homeless Households	Change of relevant legislation sections applicable.
4.7 – Band b – high medical needs	Included a new category for those who are owed a prevention or relief duty. These new duties have been introduced under the Homelessness Reduction Act.
4.7 f Band B Homeless Prevention	Changes to current wording to give preference whilst we look to prevent or relieve homelessness. This will apply to those applicants actively working with us for a period of 56 days.
4.8 – Band c – medium needs	In section D, new criteria introduced to reflect the new prevention and relief duties.
4.8 Other homelessness	Changes to existing wording: d) Other homelessness. Applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and are: a) Intentionally homeless.

	<p>b) Homeless or threatened with homelessness but not in priority need.</p> <p>c) Owed a main homelessness duty by a local authority that is not a partnership organisation in the sub-region.</p>
5.2	<p>Removing paragraph: Where a person is threatened with homelessness within a period of more than 28 days, the Council will work with the applicant to try and prevent their homelessness. Those persons, who appear likely to have a priority need in the event of a homelessness application being made, will be placed in Band B whilst the prevention measures are being pursued.</p>
5.10 – Direct Lets	<p>Additional reason added in order to have the option to make a direct let offer to an applicant owed the “relief” duty.</p>
8.2 – Data protection	<p>Remove this if no changes are made.</p>

Insert local authority name

LETTINGS POLICY TEMPLATE

This document sets out how **(insert local authority name)**, in partnership with Registered Providers with properties in the district, will allocate their properties through the “Home-Link scheme”

Any text in red needs to be customised to each partner’s requirements

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Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This is the letting policy for **insert local authority name**, (“HDC”) and should be considered in conjunction with the Home-Link Partnership Guide, which outlines how the Home-Link choice based lettings scheme will work in Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk. The partner organisations to the Home-Link scheme are:

- a) Cambridge City Council
- b) East Cambridgeshire District Council
- c) Fenland District Council
- d) Forest Heath District Council
- e) Huntingdonshire District Council
- f) South Cambridgeshire District Council
- g) St Edmundsbury Borough Council

1.1.2 The Home-Link scheme and this lettings policy were designed through collaboration between the partner organisations listed above, with the aim of having as much consistency in the letting of social housing as is possible in a very diverse area. The lettings policy aims to ensure that all people seeking social housing in **(insert local authority name)** can exercise choice in deciding where they wish to live and in the type of property they would prefer.

1.1.3 The policy enables **(insert local authority name)** to consider the individual needs of its applicants whilst making best use of the scarce resource of housing stock. The policy sets out:

- a) How to apply for housing.
- b) Who will qualify to be accepted onto the housing register.
- c) How priority for housing applicants will be given.
- d) What the decision-making processes are.
- e) How homes will be let.

1.1.4 You may view the Home-Link Partnership Guide and this lettings policy, at **(insert local authority website)**, or request a copy from any of the partner organisation’s offices. (See Appendix 1 on p.31)

1.2 Objectives of the lettings policy

- a) To meet the legal requirements for the allocation of social housing as set out in the Housing Act 1996 (as amended)
- b) To assist applicants in the highest assessed need
- c) To let properties in a fair and transparent way and provide a consistent lettings process
- d) To make best use of housing stock
- e) To ensure that applicants are not unlawfully discriminated against, whether directly or indirectly
- f) To support vulnerable applicants
- g) To provide increased choice and information to applicants
- h) To provide information and feedback on homes that are let through the Home-Link scheme
- i) To improve mobility across the Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk
- j) To promote social inclusion and help achieve sustainable communities

1.3 Statement on choice

- 1.3.1 (Insert local authority name) is fully committed to enabling applicants to play a more active role in choosing where they live, whilst continuing to house those in the greatest need in (insert local authority name).
- 1.3.2 The Home-Link scheme enables applicants from (insert local authority name) to have access to a percentage of available homes from all the partner organisations across Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk.

1.4 Legal context

- 1.4.1 All applicants for housing will be assessed to determine their eligibility to be placed on the housing register. This is to ensure homes are let to those in the highest assessed need and ensures that the council meets its legal obligations as set out in the Housing Act 1996 (as amended).

This policy has also had regard to:

- a) Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England, and
 - b) The Public Sector Equalities Duty, and
 - c) Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act, and
 - d) (insert local authority name) Homelessness Strategy, and
 - e) (insert local authority name) Tenancy Strategy (containing details of the types of social rented tenancies that may be offered by housing association landlords).
- 1.4.2 The law states that there are five groups of applicants where reasonable preference must be considered:
- a) People who are homeless (within the meaning of Part VII (7) of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended))
 - b) People who are owed a duty by any local housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2), or 195(2) of the 1996 Act (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any such authority under section 192(3)
 - c) People occupying unsanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions
 - d) People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including grounds relating to a disability); and
 - e) People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others)
- 1.4.3 The lettings policy has been designed to ensure applicants who fall into the above reasonable preference categories will be awarded reasonable preference.
- 1.4.4 Every application received by (insert local authority name) will be considered according to the facts unique to that application as (insert local authority name) recognises that every applicant's situation is different. Applications will be considered on an individual basis and individual circumstances will be taken into

account. However, all lettings will be made in accordance with this lettings policy. Where individual circumstances are not covered by the on-line application form, applicants should contact the partner to whom they are applying to discuss their application so that all relevant facts can be considered fully.

1.5 Equal opportunities and diversity

- 1.5.1 The lettings policy will be responsive, accessible and sensitive to the needs of all by having regard to the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010.

(Insert local authority name) is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and will ensure that all applicants are treated fairly and without unlawful discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

In addition, (Insert local authority name) is committed to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (2011):

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

(Insert local authority name) also has due regard to the commitments made in Article 14 of the Human Rights Act (1998) as it relates to the service provided.

1.6 The welfare of children

- 1.6.1 (Insert local authority name) will ensure that decisions made under this lettings policy have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children taking into account Section 11 of The Children's Act and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

- 1.6.2 (Insert local authority name) will also have regard to the Children & Social Work Act 2017 as relates to the local arrangements for safeguarding and promoting welfare of children.

1.7 The welfare of adults

- 1.7.1 (Insert local authority name) will also have regard to the Care Act 2014, which includes provisions for adults at risk of abuse or neglect.

1.8 Monitoring and reviewing the lettings policy

- 1.8.1 (Insert local authority name) will monitor the operation of the lettings policy by regularly reviewing the policy to ensure that the policy meets its stated objectives and complies with legislative changes.

Chapter 2

2.1 How to apply for housing

2.1.1 As well as applying to go on the housing register, applicants are given the opportunity to complete an on-line housing options assessment form. This allows the applicant's housing options to be assessed and determine which options could be the most appropriate. If this includes social housing (which includes Affordable Rents), and the applicant is eligible, they will then need to complete the more detailed housing register application form. Where applicants are unable to use these on-line facilities a paper form will be available on request and Home-Link partners can offer assistance to complete the form.

The on-line forms can be completed at www.home-link.org.uk. A paper form, if required, can be requested from (insert name and address of local authority) or any of the partner organisation's offices as detailed in Appendix 1.

2.1.2 An applicant may include anyone on their application who may reasonably be expected to live with them as part of their household.

2.1.3 Where two applicants wish to have a shared application they will be known as joint applicants. If an applicant lists a partner on his/her application it will be assumed that the partner is a joint applicant unless either party advises the council otherwise. Although adults who are not partners and need more than one bedroom may jointly apply to the register, due to the level of demand for family sized accommodation from family households (by "family" we mean households that have children (under 18) who are dependent on the adult(s)) they will not normally be prioritised for an offer of this size of accommodation ahead of families.

2.1.4 On receipt of the application (insert local authority name) will assess this and may request additional information and supporting evidence so that the applicant's eligibility and housing need can be confirmed. (Insert local authority name) will verify the information provided which may include inviting the applicant for an interview or visiting them at home.

2.1.5 Applications will only be accepted onto the register where:

a) The applicant is eligible for an allocation of social housing (see Chapter 3);
and

b) The applicant qualifies for an allocation of social housing. (See sections 3.2 to 3.4).

2.1.6 After assessment (insert local authority name) will write to applicants to inform them whether they have been accepted onto the housing register, or give reasons if they have not. Where accepted they will be informed of:

- a) Their unique reference number, which allows them to bid for homes through the Home-Link Scheme
- b) The housing needs band in which the application has been placed
- c) The date that the application was placed in the band (the "date in band")
- d) The size of property for which the applicant is likely to be able to bid

If they have not been accepted onto the housing register the council will set out the reasons for this decision and will provide information about the review process (see Chapter 6).

2.2 Date of registration

- 2.2.1 The registration date of an application will be the date the on-line housing application form is received electronically, or if a paper application is submitted, the date it is received at the office of **(insert local authority name)**, or any of the partner organisations.

2.3 Date in band

- 2.3.1 The principle of the policy is that normally no applicant should overtake existing applicants in a band. Therefore, applicants will be placed within a band in date order.

a) **New applications:** the date in band will be the same as the applicant's date of registration. Where supporting documents have been requested, not provided within 28 days but still accepted at the discretion of the council, the date in band will be the date the documents were received

b) **Change of circumstances which results in a higher band assessment:** the date in band will be the date the applicant provides evidence of the change of circumstances leading to the award of a higher priority band.

- 2.3.2 When applicants move down bands due to a change in their circumstances the following applies:

a) **Returning to a band that they were previously placed in:** the date in band reverts to the date that applied when the applicant was previously in that band.

b) **Moving into a lower band they have not previously been placed in:** the date in band will be the date that the application was first placed into a higher band. In most circumstances, this is likely to be their date of registration.

2.4 Armed Forces personnel – date in band.

- 2.4.1 Additional priority will be awarded to the following categories of people:

- a) serving members of the regular forces who are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service
- b) former members of the regular forces
- c) bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in the regular forces where (i) the bereaved spouse or civil partner has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in Ministry of Defence accommodation following the death of their service spouse or civil partner, and (ii) the death was wholly or partly attributable to their service
- d) existing or former members of the reserve forces who are suffering from a serious injury, illness, or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service.

- 2.4.2 Additional priority will be awarded to the above categories of people by awarding their application the appropriate priority band, as set out in this lettings policy, and backdating their date in band by the total cumulative period of their length of military service (including where they have made a homeless application). This will have the

effect of raising their priority above applicants in similar circumstances who have not undertaken military service.

This additional priority is awarded to meet the expectations set out in the Armed Forces Covenant and national guidance.

- 2.4.3 Current members of the Armed Forces may also request that this additional priority be applied to their housing application six months prior to the date when they are due to leave military service. Appropriate evidence of the end to military service will be required.

2.5 Multiple applications

- 2.5.1 An applicant can have only one active application on the housing register at any time.

2.6 Change of circumstances

- 2.6.1 Where an applicant registered with (insert local authority name) has a change in their circumstances they must promptly inform (insert local authority name). Applicants can complete a change of circumstances on-line at www.home-link.org.uk or obtain a change of circumstances form from any partner organisation, but this must then be sent to the partner organisation who is managing their application. Change of circumstances received by (insert local authority name) will be assessed based on the new circumstances. Examples of change of circumstances are detailed below, although this list is not exhaustive.

- a) Change of address
- b) People joining or leaving the household
- c) Pregnancy/birth of a child
- d) Relationship breakdown
- e) Change to the medical circumstances of anyone included on the application
- f) Death of a household member
- g) Death of a joint applicant
- h) Change of income and/or capital

2.7 Applicant's consent and declaration

- 2.7.1 When an applicant applies for housing, they will be required to confirm their understanding of, or sign a declaration to confirm that:
- a) The information they have provided is true, accurate and complete.
 - b) They will promptly inform (insert local authority name) of any change in circumstances.
 - c) They understand that information will be shared with all the partner organisations.
 - d) They consent to (insert local authority name) making enquiries of any relevant persons to confirm the information on the application form is correct.
 - e) They consent to the release of any relevant information either to (insert local authority name) held by third parties, or by (insert local authority name) to third parties.
 - f) The information provided may be used to help in the detection and prevention of fraud.
- 2.7.2 (Insert local authority name) may take legal action against applicants who withhold or provide false information regarding their housing application. Where an applicant

has been let a property as a result of providing false information, their landlord may take court action to obtain possession of the property.

2.8 Data protection

2.8.1 (Insert local authority name) policy on Data Protection is available on request. (Insert hyper-link to data protection info page on your website).

2.9 Application review

2.9.1 Every year on the anniversary of an application being received, we will write to the applicant to see if they still wish to be on the housing register and ask them to update their application if there have been any changes to their circumstances. If there is no response within the required time limit, (28 days from the letter/email being sent) the application will be cancelled. We will write to the applicant to notify them of this. If an applicant contacts (insert local authority name) within 28 days of their application being cancelled and indicates that they still want to be considered for housing, the application will be reinstated from their last applicable date in band (see s.2.3 above).

2.10 Cancelling an application

2.10.1 An application will be cancelled from the housing register in the following circumstances:

- a) At the applicant's request.
- b) If the applicant becomes ineligible for housing (see s.3.2).
- c) If the applicant no longer falls within a qualifying class of applicant (see s.3.3).
- d) When the applicant has been housed through the lettings policy.
- e) When a tenant completes a mutual exchange.
- f) Where an applicant does not maintain their application through the review process, or where they move and do not provide a contact address.
- g) Where the applicant has died.

2.10.2 When an application is cancelled, we will write to the applicant or their representative to notify them. Where an applicant has been highlighted as vulnerable, (insert local authority name) will contact the applicant to check their circumstances before cancelling the application. Any applicant whose application has been cancelled has the right to ask for a review of the decision, (see Chapter 6).

2.10.3 Where an applicant wishes to re-join the housing register at a later date their new date of registration will be the date they re-apply.

Chapter 3

3.1 Who can be accepted onto the housing register?

- 3.1.1 The Council can allocate housing to anyone who qualifies for an allocation if they are not ineligible under the Housing Act 1996 section 160ZA
- 3.1.2 The Council cannot allocate housing to two or more persons jointly if one of them is ineligible

3.2 Eligible applicants

- 3.2.1 **(Insert local authority name)** is required, by law, to decide that certain applicants are ineligible for an allocation of social housing. Eligibility can change with a change of immigration status and therefore the Council will keep an applicant's eligibility for housing under review. Applicants are responsible for informing the Council of any change in their immigration status.
- 3.2.2 Applicants whose immigration status makes them ineligible to be considered on the register will be notified in writing of the decision and the reason for the decision. If an applicant is accepted onto the register, but subsequently becomes ineligible, their housing application will be cancelled and the applicant notified. Applicants found to be ineligible have a right to ask for a review of the decision (see Chapter 6).
- 3.2.3 Where an eligible applicant includes people who are ineligible as part of his or her household the council can, in deciding who forms part of the applicant's household for the purposes of housing allocation:
 - (a) Have regard to the fact that members of a person's household would not be eligible for accommodation in their own right
 - (b) Have regard to the fact that an ineligible person is not permitted to have recourse to public funds.
 - (c) Conclude that an ineligible person does not form part of the household.

3.3 Qualifying categories of applicants

- 3.3.1 Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk are areas where the demand for social housing far exceeds the supply. For this reason only those applicants who meet the local connection criteria will qualify to join the housing register (see s.3.4).
- 3.3.2 Applicants will not qualify to join the housing register if they are considered to be unsuitable to be a tenant because of unacceptable behaviour (see s.3.5)

3.4 Connection to the local area criteria

- 3.4.1 An applicant will be considered to have a connection with **(insert local authority name)** and accepted onto the housing register if they meet one of the following criteria:
 - a. The applicant works in the local authority area for sixteen hours or more per week; or
 - b. The applicant has lived in the local authority area for at least 6 of the last 12 months, or 3 of the last 5 years; or

- c. The applicant has family members who have been resident in the local authority area for a period of 5 years or longer and are currently resident in the local authority area. Family members are defined as parents, sons and daughters or brothers or sisters. Other family associations will be considered on a case by case basis; or
- d. The applicant is owed a main housing duty under the s.193 (2) or 193C (4) of the relevant homelessness legislation by (insert local authority name); or
- e. The applicant is serving in the regular forces or who has served in the regular forces within five years of the date of their application for an allocation of housing under Part 6 of the 1996 Act; or
- f. The applicant has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of that person's spouse or civil partner where—
 - i. the spouse or civil partner has served in the regular forces; and
 - ii. their death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service; or
- g. The applicant is serving or has served in the reserve forces and who is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to that service; or
- h. The applicant is a "relevant person" as defined by Regulation 4 of the Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Right to Move) (England) Regulations 2015; or
- i. The applicant or a member of the applicant's household needs to move away from another area to escape violence or harm; or
- j. The applicant is a care leaver from (insert local authority name) who has been placed (by Children's Services) outside the (insert county name) area; or
- k. There are special circumstances that (insert local authority name) considers give rise to a local connection.

3.4.2 Applicants who are in one of the reasonable preference groups, but with none of the connection to the local area criteria above, may be eligible to join the register. Anyone who believes this applies to them should contact (insert local authority name) directly to discuss their circumstances.

3.5 Applicants with a history of unacceptable behaviour

3.5.1 Where an applicant or a member of their household has a history of behaviour which in the opinion of (insert local authority name) is unacceptable and makes the applicant unsuitable to be a tenant the council may decide that the applicant does not qualify to be accepted onto the housing register. Unacceptable behaviour can include (but is not limited to) domestic or other abuse, harassment, anti-social behaviour, drug dealing or other criminal activity, failing to maintain or repair their home or associated garden or garage, noise nuisance or tenancy related debt

3.5.2 When considering whether an applicant with a history of unacceptable behaviour qualifies to be accepted on the housing register, the council will consider the nature

of the behaviour, when it took place, the length of time that has elapsed since and whether there has been any change in circumstances which would show that the applicant or member of the applicant's household had amended their behaviour so that they are considered suitable to become a tenant

- 3.5.3 If the council decides that an applicant does not qualify to be accepted on the housing register because the applicant or a member of their household has a history of unacceptable behaviour that makes them unsuitable to be a tenant, the applicant will be informed in writing of this decision and the reasons for the decision. They will also be informed how they can become a qualifying person, for example, by agreeing an arrangement to make payments towards rent arrears and adhering to this, or by the applicant showing that the circumstances or behaviour that made them unsuitable to be a tenant, has changed
- 3.5.4 If an applicant is accepted onto the register but a change in their behaviour means that they are no longer a qualifying person, their housing application will be removed and the applicant will be notified in writing of this decision and the reasons for the decision
- 3.5.5 Applicants considered as not qualifying due to unacceptable behaviour have a right to ask for a review of the decision (see Chapter 6).

3.6 16 and 17 year olds

- 3.6.1 Anyone aged 16 or over can apply for housing. However until the applicant reaches 18 years old any offer of accommodation will be subject to appropriate guarantor or trustee arrangements being in place. The guarantor could be a family member, adult friend, or a professional body. Applicants under 18 years old will be referred to a housing officer for advice regarding their housing rights and options.

Chapter 4

Assessment of housing need

4.1 Legal background

- 4.1.1 All eligible and qualifying applicants will be placed in a housing needs band following an assessment of their household's needs. This is to ensure that (insert local authority name) meet their legal obligations as set out in the Housing Act 1996 (as amended).

4.2 Advice and information

- 4.2.1 (Insert local authority name) will ensure that advice and information on how to apply for housing in (Insert local authority name) is available free of charge to everyone. If applicants are likely to have difficulty in making an application without assistance, then the council will make any necessary assistance they require available.

4.3 Assessment of housing need

- 4.3.1 Assessments of housing needs are based on an applicant's current housing circumstances. Assessments will be completed by housing officers of (insert local authority name). Medical assessments will be made by a medical professional or appropriately trained officer.

Where an adverse decision about an application is made by any of the Home-Link partners, any duplicate applications to another partner's housing register will have due regard to that original decision. Because the Home-Link partners use the same assessment criteria for housing applications, original decisions will only be overturned in exceptional circumstances following an assessment. The original partner applied to will be contacted to discuss the decision and the decision will generally apply to any new application when sufficient information has been received.

Any new or additional information not available for the original decision will be considered by the Home-Link partner to assess any impact on the decision.

4.4 Local lettings criteria

- 4.4.1 To ensure local housing needs are met, 90% of properties advertised through the Home-Link scheme will be labelled as available to applicants with a connection to (insert local authority name). 10% of advertised properties will be open to bidding from applicants with a connection to any of the Home-Link partner organisations. 25% of new growth homes will be made available for cross boundary moves. The relevant local area connection requirement will be clearly labelled on the property advert.
- 4.4.2 Where a property has local area connection criteria attached to it through a local lettings plan or s.106 agreement, then these properties will be let in line with the criteria within the lettings plan or the s.106 agreement. This may differ from the connection to the local area criteria contained within this lettings policy and will be mentioned in the property advert.

4.5 Housing needs bands

- 4.5.1 Eligible and qualifying applicants will be placed in one of the following four bands in date order. Applicants placed in Band A will have the highest assessed need, Band

D the lowest. When an applicant is placed in a housing needs band the same level of priority will apply with all partner organisations in the Home-Link scheme.

- 4.5.2 Any applicants accepted on to the housing register under section 3.4.2 of this policy (in a reasonable preference group but not meeting the connection to the local area criteria), will be placed in band C. However, they will only be considered for a property after any applicants in that band who have a proven connection with the local area.

4.6 Band A: Urgent need

Applicants with the following circumstances will be placed into Band A:

a) Urgent transfer

Where an existing council or housing association tenant needs to move urgently because of circumstances that could include:

- a) Major repairs are required on the property in which they live and which cannot be undertaken with the tenant living in the property.
- b) The property is being demolished.
- c) Urgent social need to move.

b) Current supported housing resident

Applicants leaving Social Services care or other supported accommodation, and are ready to move to a permanent home of their own. This will be subject to the council, Social Services and the landlord of the supported accommodation agreeing that the applicant is ready to move to their own home. If the applicant needs an on-going support package to allow them to live independently, confirmation that this will be put in place will also be required from the proposed support provider. The date that this priority is awarded (date in Band A) will be the date that the resident is ready to move to independent living, as recommended by their support worker.

The decision to apply this priority will be made by the relevant decision-making process in the district where the supported housing is based.

c) Urgent health and safety risk

The condition of the applicants current accommodation has been assessed by (insert local authority name) or a partner organisation as posing an urgent health and safety risk. This will apply where the assessment has classified the accommodation as unsafe, or where there is a risk of imminent harm as identified in the assessment, which cannot be remedied in a reasonable time and where the health and safety risk has not been caused intentionally by the applicant or a member of the applicant's household who will continue to live with them.

d) Urgent medical need

An urgent medical priority will be awarded where the assessment concludes that the applicant or household member has a severe medical condition or disability that is made substantially worse by their current housing. This would include people whose life is at risk due to their current housing conditions or who are completely housebound because of the type of accommodation they live in.

Priority will be given depending on how unsuitable the current accommodation is in relation to their medical or disability needs. The assessment is not purely based on the applicant's health conditions.

The following are only examples of circumstances that **may** qualify (but not in all circumstances) for an urgent medical need award:

- Those who, on leaving hospital, either have nowhere to live or have somewhere to live but it is unsuitable for their medical needs and cannot be made suitable through adaptations
- Those who have somewhere to live but it is unsuitable for their medical needs and cannot be made suitable through adaptations because of cost effectiveness, structural difficulties or the property cannot be adapted within a reasonable amount of time. Applicants will be individually assessed
- Where an applicant's condition is life threatening and the existing accommodation is a major contributory factor
- Where an applicant's health is so severely affected by the accommodation that it is likely to become life threatening
- Disabled persons (as defined under the Equality Act 2010) who have restricted or limited mobility and are limited by their accommodation and unable to carry out day to day activities or have difficulties accessing facilities e.g. bathroom, kitchen, toilet, inside and outside of their accommodation safely and the current accommodation cannot be reasonably adapted

e) Lacking two or more bedrooms

The household is assessed as lacking two or more bedrooms (see s.5.4).

f) Under-occupancy by two or more bedrooms or release of adapted property

Where an existing council or housing association tenant:

- a) Is assessed as having two or more bedrooms that are not required by the household (see s.5.4).
- b) Where a property has been adapted and the adaptations are no longer required. For example, if the person requiring the adaptations has moved or died.

g) Homeless households (Main homelessness duty owed under s.193 (2) of the Housing Act 1996 as amended)

Where (insert local authority name) has accepted a duty under s193 (2) of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) and this duty has not been brought to an end.

h) Urgent multiple needs

This priority will be applied where an applicant is assessed as having two or more Band B needs. This may include an application where two household members have the same assessed need e.g. two high medical needs.

For multiple needs in Band A please see 'emergency housing status' (see Chapter 5)

4.7 Band B: High need

Applicants with the following circumstances will be placed into Band B:

a) High health and safety risk

The condition of the applicant's current accommodation has been assessed by **(insert local authority name)** or a partner organisation as posing a high health and safety risk to them or members of their household. This will apply where the assessment has identified that the applicant is living in a property, the condition of which places them or members of their household at a high risk of harm as identified in the assessment, which cannot be remedied in a reasonable time and where the health and safety risk has not been caused intentionally by the applicant or a member of the applicant's household who will continue to live with them.

b) High medical need

A high medical priority will be awarded where the assessment concludes that the applicant or household member has a serious medical condition or disability that is made substantially worse by their current housing, but who are not housebound or whose life is not at risk due to their current housing.

However, their housing conditions directly contribute to causing serious ill health and the condition of the property cannot be resolved within a reasonable period of time.

Circumstances will be assessed and may need to be referred to a relevant health care professional, depending upon the circumstances. The following are only examples of cases that **may** qualify (but not in all circumstances) for a high medical need award:

- The applicant's accommodation is directly contributing to the deterioration of the applicant's health, such as severe chest condition, requiring intermittent hospitalisation because of chronic dampness in the accommodation
- Children with severe conditions such as autism, or cerebral palsy, where their long-term needs cannot be met without suitable accommodation
- A member of the household seeking accommodation is disabled and re-housing will enable that person to overcome physical barriers created by current accommodation e.g. steps and stairs
- A person with a severe disability requiring substantial adaptations to a property which is not, and cannot be provided for in their current accommodation
- A person with a terminal illness or long-term debilitating condition whose current accommodation is not having a significant impact on their condition but where their quality of life would be significantly improved by moving to alternative suitable accommodation
- A person suffering with a diagnosed mental illness where the medical condition would be significantly improved by a move to alternative accommodation.

c) Lacking one bedroom

This priority will be applied where the household is assessed as lacking one bedroom based on the bedroom calculation in (see s.5.4).

d) Under-occupancy by one bedroom.

This priority will be applied where an existing council or housing association tenant is assessed as having one bedroom more than required by the household (see s.5.4).

e) Victims of harassment, violence or abuse

Where (insert local authority name) or a partner organisation has investigated and identified that the applicant or a member of their household is being subjected to harassment or other conduct causing alarm and distress that will be improved by a move to alternative accommodation. Harassment might be, but is not limited to, harassment due to, race, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, mental health, physical disability, learning disability, religion, domestic abuse or harassment by a former partner or associated persons.

(Insert local authority name) will offer advice and support to assist the applicant in identifying possible ways to resolve the situation.

f) Applicants owed a Prevention or Relief duty (under s, 189a or 189B of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended))

Where an applicant is threatened with homelessness within 56 days, (insert local authority name) will work with the applicant to try and prevent their homelessness. Those applicants, who the council have reason to believe would be owed the main duty in the event of a homelessness application and a local connection, will be placed in Band B whilst the prevention measures are being pursued and the applicants are actively co-operating with the prevention work being done.

Where homelessness prevention has not been possible and an applicant becomes homeless, they will be owed a relief duty. Those applicants, who the council have reason to believe would be owed the main duty in the event of a homelessness application and a local connection, will remain in Band B during this time.

This priority will no longer apply once the prevention and relief duties have ended and applicants will be re-assessed on their housing circumstances.

g) Sleeping rough

This priority will be applied where it has been confirmed that an applicant is sleeping rough and has no other accommodation available to them. The council will verify that an applicant is sleeping rough before awarding this priority. Rough sleeping priority will not be awarded when accommodation is available to the applicant, including a placement at a direct access hostel, but the applicant chooses not to take up this offer of accommodation. Applicants assessed as 'Sleeping rough' will not be awarded additional priority on any other accommodation related factors.

h) Multiple needs

This priority will be applied where an applicant is assessed as having three or more Band C needs. This may include an application where more than two household members have the same assessed need e.g. three medical needs.

4.8 Band C: Medium need

Applicants with the following circumstances will be placed into Band C:

a) Medium medical need

Medium medical need will be awarded where an applicant has a medical condition or disability that is affected significantly by their housing circumstances, not at a critical or serious impact level but a move would be likely to improve their quality of life.

b) Need to move for social reasons

Where (insert local authority name) or a partner organisation has assessed the applicant's need to move for social reasons. An applicant will only be awarded this factor once irrespective of the number of social needs that may apply to their situation.

Examples where a social need to move may apply may include where an applicant:

- a) Needs to move to or within an area of the sub-region to give or receive support, and a proven level of support is required and can be given
- b) Has found employment in the (insert local authority name) area and needs to move closer to work, or will otherwise lose their employment, or suffer hardship
- c) Has staying contact with a child/children and is living in accommodation where the child/children are not allowed to stay overnight.
- d) Is living in a first floor or above property and has children less than 10 years of age as part of their household, or is more than 24 weeks pregnant.

c) Housing conditions

This priority will be applied where the applicant/s either lack or share one or more of these facilities with persons, who are not members of their household. Facilities may include:

- a) A living room
- b) Kitchen
- c) Bathroom

d) Other homelessness

Applicants who are:

- a) Owed a s195 prevention duty by the council but have been assessed as not having a local connection as set out in this policy
- b) Owed a s195 prevention or s189 (b) relief duty but where the council believe the applicant would be unlikely to be owed the main s193 (2) housing duty if the relief duty were to come to an end unsuccessfully
- c) No longer owed a prevention or relief duty
- d) Where the relief duty has come to an end unsuccessfully and the applicant has been determined to be intentionally homeless.
- e) Where the relief duty has ended unsuccessfully and it has been determined that the applicant is not owed the main duty as they are not in priority need
- f) Applicants who are owed the s193C (4) duty where the s189B relief duty has been ended due to the applicants deliberate non-cooperation
- g) Owed a main homelessness duty by a local authority that is not a partner organisation in Home-Link scheme but has a local connection as defined in this policy.

Applicants assessed as 'Other homelessness' will not be awarded additional priority on any other accommodation related factors.

Applicants given this priority will have their application reviewed on the anniversary of the decision, unless there is a change in their circumstances in the meantime.

e) Reasonable preference but no connection to the local area

This priority will apply to any applicant in one of the reasonable preference groups but who do not meet any of the criteria for connection to the local area in section 3.4.1 of this policy.

4.9 Band D: Low housing need

4.9.1 Any applicant who does not meet any of the criteria in Bands A, B and C will be assessed as having a low level of housing need and their application will be placed in Band D.

4.9.2 Anyone assessed as having sufficient financial resources to resolve their own housing need (see s.4.13) will be placed in band D. These applicants will only be considered for an offer of a property once all other bidding applicants who do not have sufficient financial resources to resolve their own housing need have been considered.

4.10 Low priority

4.10.1 In certain circumstances, applicants will be accepted onto the housing register, but their application will be considered as low priority as a result of unacceptable behaviour or circumstances that affects their suitability to be a tenant. In these circumstances their application will be placed in a housing needs band but they will not be actively considered for an offer of a tenancy or be able to express interest in available properties. Their application will remain in low priority until the applicant has shown that the circumstances or behaviour has changed so that they are considered suitable to be a tenant.

4.10.2 The following categories will be considered as low priority:

- a. Applicants with recoverable rent arrears, former rent arrears or other housing-related charges or debts, where these are not sufficiently high to class them as not qualifying to join the register (see s.3.5). Other than in exceptional circumstances, an applicant with outstanding recoverable rent arrears, former rent arrears or other housing-related debts will not be considered for an offer of a tenancy or eligible to bid for housing until they have shown a regular repayment record.
- b. Applicants with a history of unacceptable behaviour where this is not sufficiently severe to class them as not qualifying to join the register (see s.3.5).

4.10.3 All applicants who are considered low priority will be informed of this decision in writing, and how their application could be re-assessed, for example, by agreeing and keeping to an arrangement to make payments towards rent arrears, or by the applicant satisfying the council that the circumstances or unacceptable behaviour that made them unsuitable to be a tenant have changed.

4.10.4 (Insert local authority name) expects applicants to clear any recoverable housing related debts owed to any social housing landlord before an offer of a tenancy is made, where it is clearly within their means to do this (for example where the debt is relatively low and the applicant has a reasonable disposable income or has sufficient savings available).

4.10.5 When a financial assessment shows that the debt cannot be cleared immediately then a realistic and affordable repayment arrangement should be agreed to clear the debt. The applicant may become eligible to bid for property as long as they have made regular payments in line with the agreement they have made.

4.10.6 Applicants found to be low priority have a right to ask for a review of the decision (see Chapter 6).

4.11 Intentionally worsening housing circumstances

4.11.1 If an applicant is assessed as having intentionally worsened their circumstances, the effect of which would be to improve their housing priority irrespective of whether they had prior knowledge of the lettings policy, their level of housing need will be assessed on the basis of their previous accommodation, or previous circumstances at their current accommodation.

4.11.2 Applicants found to have intentionally worsened their circumstances have a right to ask for a review of the decision (see Chapter 6).

4.11.3 All applicants deemed to have intentionally worsened their circumstances will have their application reviewed on the anniversary of the decision, or earlier if there is a material change in their circumstances in the meantime.

4.11.4 If **(Insert local authority name)** has assessed and accepted the applicant is homeless or threatened with homelessness, has a priority need under the homeless legislation, but considers that they have become homeless intentionally; the applicant will be placed in Band C.

4.12 Homeowners

4.12.1 In line with the 'Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England', **(Insert local authority name)** will usually only allocate social housing to homeowners in exceptional circumstances. However, the council may allocate housing that is in low demand. Applicants who are homeowners will be allocated a Band D status. In exceptional circumstances **(Insert local authority name)** may consider a homeowner's status for example the council may allocate housing to applicants who require support and whose age qualifies them for housing for older people but who have insufficient financial resources to access housing for older people in the private sector

4.13 Financial resources

4.13.1 All qualifying applicants are entitled to apply for housing regardless of income levels. However, if an applicant is assessed as having income and/or capital, which will enable them to resolve their own housing need through other tenures they will not receive any preference for social housing and when bidding will appear on the shortlist after all other applicants that do not have the resources to resolve their own need.

This assessment will be based on the following

- a) The total income of the applicant/partner
- b) Any capital available to the applicant/partner
- c) Average property prices and rents in the area for the type of accommodation needed by the household

- d) The ability of the applicant/partner to rent a property in the private sector based on a realistic assessment of their financial position and commitments.
- e) The ability of the applicant/partner to acquire a mortgage and maintain required repayments based on a realistic assessment of their financial position and commitments.

4.13.2 Excluded from the above financial assessment will be any member of the Armed Forces who may have received a lump sum as compensation for an injury or disability sustained on active service.

4.13 Officer review for Band A applicants

4.13.1 Where an applicant has held Band A status for three months or more from their applicable date in band or the applicant has refused more than three reasonable offers of accommodation or has made little or no attempt to bid for accommodation (Insert local authority name) may carry out a review of their circumstances. This will result in either:

- a) A direct let – usually for statutorily homeless applicants living in temporary accommodation.
- b) Priority being maintained.
- c) Moving into a lower priority band if the circumstances under which they were placed in Band A no longer apply.
- d) Making the applicant unable to bid for a specified period, not exceeding 6 months

Chapter 5

Assessment information and criteria

5.1 Transfer applicants

- 5.1.1 Transfer applicants are those applicants who are tenants of a council or housing association property in the UK who wish to move to alternative accommodation.

5.2 Homeless applications

- 5.2.1 Applicants who are already on the housing register will remain in their existing housing needs band whilst a homeless assessment is carried out (unless the criterion in s.5.2.3 below applies).
- 5.2.2 When a decision has been made by (insert local authority name) that an applicant is owed a main homelessness duty under s.193 (2) of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) their application will be placed and remain in Band A until that duty is brought to an end (See s.4.6 (g))
- 5.2.3 A person who is threatened with homelessness may have an existing housing register application. Applicants already in Band A will retain their existing Band A status whilst homelessness prevention measures are pursued.
- 5.2.4 An applicant who is statutorily homeless or threatened with homelessness but deemed not to have a priority need will be placed in Band C (unless other circumstances are such that they are eligible for placement within a different band).
- 5.2.5 Applicants who have been assessed as being in priority need but are intentionally homeless will be assessed as having Band C status in line with 4.8(d). If an applicant has intentionally worsened their circumstances the housing needs assessment will take this into account (see s.4.11).

5.3 Split families

- 5.3.1 Where an application is made by family members who it would be reasonable to expect them to live together but they are unable to do so, the council will assess their particular circumstances to consider the best way of addressing their housing needs.

5.4 Bedroom requirement guidelines

- 5.4.1 Bedroom requirements are generally determined in line with the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) regulations and these regulations will be applied when calculating bedroom requirements in overcrowding and under-occupancy assessments. They will also be used when calculating the size of property (number of bedrooms in the property) that an applicant will be able to bid on and eligible to be offered through the letting process.

Bedroom requirements are determined by the applicant's size of household. Ineligible household members may not be included (see paragraph 3.2.3). Generally, the LHA regulations allow one bedroom each for:

- a) Every adult couple
- b) Any other adult aged 16 or over
- c) Any two children (aged under 16) of the same sex
- d) Any two children, regardless of sex, under the age of 10

- e) Any other child aged under 16
- f) A non-resident carer (claimant/partner or child have disability and need overnight care)

Applicants requiring help in calculating their bedroom entitlement can use the Directgov online bedroom entitlement calculator at <https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/BedRoomCalculator.aspx>.

If, in exceptional circumstances, the council considers that a room designated by a landlord as a bedroom is not capable of being used as a bedroom, they may re-assess overcrowding for the household.

5.4.2 Single and joint applicants of pensionable age may be eligible to be considered for one and two bedroom properties considered to be housing for older people.

5.4.3 A pregnant woman expecting her first child will be assessed as requiring two bedrooms from week 24 of her pregnancy.

5.4.4 An applicant may be assessed as requiring an additional bedroom where (insert local authority name) considers there are special circumstances.

5.5 Staying contact with children

5.5.1 A child, or children, living between parents at separate addresses will only be considered as having one main home unless there are exceptional circumstances that mean that both parents should provide a home. A Court Order allowing access to children, or confirming residence between separated parents does not mean that the council must consider that the child is part of an applicant's household for the purposes of a housing register application.

5.5.2 An assessment will be made by the council as to which parent's property is considered as the child's main home. If the council considers that an applicant does not provide the child with his or her main home then the child will not be considered as part of the housing register application. The child would then not be considered as part of the bedroom requirements when assessing overcrowding or under-occupation. They would also not be considered when assessing the size of property (number of bedrooms) that the application would be eligible to bid for and offered through the lettings process.

5.6 Medical assessments

5.6.1 Medical assessments will be carried out for any applicants who believe that their medical condition or disability is affected by their current accommodation. The applicant will be required to fill in a self-assessment medical form, or provide information from a medical professional, detailing the effect that their current accommodation has on their medical condition or disability. These forms will be assessed and where appropriate referred to a medical professional or appropriately trained officer for their opinion of how the medical condition is affected by the applicant's housing circumstances.

5.7 Harassment and domestic violence

5.7.1 Where the applicant is a victim of harassment, domestic violence or anti-social behaviour, (insert local authority name) will offer advice and support to assist applicants in identifying possible ways of resolving their situation.

5.8 Applicant subject to Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements, (MAPPA)

- 5.8.1 Where an applicant is subject to Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), (insert local authority name) will liaise with the panel to ensure an appropriate housing solution to meet the needs of the applicant and the community.

5.9 Emergency housing status

- 5.9.1 An emergency housing status may be awarded to applicants in exceptional circumstances, where remaining in their current accommodation may cause risk of death or serious injury, where an applicant has been assessed as having multiple needs that fall within Band A, where an applicant is terminally ill, is already in Band A and, in the opinion of a qualified medical practitioner, is likely to have less than 12 months to live, or where the applicant's home is to be demolished under one of the council's or partner organisation's redevelopment schemes. An applicant with emergency housing status who bids for a home will be considered as a priority above all other applicants in any other band.

5.10 Direct Lets

- 5.10.1 Most properties will be advertised through the Home-Link scheme. However in certain circumstances some properties may be let directly to applicants and these properties will be let outside of the allocation scheme. Where an applicant is identified as requiring a direct let the case will be referred to a senior officer for approval. The list below gives some examples of where this may happen.
- a) Where the council has accepted a main homelessness duty towards a household but the household has not found suitable accommodation during a period of choice through the Home-Link scheme.
 - b) Where the council has accepted a s189 (b) relief duty towards a household but the household has not found suitable accommodation during a period of choice through the Home-Link scheme.
 - c) Where an applicant and their household require a specific size, type or adapted property and the applicant has not been able to find suitable accommodation through the Home-Link scheme
 - d) Where an existing social housing tenant is required to move to make the best use of stock, including where their home is to be demolished, and they have not been successful in finding a suitable property through the Home-Link scheme
 - e) Where the applicant has emergency housing status
 - f) Use and occupation cases
 - g) Where an applicant in Band A has refused 3 reasonable offers or made little or no effort to bid
- 5.10.2 Information as to which properties have been allocated though direct lets will be made available through the Home-Link feedback information.
- 5.10.3 Direct lets will be made based on a suitable property becoming available. Where a property becomes available that is suitable for more than one applicant with a direct let status, the date applicants were awarded a direct let status will be used as a deciding factor in deciding to whom the property will be let.

5.11 Direct lets to homeless applicants

- 5.11.1 Homeless applicants who are owed a main homelessness duty by (insert local authority name) (under s.193 (2) of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended)) will be placed in Band A and will be able to bid for properties through the Home-Link scheme. Their date in band will be the date they originally applied to the council as homeless.
- 5.11.2 Where homeless applicants in Band A have not been have not been offered a tenancy through the bidding process at the point at which the Council has accepted the main homelessness duty, the council reserves the right to make a direct let of a property, either in the social or private rented sector, under the council's policy on discharging homelessness duties.
- 5.11.3 The main homelessness duty will come to an end, and a homeless applicant loses their priority under this section, when any of the circumstances within s.193 (6) or (7) of the Housing Act 1996 Act (as amended) are met. This will include an applicant:
- Accepting an offer of accommodation made through the Home-Link scheme
 - Accepting an offer made through the direct let process within the policy (see s.5.10 above), or
 - Accepting a suitable offer of accommodation in the private rented sector in line with section 193 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) and the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012
 - Having been informed of the possible consequences of refusal and the right to request a review of the suitability of the accommodation, refuses a reasonable offer of suitable accommodation made through the direct let process, or in the private rented sector as outlined in c) above
- S. 193(6) of the Housing Act 1996 Act (as amended) gives the full circumstances under which the main homelessness duty comes to an end.
- 5.11.4 Where a homeless applicant is to be allocated a property through the direct let process (insert local authority name) has responsibility for determining the suitability of any allocation. They will do this by assessing the household's particular needs and circumstances within the context of the general housing conditions in the area.
- 5.11.5 Where a homeless applicant is offered accommodation through a direct let, but does not feel that this offer is suitable; they have the right to request a review of the decision that the offer is suitable. For details of the review process (see Chapter 6).
- 5.11.6 As the property does not have to remain available during the review of the suitability and reasonableness of a direct let, homeless applicants are advised to accept and move in to the accommodation pending the decision on review. If the review outcome is unsuccessful for the applicant they will still have accommodation to live in whilst they consider their further options.
- 5.11.7 If a homeless applicant refuses a direct let and it is then deemed suitable at review, the main homelessness duty will come to an end. They will also have to vacate any temporary accommodation that is being provided.
- 5.11.8 If, on reviewing an applicant's refusal of a direct let, the property offered is considered to be unreasonable or unsuitable, the duty under s.193 (2) will continue and the applicant will be made a further offer of suitable accommodation.

5.12 Applicants who require a specific size, type or adapted property.

5.12.1 Where an applicant requires a specific size, type or adapted property, they will be placed in the appropriate housing needs band, but may be offered a direct let if **(insert local authority name)** have a shortage of suitable properties. For example:

- a) An applicant requires a very large property to accommodate their household.
- b) An applicant requires a property of a specific type in a specific area of the district.
- c) An applicant requires a property with specific adaptations and such a property becomes available.
- d) Where an applicant is willing to move to release a property larger than required to meet their housing needs.

5.13 Housing for older people (also known as sheltered housing)

5.13.1 Housing for older people will be advertised through the Home-Link scheme. Housing for older people is generally available to applicants over 60 years of age but the age limit can be lower on some properties and it will be clearly shown in the advert. Prior to an offer of a tenancy, applicants will be subject to an assessment by the landlord of the property to establish their support needs and suitability to living in housing for older people.

5.14 Extra care properties

5.14.1 Extra care properties are for older people who need the additional support services that are provided. Extra care properties are not often advertised through Home-Link. Where they are advertised, applicants who bid will be assessed based on their care needs by a specialist panel.

5.15 Refusals of direct let

5.15.1 Where an applicant (other than a person owed the main homelessness duty) refuses a reasonable offer of a direct let a senior officer will review the reasons for the refusal and the applicant may lose any housing priority they held, dependent on the reasons for the offer refusal. Applicants have the right to ask for a review of this decision (see Chapter 6).

5.16 Local lettings plans

5.16.1 Local lettings plans are used across the Home-Link area to help create balanced and sustainable communities. Where a local lettings plan applies, it will be stated in the property details when advertised. Details of any local lettings plans will be available from the local authority in whose area the property is situated. Some local lettings plans may ask for an applicant to have a local connection to a specific parish or village. In those cases, the connection criteria will be stipulated in the legal agreement for that development.

Chapter 6

6.1 Reviews of decisions

6.1.1 (Insert local authority name) will carry out reviews of assessment decisions as required.

6.1.2 Examples of circumstances that may be reviewed include:

- a) Multiple need in band
- b) Emergency housing status
- c) Moving people up a band or down a band
- d) Priority assessments, in complex cases.
- e) Housing people in different accommodation to designated need size
- f) Low priority decisions
- g) Direct lets
- h) Being restricted from bidding

The above list is not exhaustive.

6.2 Statutory reviews

6.2.1 An applicant has the right to request a review of certain decisions made under part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). These are:

- a) Decisions about the facts of the applicant's case which are likely to be, or have been, taken into account in considering whether to accept onto the housing register or to allocate housing accommodation to the applicant
- b) Lack of any reasonable preference based on previous behaviour s167 (2C) Housing Act 1996 (as amended)
- c) Ineligibility for an allocation based on immigration status s160ZA (9)
- d) Decisions that an applicant does not qualify for entry on to the housing register (see sections 3.3 to 3.5)

6.2.2 Decision letters issued in respect of housing applications will advise the applicant of their right to request a review and provide appropriate guidance on how to do this. An applicant can obtain further details of the review procedure from (insert local authority name).

6.2.3 A request for a review of a decision can be made in writing or verbally to a member of staff at (insert local authority name). The request should be made within 21 days following the notification of the decision. Reviews will normally be considered within 56 days of the request being received but may be completed sooner. The applicant will receive a written response outlining the result of the review.

6.2.4 An applicant will only be entitled to one internal review. If an applicant is still unhappy following the review of a decision, they can make a complaint through the council's complaints procedures. If they continue to be dissatisfied after the council complaints procedure is concluded, they can contact the Local Government Ombudsman (see s.6.4) or seek to challenge the decision through a judicial review.

6.2.5 Statutory reviews will be undertaken by a designated officer who was not involved in the original decision, and who is senior to the original decision-making officer.

6.3 Homeless reviews

- 6.3.1 Homeless applicants have the right to request a review of certain decisions made by **(insert local authority name)** in respect of their homeless application. Within the context of the council's lettings policy this includes the decision to bring to an end the main homelessness duty by making a suitable offer of permanent accommodation through the housing register through the direct let process or in the private rented sector (see s.5.11).
- 6.3.2 If an applicant wishes to ask for the review of the Council's decision following a homeless application they must request this within 21 days of the date of the decision letter.
- 6.3.3 If an applicant wishes to request a review of the reasonableness of an offer or the suitability of the property, this must be made within 21 days of notification of a decision to make the offer. Late review requests can be considered under exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the council.
- 6.3.4 Applicants who request reviews of decisions about suitability of accommodation will be advised to accept and move into accommodation pending the outcome of their review request. If the review goes in their favour alternative accommodation will be provided as quickly as possible. However, if the reasonableness and suitability of the offer is upheld the applicant will still have accommodation to live in whilst they consider their further options.
- 6.3.5 The applicant has the right of appeal to the county court if they are dissatisfied with the decision on a review.

6.4 The Local Government Ombudsman

- 6.4.1 The Local Government Ombudsman investigates complaints of injustice arising from maladministration by local authorities and other bodies. They can be asked to investigate complaints about most council matters including housing.
- 6.4.2 If an applicant is not satisfied with the action the council has taken, and has exhausted the council's own complaints procedure, they can send a written complaint to the ombudsman.
- 6.4.3 The Local Government Ombudsman can be contacted at:
Local Government Ombudsman
The Oaks No 2
Westwood Way
Westwood Business Park
Coventry CV4 8JB
Tel: 024 7682 0000
Website: www.lgo.org.uk

If an applicant wishes to make a complaint against a housing association, they should contact:

The Housing Ombudsman Service
Norman House
105 -109 Strand
London
WC2R 0AA
Tel: 08457 125 973
Website: www.ihos.org.uk

Chapter 7

7.1 Letting of accommodation

- 7.1.1 Properties will be advertised through the Home-Link scheme. The advertising will be carried out on a regular basis and for specific periods of time, known as advertising cycles.

7.2 Labelling property adverts

- 7.2.1 All adverts will include a description of the property and any other relevant information, for example rent charge, property size, length and type of tenancy, local facilities, disabled adaptations or if the property is housing for older people. The property will be labelled to show who is able to express an interest in it (known as bidding), for example, where a local connection is required, or if there is an age restriction on the property.
- 7.2.2 At least 1% of adverts will offer preference to social housing tenants needing to move for employment reasons (who would otherwise suffer hardship) under the Right to Move scheme.
- 7.2.3 Applicants should check the information contained in the property advert labelling to see if they qualify to be considered for the property.

7.3 Bedroom requirements

- 7.3.1 Bedroom requirements will generally be determined in line with the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) regulations (see s.5.4).
- 7.3.2 Landlords may choose to allow the under-occupation of certain properties including those that they advertise. The property advert will explain this on those properties the landlord is willing to under-occupy. Where a landlord is willing to allow under-occupation, this will generally be by allowing an applicant to be considered for one bedroom more than their assessed Local Housing Allowance (LHA) entitlement (for example allowing applicants with an assessed two bedroom LHA need to be considered for a 3-bedroom property). All households bidding for these properties and meeting the labelling criteria will be considered in line with the shortlisting criteria contained in 7.4.1 below.
- 7.3.3 Where a landlord is willing to allow under-occupation an affordability assessment will be completed to ensure that the applicant being considered for the property is able to meet rent payments. If the applicant is assessed as being unable to afford the rent payments the landlord may bypass them on the shortlist.

7.4 Shortlisting

- 7.4.1 After the end of an advertising cycle a shortlist of applicants bidding for the property and meeting the labelling criteria will be produced. Applicants will be ranked in order of their priority band with Band A above Band B, Band B above Band C, and Band C above Band D. Where more than one applicant in the same priority band appears on the shortlist they will be ranked in date order as determined by their date in band (see 2.3). In circumstances where there is more than one applicant in the same band with the same date in band, the applicant with the earliest registration date will appear higher on the shortlist. If there is more than one applicant with the same band, date in band and registration date an officer will make an allocation decision based on the best use of the housing stock and needs of the applicants.

7.4.2 Preference during shortlisting will be given to applicants within a band who have a proven connection to the local area.

7.4.3 When a shortlist of applicants is completed the landlord of the available property may offer an accompanied viewing of the property to a group of the highest priority applicants. This is to ensure that if the applicant who tops the shortlist decides not to take the tenancy, the property can be quickly offered to the next person on the shortlist.

7.4.4 After viewing the property the applicant at the top of the shortlist will be given 24 hours to accept or refuse the offer. If an applicant is offered a tenancy (verbally or in writing) and does not reply to accept that offer within the deadline given, the landlord will take this as a refusal of the offer. If the offer is refused the next person on the shortlist will be offered the property. The landlord will work down the shortlist in order.

7.4.5 In exceptional circumstances an officer may make a decision to bypass an applicant on a shortlist, for example, if, in doing so, the offer could put a vulnerable person at risk of any harm. Any such decisions will be explained fully to the applicant in writing by the landlord making the decision. This is known as a 'sensitive let'.

7.5 Formal offer of the property

7.5.1 Once the applicant has confirmed their acceptance of the tenancy the landlord of the property will write to confirm the formal offer of the tenancy. The Home-Link system will then not allow that applicant to be considered for any further properties and once the tenancy starts their housing register application will be cancelled.

7.5.2 Once the property is ready to let the landlord of the property will complete the tenancy sign up.

7.6 Withdrawal of offers

7.6.1 In exceptional circumstances an offer of a property may be withdrawn, for example:

- a) Where there has been a change in the applicants' circumstances
- b) Where the successful applicant has rent arrears or other housing related debts that had previously not come to light
- c) Following verification the applicant is not eligible for the property
- d) Where an error has been made in the advertising criteria
- e) Where an offer of accommodation could put a vulnerable person at risk of any harm
- f) Where the property is no longer available to let

7.7 Refusing an offer of accommodation

7.7.1 Usually, if an applicant refuses an offer of accommodation made through Home-Link, they will remain in their housing needs band. If an applicant unreasonably refuses three or more offers of a property made through Home-Link or has made little or no attempt to bid for accommodation, an officer may contact the applicant to offer support and assistance and verify their circumstances. The applicant may be moved into a lower priority band or be unable to bid for a specified period not exceeding 6 months

7.8 Allocations to staff, council members or their family members

- 7.8.1 Members of staff, their close family and elected members who require housing with **(insert local authority name)** may apply for housing in the same way as other applicants. Their status should be disclosed on the application form at the time of applying.
- 7.8.2 If an applicant who is a member of staff, elected member or a member of their direct family, makes a successful bid for a property the **(insert appropriate senior officer title)** will be informed and must approve the letting prior to the formal offer being made.

7.9 Tenancy management outside the scope of the lettings policy

- 7.9.1 The following tenancy management areas are not included as part of this lettings policy as they are not included within part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended):
- a) Mutual exchanges
 - b) **Introductory/starter** tenancies converted to **secure/assured** tenancies
 - c) Where a **secure/assured** tenancy of a property is assigned by way of succession to the same property
 - d) Where a **secure/assured** tenancy is assigned to someone who would be qualified to succeed to that tenancy if the **secure/assured** tenant died immediately before the assignment
 - e) Where court orders are made under one of the following:
 - i. Section 24 of the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973
 - ii. Section 17 (1) of the Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984
 - iii. Paragraph 1 of schedule 1 to the Children Act 1989

Chapter 8

Confidentiality and access to information

8.1 Applicants' rights to information

- 8.1.1 Applicants have the right to request such general information as will enable them to assess:
- a. How their application is likely to be treated under the lettings policy (including whether they are likely to be regarded as a member of a group of people who are to be given preference by this policy, (see Chapter 3)
 - b. Whether housing accommodation appropriate to their needs is likely to be made available to them.
- 8.1.2 Applicants have the right to request information held about their application which is likely to be, or has been, taken into account when considering whether to allocate them housing.

8.2 Data protection

- 8.2.1 When an applicant applies to the Home-Link scheme the partner organisations will only ask for information that they need to assess their eligibility and housing needs. The partner organisations will collect and keep data in accordance with the council's guidelines on handling personal, sensitive personal or special categories of personal data.
- 8.2.2 These guidelines are in accordance with the national regulations which cover both electronic and manual records and the govern everything we do with the data, including collecting, storing, using and disposing of it.
- 8.2.3 Personal, sensitive personal or special categories of personal data held about applicants will not be disclosed to third parties apart from:
- a) Where the individual who is the subject of the confidential information has consented to the disclosure
 - b) Where disclosure is made in accordance with an information sharing protocol that complies with the ICO's current data sharing code of practice
 - c) Where the council or a partner organisation is required by law to make such disclosures

8.3 Requesting information

- 8.3.1 Applicants are able to request copies of the information held regarding their application. Please note that we cannot provide you with personal information about other people if doing so will breach the regulations.

Appendix 1

Home-Link partner organisation list

Local authority

Cambridge City Council

Mandela House
4 Regent Street
Cambridge
CB2 1BY
Email: cbl@cambridge.gov.uk
Website: www.cambridge.gov.uk

South Cambridgeshire District Council

South Cambridgeshire Hall
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
Cambridge
CB23 6EA
Email: cbl@scambs.gov.uk
Website: www.scambs.gov.uk

East Cambridgeshire District Council,

The Grange
Nutholt Lane
Ely
Cambs.
CB7 4PL
Email: customerservices@eastcambs.gov.uk
Website: www.eastcambs.gov.uk

Huntingdonshire District Council

Pathfinder House
St Mary's Street
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire
PE29 3TN
Email: housingervices@huntsdc.gov.uk
Website: www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Fenland District Council

Fenland Hall
County Road
March
Cambridgeshire
PE15 8NQ
Email: info@fenland.gov.uk
Website: www.fenland.gov.uk

LSVT landlord

Sanctuary Housing

Avro House
49 Lancaster Way Business Park
Ely
Cambs
CB6 3NW
Email: east-lettings@sanctuary-housing.co.uk
Website: www.sanctuary-housing.co.uk

Luminus Group

Brook House
Ouse Walk
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire
PE29 3QW
Email: homes@luminus.org.uk
Website: www.luminus.org.uk

Circle Housing

Beacon House
23 Hostmoor Avenue
March
Cambridgeshire
PE15 0AX
Email: Lettings-March@circle.org.uk
Website: www.circle.org.uk

Local authority

Forest Heath District Council

College Heath Road
Mildenhall
Suffolk
IP28 7EY

Email:
customer.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk
Website: www.westsuffolk.gov.uk

St Edmundsbury Borough Council

West Suffolk House
Western Way
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
IP33 3YU

Email:
customer.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk
Website: www.westsuffolk.gov.uk

LSVT landlord

Flagship Housing Group

Keswick Hall
Keswick
Norwich
Norfolk
NR4 6TJ

Email: info@flagship-housing.co.uk
Website: www.flagship-housing.co.uk

Havebury Housing Partnership

Havebury House
Western Way
Bury St. Edmunds
Suffolk
IP33 3SP

Email: office@havebury.com
Website: www.havebury.com

Appendix 2

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Adapted properties – a property that has been adapted for an applicant with disabilities.

Advertising cycle – how often properties are advertised and available to make a bid on.

Advertised - properties that are advertised and are available for applicants to bid for through Home-Link.

Age restrictions - where a property is labelled, as only being available to applicants of a certain age.

Application number - a unique housing register number generated by the computer system.

Bedroom eligibility - how many bedrooms a household is assessed as needing.

Bid – the process used by applicants in registering an interest in an available property.

Choice based lettings (CBL) - a method of allocating social and affordable homes which have become available for letting by openly advertising them, and allowing applicants to bid for these.

Customer/applicant - is either a tenant of a partner organisation (including those in temporary accommodation) or a housing applicant on the Home-Link housing register.

Date of registration - the date an application form is registered with a partner organisation.

Date in band - the date an application is placed in a housing needs band and used as the applicable date when shortlisting.

Decision making organisation - the organisation that made a decision about a housing or homeless application.

Direct let - a property that is offered directly to an applicant, without them having to bid.

Domestic violence/abuse - is threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (physical, psychological, sexual, financial or emotional) by a partner, former partner or a family member.

Housing options - looking at the number of ways in which an applicant or customer might be assisted and supported to find a solution to their housing needs. Housing options may include private rented accommodation, mutual exchange, or even a help to buy product.

Housing register - a list of those requesting, eligible and qualifying for housing.

Housing related debts - are defined as recoverable current rent arrears, former tenant arrears, outstanding re-chargeable repairs, current and former housing related service charge arrears and court costs. They do not include Council Tax debts or Housing Benefit overpayments.

Joint application - where more than one applicant applies to join the housing register on one application form.

Labelling properties - describing who is eligible to bid for a property and if there will be a preference applied.

Local Connection - The connection an applicant has to a specific area.

Local elected members - each local authority is governed by a group of elected members also known as councillors.

LSVT landlord - Large Scale Voluntary Transfer, where a local authority has sold its housing stock to a Registered Provider

Mutual exchange - a scheme which allows two social housing tenants to swap their homes.

Partner organisations - all the councils that are partners to the Home-Link scheme.

Registered Providers - also known as housing associations. These are social landlords who also provide social and affordable rented homes for which applicants/customers can bid for through the Home-Link scheme.

Regular Forces - Means the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines, Her Majesty's regular army or the Royal Air Force

Reserve Forces - Means the Royal Fleet Reserve, the Royal Naval Reserve, the Royal Marines Reserve, the Army Reserve, the Regular Reserves, the Royal Air Force Reserve or the Royal Auxiliary Air Force

Transferring tenant - an applicant who is currently a tenant of a local authority or registered provider and who wishes to move.

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	Annual Presentation by the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance	
Report No:	OAS/FH/18/006	
Report to and date:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	8 March 2018
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Stephen Edwards Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance Tel: 01799 530325 Email: stephen.edwards@forest-heath.gov.uk	
Lead officers:	<p>Rachael Mann Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) Tel: 01638 719245 Email: rachael.mann@westsuffolk.gov.uk</p> <p>Karen Points Assistant Director (HR, Legal and Democratic Services) Tel: 01284 757015 Email: karen.points@westsuffolk.gov.uk</p> <p>Christine Brain Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) Tel: 01638 719729 Email: Christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk</p>	
Purpose of report:	<p>As part of the "Challenge" role, Overview and Scrutiny are asked to consider the roles and responsibilities of Cabinet Members. It is part of the Scrutiny role to "challenge" in the form of questions.</p> <p>Therefore, to carry out this constitutional requirement, at every ordinary Overview and Scrutiny meeting at least one Cabinet Member shall attend to give an account of his or her portfolio and answer questions from the Committee.</p>	

Recommendation:	<p>Members of the Committee are asked to question the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance on his portfolio responsibilities, and having considered the information, the Committee may wish to:</p> <p>1) Make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance for his consideration;</p> <p>2) Request further information and / or receive a future update.</p> <p>3) Take any other appropriate action as necessary.</p>		
Key Decision: <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i>	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 		
Alternative option(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 		
Implications:			
Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	•
Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	•
Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	•
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	•
Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	•
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
None	Low/Medium/ High*		Low/Medium/ High*
Wards affected:		All	
Background papers:		None	
Documents attached:		Exempt Appendix A – ICT customers Appendix B – Departmental ICT costs	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation

1.1 Background

1.1.1 As part of its "Challenge" role, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the roles and responsibilities of Cabinet Members. To carry out this constitutional requirement, at every ordinary Overview and Scrutiny meeting at least one Cabinet Member shall be invited to give an account of his or her portfolio and to answer questions from the Committee.

1.1.2 Last year, on 16 March 2017, Councillor Stephen Edwards, Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance attended this committee and presented a report which summarised the areas of responsibility covered under his portfolio.

1.2 Scrutiny Focus

1.2.1 The scope of this report differs from that of last year as the Cabinet Member has been asked to prepare a report which answers the following specific questions identified by the committee members as being relevant to the resources and performance portfolio:

- 1) **Procurement:** How does the Council's procurement procedure protect us from doing business with companies like Carillon? *(for example: if you require 3 quotes for someone big, then often there are very few companies that size that can quote, but how financially healthy are they?)*
- 2) **ICT:** Will members be consulted on what they would like to see in terms of ICT offerings in 2019, and when will that happen?
- 3) **ICT:** What is the total IT budget, and what IT services does the council supply to each Department (ITIL Service Library List)?
- 4) **ICT:** How much of each IT services, does each department consume?
- 5) **ICT:** How much does it cost to provide each IT service?

1.3 Response to Key Questions Set out in the Scrutiny Focus

1.3.1 Procurement: How does the Council's procurement procedure protect us from doing business with companies like Carillon?

The procurement procedures (Contract Procedure Rules) to be followed are based on the value of the contract – in general for all relevant contracts over £50,000 the Procurement Manager must be consulted for his advice (some specific types of contract are excluded from the CPRs, plus exemptions may be sought in certain specific circumstances).

Guidance is available for officers regarding whether financial assessment of tenderers and contractors should be undertaken.

Financial assessments are undertaken on:

- Contracts between £10k - £50k where there are considered to be particular risks
- Non-Constructionline* contracts over £50k
- Constructionline contracts over £50k which are considered to carry particular risks

The financial assessment is undertaken (using guidance from the Office of Government Commerce) to analyse the supplier's financial position and determine the level of risk that it would represent, based on the contract requirement and value. Relevant and available financial information will be used to make a judgement, and this will generally consist of:

- accounts (audited, where relevant) for the last two years
- credit report
- internet searches regarding any recent financial news relating to the company

Based on the financial assessment undertaken suppliers will be awarded a pass or fail score. A pass signifies that the supplier, based on currently available financial information, is considered likely to be sufficiently financially stable to undertake a given contract.

*NB Constructionline is a Government-run scheme, which collects, assesses and monitors standard company information and operates a pre-qualification assessment service. This pre-qualification service provides an assessment of the supplier's financial status including guidance regarding the maximum contract limit.

1.3.2 **ICT: Will members be consulted on what they would like to see in terms of ICT offerings in 2019, and when will that happen?**

We are keen to engage with Councillors on what the Council's ICT provision will look like moving forward. Based on feedback to date it is clear expanded Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) will be a key part of any offering. It should also be noted that for those who do not feel their current ICT equipment meets their needs that the following upgrades is available:-

- a. All Councillors are able to have their corporate devices upgraded to Windows 10 from Windows 8.1. This has proved a significant improvement in performance and stability. Hardware replacements are also available if a total device replacement is needed.
- b. Twin SCC/WS Councillors – Those who represent both Councils can access the West Suffolk ICT systems via a Microsoft Remote Desktop from their Suffolk County Council (SCC) laptops. This functionality is currently be piloted by one councillor and we welcome additional councillors to also pilot before full rollout. This functionality provides a simple cost effective option, enhancing flexibility whilst maintaining the separation of SCC and WS data. Discussions about a reciprocal arrangement with SCC are also taking place.

- c. Citrix Walled Garden environment – This solution provides access to all the Councils Microsoft Office applications and intranet from a personal device such as Apple MAC, Ipad or Windows PC without the need for corporate equipment. This functionality has only recently become available and we will be seeking some Councillors to pilot.

1.3.3 ICT:

- **What is the total IT budget, and what IT services does the council supply to each Department (ITIL Service Library List)?**
- **How much of each IT services, does each department consume?**
- **How much does it cost to provide each IT service?**

These have been answered in 1.3.3 of this report.

ICT Introduction

This section has been prepared to answer the questions set out at paragraph 1.2.1 (3) above. It should be noted that core ICT spend is centralised within the ICT Cost Centre, however departmental line of Business Application Spend is devolved to departmental cost centres. For the purposes of this report these will both be covered.

In relation to consumption of core ICT services these are consumed consistently across all users of ICT and are therefore divided per ICT user and attributed to departments based on the number of ICT users in each department. Line of business ICT services will be represented within the totals for the appropriate department.

The cost of each core ICT service is listed under section 1.3.5.1 below. The cost of providing Line of Business ICT services are detailed within section 1.3.5.2 below against the relevant department. A summary breakdown of ICT users per department is listed in the next section.

1.3.4 Total ICT Users Supported per department

The West Suffolk ICT service support approximately 1,150 fully managed users across West Suffolk, ARP, Abbeycroft, EELGA and others. As well as first line support for around 500 SCC staff with whom we share office accommodation. For the purposes of this report we are focused on the West Suffolk totals listed below only:-

Total West Suffolk ICT Users	630
Families and Communities	103
Growth	29
HR, Legal & Democratic Services	72
Operations	180
Planning and Regulatory Services	93

Resources and Performance	65
CEO's Office	6
Councillors	72
Others (Verse, Audit Commission. Emergency planning)	10

1.3.5 Total West Suffolk ICT costs

The net costs below are after income and expenditure for third party contracts have been taken into account as this is outside of the scope of these answers. A schedule of income from third party ICT customers can be found in **Exempt Appendix A** as supplementary information.

Software licence costs are predominantly subscription based or Software as a Service (SaaS) based and paid annually. Hardware is calculated predominately on a 5 Year expected life and the total costs are divided by estimated life to produce an annual provision into the hardware refresh reserve.

1.3.5.1 Corporate ICT Costs

The table below lists the total core ICT costs that all users of ICT receive, these are then split across the department spend below on a per ICT user basis relative to the size of the department.

Total Annual Core ICT Budget	£632,000
End Users Device Hardware	£85,000
- Laptop	
- Desk Phone	
- Mobile Phone	
Backend Infrastructure Hardware	£110,000
- Servers	
- Storage	
- Switches	
- Firewalls	
- Telephony System	
Microsoft and other infrastructure Licensing	£142,000
- Office	
- SQL Server	
- Exchange	
- Windows	
- Windows Server	
Wide Area Network and Internet Connectivity	£105,000
- Internet Connectivity	
- PSN Connectivity	
- Wide Area Network Connectivity	
- SIP Telephony Service	
Customer and Infrastructure Support Staff (Net)	£190,000
- Desktop Support	
- Telecoms Support	
- Server and Network Support	

The net cost of the ICT Business Application support team is as follows, these have been split across departments based on individual responsibilities for Systems. They are shown here for completeness but not included in the total above.

Business Application Support Staff (Net)	£444,200
--	----------

1.3.5.2 Departmental ICT Costs

All departmental application costs set out in **Appendix B**, exclude system implementation and cost of change should they need replacing, including temporary ICT team resource. Some annual fees represent a subscription or SaaS license, whereas others are annual support and upgrade maintenance on systems that incurred an initial capital expenditure. The costs of non ICT system administration of these systems within each department are not included.

1.3.6 Breakdown of typical per user costs

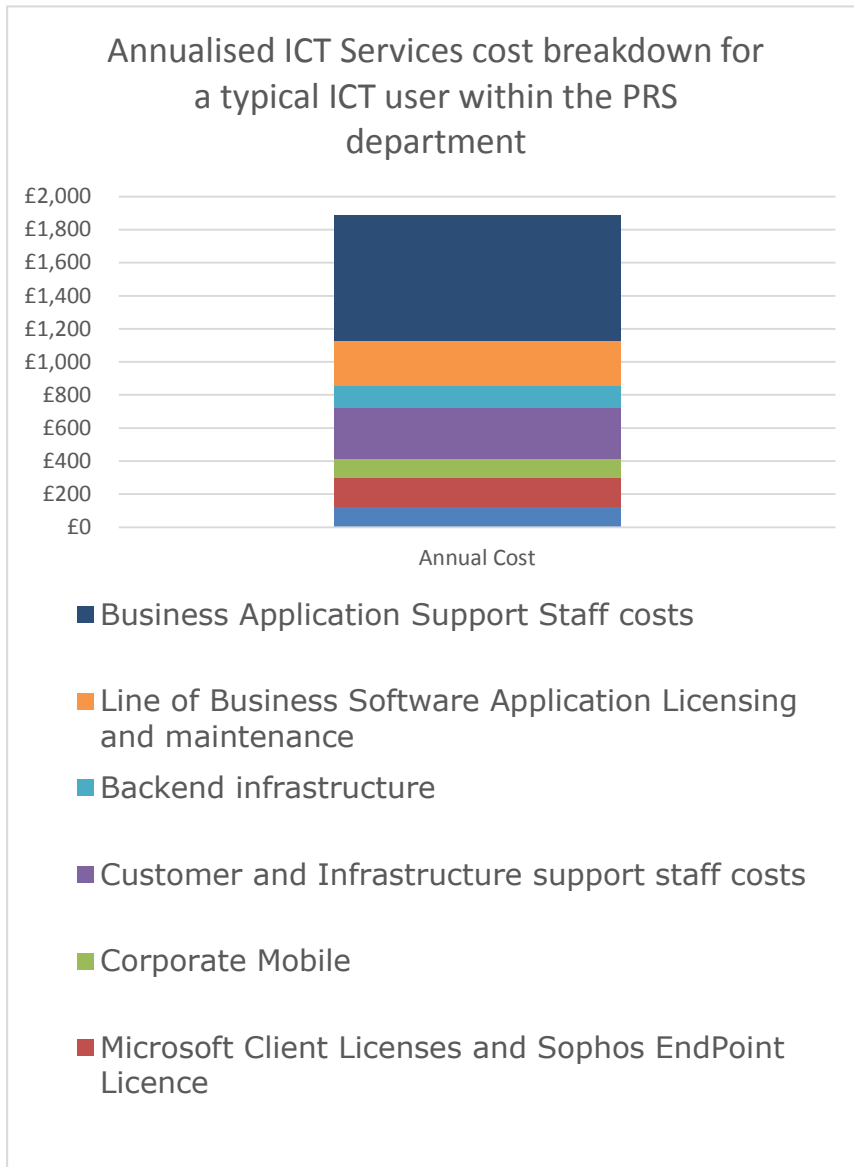
To provide further analysis and a more granular level of detail we have also produced the typical base costs for a standard user with laptop, desk phone and mobile as shown below

Direct per user costs	Annual Cost
Laptop (5 Year life)	£124
Microsoft Client Licenses and Sophos Endpoint Security	£177
Corporate Mobile	£117
Indirect infrastructure costs divided by total users	
Customer and Infrastructure support staff costs.	£304
Backend infrastructure	£135

These can be added to the service specific per user costs shown for PRS below

Planning	Annual Cost
Line of Business Software Application Licensing and maintenance	£273
ICT Business Application Support Staff costs	£762

These figures are shown relative to one another in the chart below.



1.4 **Proposals**

1.4.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee ask questions of the Cabinet Member following his update.

Appendix B - Departmental ICT Costs

All departmental application costs set out, exclude system implementation and cost of change should they need replacing, including temporary ICT team resource. Some annual fees represent a subscription or SaaS license, whereas others are annual support and upgrade maintenance on systems that incurred an initial capital expenditure. The costs of non ICT system administration of these systems within each department are not included.

Families and Communities (FC)			£297,762
Supplier	System	Platform	Cost
Abritas Ltd	Homelessness	Hosted	£20,500
Civica UK Limited	Customer Services	MS SQL	£29,600
Covalent Software Ltd	Performance Mgmt.	Hosted	£2,800
Firmstep	Web Forms	MS SQL	£15,400
Paper Thin Inc	Website Content Management	MS SQL	£5,600
Service Specific ICT Application Support			
2.2 ICT FTEs + Mgmt.			£113,027
Percentage of Core ICT costs divided by departmental users			
103 Departmental Users		£1,076	£110,835

Growth (GR)			£71,113
Supplier	System	Platform	Cost
Northgate Public Services (UK) Ltd	Environmental Heath	MS SQL	£8,300
Shelton Development Services Ltd	Housing System	MS SQL	£1,105
Service Specific ICT Application Support			
0.3 ICT FTEs + Mgmt.			£30,502
Percentage of Core ICT costs divided by departmental users			
29 Departmental Users		£1,076	£31,206

HR, Legal & Democratic Services (HRLDS)			£233,388
Supplier	System	Platform	Cost
Midland Software Ltd	HR & Payroll	MS SQL	£39,300
NorthgateArinso UK Limited	P11D	MS SQL	£820
Xpress Software Solutions Ltd	Elections	MS SQL	£32,075
Complywise Ltd	Health and Safety	Hosted	£1,550
Civica UK Limited	Legal Case Mgmt.	MS SQL	£12,100
Modern Gov	Committee	MS SQL	£10,000
Service Specific ICT Application Support			
1 ICT FTEs + Mgmt.			£60,066
Percentage of Core ICT costs divided by departmental users			
72 Departmental Users		£1,076	£77,477

Operations (OPS)			£353,515
Supplier	System	Platform	Cost
Integrated Skills Limited	Waste Round Route Calculation	MS SQL	£9,500
Nebula Systems (Uk) Ltd	Electronic Point of Sale	MS SQL	£1,740
TriNova Systems Ltd	Tree Maintenance		£2,000
Bartec Auto ID Ltd	Waste Management	MS SQL	£15,500
Chipside Limited	Parking Enforcement	MS SQL	£3,500
Computer Aided Business Systems Ltd	Auto CAD LT		£4,000
Excitech Ltd	Auto CAD Architect		£3,350
Masterbill Micro Systems Ltd	Quantity Surveyor Estimating	MS SQL	£760
3i Studio Limited	Maintained Estate	MS SQL	£1,135
Artifax Software Limited	Box Office Staffing	Hosted	£2,220
Edge IT Systems Limited	Epitaph Cemetery	Hosted	£1,430
Technopoly Limited	Accelerator Fleet Management	MS SQL	£1,900
Timeplan Fuel Solutions Ltd	Fuel Control	MS SQL	£500
Spectrix	Event Booking	Hosted	£34,500
Service Specific ICT Application Support			
1.3 ICT FTEs + Mgmt.			£77,788
Percentage of Core ICT costs divided by departmental users			
180 Departmental Users		£1,076	£193,692

Planning and Regulatory Services (PRS)			£196,350
Supplier	System	Platform	Cost
Idox Software Ltd	Planning EDRMS Planning Public Access Land Charges Licensing Planning Back Office	Oracle/MS SQL	£25,400
Service Specific ICT Application Support			
1.1 ICT FTEs + Mgmt.			£70,876
Percentage of Core ICT costs divided by departmental users			
93 Departmental Users		£1,076	£100,074

Resources and Performance (RP)			£291,657
Supplier	System	Platform	Cost
Adelante Software Limited	Payments	MS SQL	£15,500
Astun Technology Ltd	Web based GIS	MS SQL	14,700
Contract Data Research Ltd	Desktop GIS		£7,400
Methods Advisory Limited	Finance System	MS SQL	£18,550
Ordance Survey	Master Map License		£5,000
Aligned Assets Ltd	Local Land and Property Gazetteer	MS SQL	£4,000
Bottomline Technologies Ltd	Bank AC Detail validation	MS SQL	£3,530
Real Asset Management PLC	Asset 4000 Asset Management	MS SQL	£4,500
Suffolk County Council	eProcurement		£7,400
Microgen Banking Systems Ltd	BACWay BACS	MS SQL	£1,550
Service Specific ICT Application Support			
3 ICT FTEs + Mgmt. (includes LLPG and GIS)			£139,583
Percentage of Core ICT costs divided by departmental users			
65 Departmental Users		£1,076	£69,944

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	West Suffolk Information Framework – Report from the Joint Task and Finish Group	
Report No:	OAS/FH/18/007	
Dates:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	8 March 2018
	Cabinet	3 April 2018
Portfolio holder:	Councillor Stephen Edwards Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance Tel: 01799 530325 Email: Stephen.edwards@forest-heath.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Rachael Mann Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) Tel: 01284 751245 Email: Rachael.mann@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	To review the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Joint Task and Finish Groups work on a proposed West Suffolk Information Framework.	
Recommendation:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <u>Note</u> the work of the Joint Task and Finish Group. 2) Recommend to Cabinet the <u>approval</u> of the draft West Suffolk Information Framework, attached as Appendix A. 	
Key Decision: <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i>	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion by Overview and Scrutiny Committee provides an important input into the draft document as a whole. The actions from the framework have arisen as a result of ongoing engagement by Councillors and officers. 	

Alternative option(s):		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is not compulsory for councils to have an Information Framework in place, however, this can result in a lack of direction and outcomes that councillors and staff are working towards. 	
Implications:			
Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Framework represents a high level direction of travel and there are no specific financial implications as a result of the acceptance of this framework. 	
Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff skills and capacity will continue to be reviewed in line with service demands and individual business cases that come forward from the actions contained within this report 	
Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Information Framework is a Statement of Intent for data and information usage. In itself – there are no ICT implications. However as further business cases develop and following the development of the ICT Strategy, implications for ICT will become clearer. 	
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing legal and policy arrangements will stay as is. 	
Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Information Framework seeks to use data and information in a way that improves accessibility of information. However the Framework also recognises the needs of those less able to access technology and therefore recognises the need to be inclusive and to protect and enhance our current communication channels. Any implications therefore are expected to be positive and inclusive. 	
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)
	Low/Medium/ High*		Low/Medium/ High*
Lack of buy in to the approach or benefits	Medium	Communications plan to deliver emphasising benefits – plus tight controls on delivery of related projects will help develop trust and confidence that framework is delivering value.	Low
Lack of support outside of West Suffolk to achieve aims and objectives	Medium	Effective stakeholder management will help alleviate risks	Low

Over ambitious expectations	Medium	Effective scoping and risk analysis throughout project lifecycle	Low
Potential of additional Data Sharing constraints due to GDPR nervousness	Medium	Ensure communications are accurate and approaches are risk based. Promote GDPR as an opportunity rather than a threat. Learn from best practice and case studies elsewhere.	Low
Ward(s) affected:	All		
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>	West Suffolk Strategic Plan 2018-2020 https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Policies Strategies and Plans/upload/StrategicFramework2018-20.pdf		
Documents attached:	Appendix A - West Suffolk Information Framework		

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

- 1.1 The Councils have **access to a wealth of data and information currently fragmented across systems and services**. The Information Framework (and associated ICT Strategy – to be developed) proposes a revised approach to our use of data (and data from our partners) to help develop and improve decision making, and improve services.
- 1.2 The proposed purpose of the Information Strategy (as referenced at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee -20/04/2017) is **to seek to recognise the strategic value of information to the Council** and will promote and facilitate good information management practice, based on:
- a set of underlying data sharing principles;
 - seeking to define how we use information currently;
 - how we should be using information in the future;
 - how this can deliver key outcomes to both our staff,
 - our operations and our customers/consumers ; and
 - describing where technology can help facilitate this.
- 1.3 To help facilitate this, at Overview and Scrutiny Committee (20/4/2017) it was recommended that a **West Suffolk Information Framework Joint Task and Finish Group** be set up to scrutinise and shape the development of an Information Strategy for West Suffolk Councils’.
- 1.4 This group included **2 Members** from both **Forest Heath District Council** (Brian Harvey and Simon Cole) and **2 Members** from **St Edmundsbury Borough Council** (John Burns and Clive Springett) – with other Members co-opted in as and when needed to provide a ‘peer review’ role in shaping the development of this document (see [OAS/FH/17/013](#) for further information.)
- 1.5 **The Joint Task and Finish group met on 4 occasions** (28/7/17, 22/8/17, 19/10/17 and 11/1/18) to discuss and progress the document – providing a valuable steer as regards shaping the vision, the principles and the development of the Draft Information Framework, attached as **Appendix A**, to the wider Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.6 Note: It was recognised early on in the process that the **document should become a Framework rather than a Strategy** (reflecting the focus on Data and Information, and our Vision and Objectives regarding its usage) and that a subsequent ICT Strategy would focus on the delivery of the Technology Architecture to support the Framework.
- 1.7 The report seeks the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s input into the draft West Suffolk Information Framework** following the work of the Joint Task and Finish Group. **The framework is a first for West Suffolk Councils’**, and represents a **revised approach to data and the way we use it**.
- 1.8 The framework provides a **high level summary of our current position**, and proposes an **approach that seeks to maximise our data assets through aligning data across West Suffolk Councils’ (and its partners)** to improve the services provided across the Councils’.
- 1.9 **Our vision** is to use **information to its maximum potential in West Suffolk**, in order to **improve services and create better outcomes** for our residents, customers, visitors, businesses, partners and communities.

Our key principles are:

- To understand our Data as an asset – improving our information asset management;
- To improve the quality and security of our information assets;
- To use data and intelligence to support decision-making;
- To digitize our information systems that support service delivery;
- To support integrated working between partners (providing 'joined up' information around the individual / resident / business);
- To positively encourage Customer access and transactions – through a digital by design approach (whilst continuing to support our less able residents and service users);
- To encouraging greater staff and councillor engagement with our information systems (through improved design);
- To present our information effectively (in a way that supports 'transparency')

(Note: This also recognises our obligations regarding Data Protection Act and the new General Data Protection Regulation – in fact, our GDPR plan is also helping to identify some key data sources, therefore GDPR has had/will continue to have a positive impact on this activity.)

2. *This framework is not comprehensive – however it provides a direction of travel/statement of intent for West Suffolk Councils'.*

2.1 **The aim** of the Framework document is to **provide councillors, staff, partners and interested members of the public with an overview of the councils' direction of travel and its intent as regards data and information**, and is not therefore a delivery document. The content is therefore necessarily high-level and focused on principles and approaches, with the detail and business as usual activities being fleshed out in individual plans, strategies and service-specific business plans. It is also acknowledged that we will need to engage with our Parish Councils in some aspects of this work – recognising their importance in the process.

3. *As this is a Framework – there is no explicit end date – a proposed action/activity plans has been included at the end of this document.*

3.1 **This represents a proposed way of working, therefore should not be seen as a Delivery document.** It is however likely that this need to change over time according to Council priorities and to keep pace of change. **It does however provides high level principles regarding what we are aiming to achieve.** Projects that are developed based on these key principles will however be subject to robust business cases and follow the governance approach already in place.

4. *West Suffolk's contribution is part of the picture – success of the Framework necessitates wider engagement.*

4.1 The document references **stronger links to our colleagues across Suffolk**, which include NHS and any other key 'data stakeholder' that can have a positive impact on delivery of data driven outcomes. There is also **reference to other data sharing projects underway within Suffolk that could provide proof of concepts for sharing of data and information.** Similarly, there is a growing evidence base of Best Practice from many other Public Sector partners that we can make use of to help reduce risks and avoid duplication of effort. This is however a constantly changing environment, with new tools (and risks) surfacing regularly – therefore monitoring and exploring other local and national initiatives

will help ensure we remain forward looking and can take a pragmatic approach to data and information usage (whilst continuing to manage, protect and secure what we have already.)

For this reason, **the framework** also seeks to **reflect and support approaches adopted within SCC and wider**, across the County – to ensure that we are aligned and make best use of these strong partnership links. NB to clarify, references to data includes both structured and unstructured data – recognising that there are some excellent data analysis tools now available that can gain value from a wide range of data sources.

5. *Information is a valuable asset (however, greater reliance also represents data as a potential increasing risk)*

5.1 The document recognises that **our data will have much greater value than ever before**. Smart technologies are turning data into usable information for a multitude of purposes. **However this use needs to be controlled and managed – and we need to continue to emphasis our data guardianship role for our data users**, residents, staff, partners and Councillors – therefore opportunities to repurpose data need to be done carefully - **ensuring our obligations around the new Data Protection and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) are met**.

5.2 Of note too is that there **are risks of 'dirty data'** – data that is of poor quality/inaccurate that cannot be used effectively. Data cleansing / validation therefore needs to be assessed, and similarly, from a security perspective - **we need to continue to adopt a robust approach to combat cyber security risks and risks of data loss/corruption etc.** – therefore for each new data sharing opportunity, there will be additional risks that need to be considered. However these challenges are similar across all of our partners within Suffolk, therefore these will continue to be addressed through existing cross working arrangements.

6. *This document sets out the direction of travel for data – it is however the ICT Strategy that will propose a Technology approach and architecture to support the Information Framework.*

6.1 As shown on the first page of the document – **Information Framework and ICT Strategy are there to support and underpin as a way of working, the Strategic Priorities – 2018-2020**. Therefore any new projects will not be done in isolation, and will be assessed to ensure that overarching strategic aims are met (and is mindful of the management and delivery of a significant 'business and usual' function for the Councils'.) **The ICT Strategy will provide the 'how' of the Information Framework**, and recognises the significant legacy investments and will **propose a step by step approach** to achieve a more agile technology infrastructure to support the future aspirations of the Councils'.

7. *Moving to a data driven approach is a cultural issue too*

7.1 Becoming more of a data driven organisation is a cultural change issue too – requiring **a breaking down of silos and greater recognition of data as an asset across all of our services, and those of our partners**. This will therefore take time and effort, however we have 2 key pilot projects that can help us with proof of concepts – helping to show the value of becoming a data driven organisation. These are the Customer Services Customer Relationship Management system project and a new cross Suffolk multi agency community focussed project – both looking at different ways to extract more value from the data we have available to us proceed and develop newer, more effective and

efficient ways of working, and to demonstrate across the organisation the value **of an approach that is more driven by data than technology**, as it's the technology that enables the data.

7.2 The organisation needs to recognise that **all of our services are data driven activities currently** and we should look to build on owned and shared data with external sources/partners. This will require a **communication and education process to help drive a cultural shift** to deliver to the aims of the Information Framework – and helping to define our relationships between data and the business context in which we operate. Again this filters into the Cultural Change process around awareness and opportunities that our data can provide.

8. *The Framework is at a High Level at present – there will be a number of delivery activities that this will support – however this does provide the overarching vision and principles for those delivery activities.*

8.1 It is recognised that this is a significant project with significant benefits, and will take some time to realise – this Framework however is **our first step on our journey**. Knowing what data we have available across the region (and how reliable this is) will help shape more detailed next steps, and determine next decisions. This is therefore the start of a journey, with much more detail to come **following a data audit and data mapping exercise**. This, alongside **key pilot projects** will then allow us **to identify priority areas** that can **deliver real outcomes** for next stage data sharing projects to focus on. This in turn will help (on a case by case basis) to identify any additional budget needed to achieve outcomes, with individual business cases to be reviewed by the ICT Programme Board)

9. *The document will be designed and formatted before publication*

9.1 The document will be proof-read, formatted and designed, including the addition of photographs where applicable, in advance of publication.

10. Next steps

10.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee's **consideration and recommendation of the Draft Information Framework** is welcomed.

10.2 The draft Information Framework is then **due to be considered by both councils' Cabinets**. Subject to agreement being reached, the framework would then be published.

10.3 **Proposed Action Plan**. Although the Framework itself isn't a delivery document – there are **a number of activities underway/already complete** that are **helping to understand where data can add greater value** – further information will follow following a data audit/data mapping exercise, and a **delivery plan will be included within the supporting ICT Strategy to follow**. Further detail on likely sequencing of initial preparation work packages follows on next page.

Activity	Description	Resource Need	Duration	Start	Finish
STAGE 1 Create Data baseline	Complete ICT Contracts Management activity and review Information Asset register to build baseline Work with BPs to refresh Applications Map/datamap, workshop with SMs to identify and confirm 'hard' data - and data that leaves/enters WSC (develop data map), present findings to SMT/LT and Inform Task & Finish Group of outcomes.	Internal resource (ICT + all Services)	3 Months	Mar 18	May 18
	CHANGE PROGRAMME : Develop org comms plan + Stakeholder Management Plan, and plan Service Specific workshops to explain and develop support for the process, plus explore training/skills needs for internal staff regarding Data Usage/sharing protocols and value of data to support decision making. Explore training/skills needs for internal staff regarding wider Data use/Data Sharing and ability to repurpose data.	Internal ICT, plus Data Protection Officer/GDPR lead HR (with advice from external parties where needed)	3 month	Apr 18	Jun 18
[Publish revised ICT Strategy/Digital Strategy for West Suffolk]	Provision of a Technical Roadmap/Digital Strategy for West Suffolk to support and underpin the principles and vision of the Information Framework	Internal ICT/Peer review SCC and engagement with Services and Members	3 months	May 18	Jul 18
[Develop Information Management model for West Suffolk]	Develop and implement Information Management changes to align with SCC Implementation (look to mirror SCC's Sharepoint model)	Internal ICT – GDPR/DPA lead + SCC IM leads/Internal Comms	4 months	Mar 18	Jun 18
STAGE 2: Work with internal teams and partner organisations to identify and map data (alongside SCOL/TCA activities)	Explore opportunities across Services/Policy Teams and wider Suffolk to explore where real value lies. Explore use of Data Analytics/Business intelligence tools to make good use of the data	Internal + External (SCC, plus partners) + external facilitation if needed	9 months (+ ongoing maint)	May 18	Jan 19
	Review work done to date at Leadership Team/SCOL as appropriate, agree priority projects and develop Business Cases/PIDs for key priority data projects. Assess impact on possible working patterns and develop comms plan/change plan based on impact	Internal + External (SCC, plus partners) + external facilitation if needed	3 months	Sep 18	Nov 18
STAGE 3: Delivery of Information and Data based Applications/APIs	Initiate delivery of key Data Projects identified above. Further develop knowledge and understanding of wide pool of data across all partners – and explore potential tranche 2 projects and programmes (timescales dependent on above projects and programmes) Further detail of stages and activities will surface as priority projects go through delivery stages.	Internal + External (SCC, plus partners) + external facilitation if needed	12 mths	Sept 18	TBC
STAGE 4: Converge Business Analytics activities	Review success of key pilot projects (inc Customer Services and other multi agency programmes) and assess likelihood of convergence benefits across all partners (to avoid data and resource duplication)	Internal + External (SCC, plus partners)	TBC	TBC	TBC
STAGE 5: Achieve comprehensive Information Management System/process	Ensure Data and Information Management and Data Analytics are embedded within respective organisations (subject to successes of priority projects above)	Internal resource – alongside SCC Resource	TBC	TBC	TBC

APPENDIX A

VERSION 0.8

FEBRUARY 6, 2018



DRAFT INFORMATION FRAMEWORK

WEST SUFFOLK COUNCILS'

PRESENTED BY: KEVIN TAYLOR

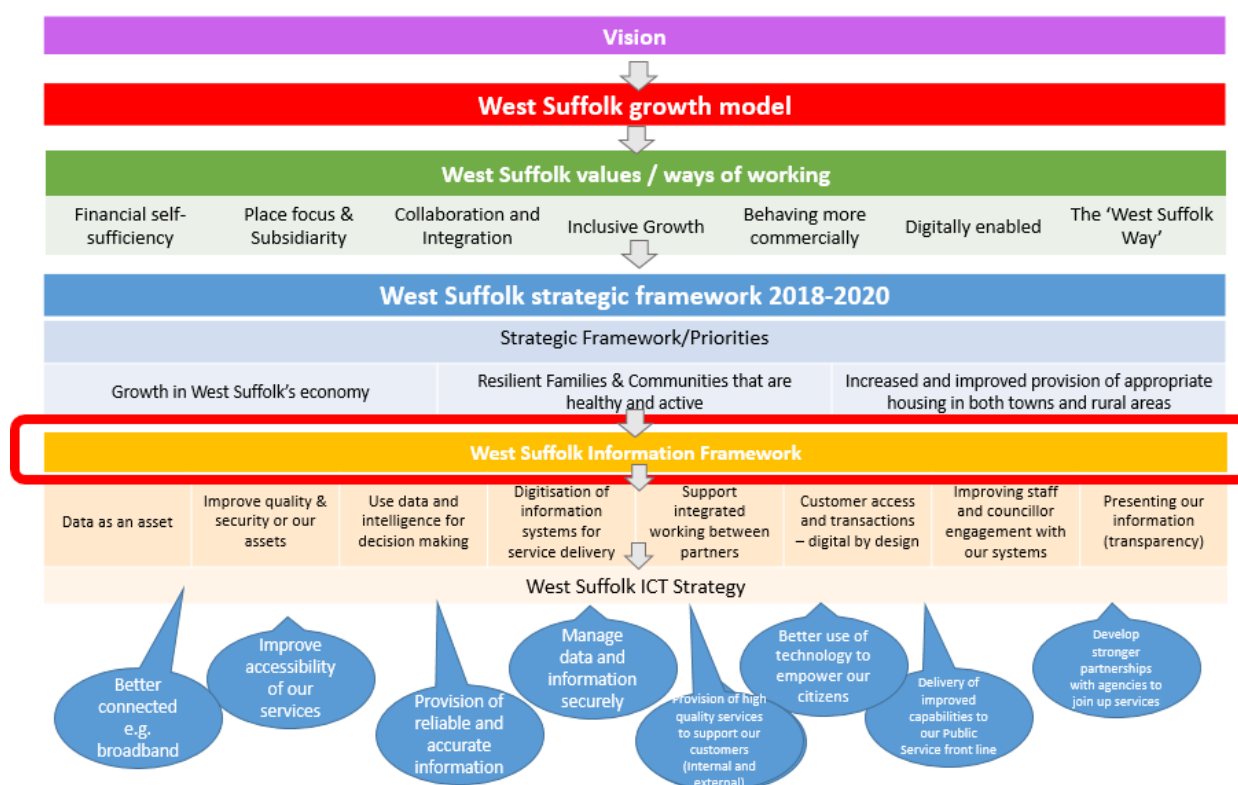
SERVICE MANAGER - ICT'

WEST SUFFOLK COUNCILS'

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to describe a future blueprint for the way West Suffolk Councils' use the data and information they collect and hold, to help improve the service we offer to our staff, our residents and customers and improve the way our officers and councilors work through more effective use of data and technology.

This framework and associated action plans will help to define our overall direction of travel regarding use of data & information at West Suffolk Councils'. Action plans will demonstrate the key steps in the journey, alongside potential key issues, risks, constraints and opportunities. Delivery will be achieved through adopting the 'West Suffolk Ways of Working' approach – and our overarching aims (as referenced in the diagram below) will be to support organisational Strategic Priorities, seeking to make better use of data, both to enable the delivery of the councils' strategic plan, as well as identifying new capabilities that could be delivered through better use of our data.



This document should be read in conjunction with the Strategic Framework Document 2018-2020 (Dec 2017), and will be underpinned by the ICT Strategy 2018-2020 and the Customer Access Strategy – and to be considered in the context of the Suffolk Wide Working diagram (p3) later in this document.

Together, these represent an integrated way of connecting services, data and systems in a way that improves our services.

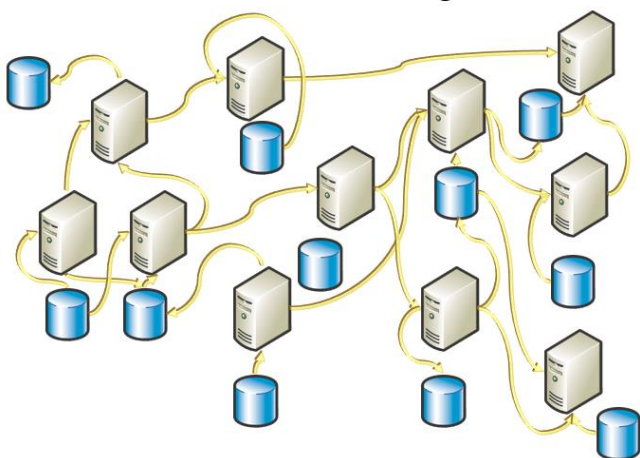
(Note: the ICT Strategy will describe the underpinning ICT technologies and architecture that needs to be in place to support activities within this Information Framework – the ICT Strategy is therefore the 'how' of the Information Framework.)

OUR 'AS IS' POSITION

Both Councils have historically procured systems and services 'on demand' plugging applications and databases into a shared network to deliver information to specialists that need it. This has served us well to date, although has led to a proliferation of databases and information pools created ad-hoc to serve an application or service specific needs.

Our current estate includes c200+ applications, many having application specific data stores, with many also sharing similar records, separately.

The current challenge...



Although this has been suitable for the standard day to day operations of the council, this approach doesn't provide the flexibility needed to support the councils' aspiration to share information between systems in a way that could help deliver predictive and pro-active services – and support evidence based data driven decision making (i.e. seeking to ensure that data is made more accessible and can be cross referenced where needed to support improved 'smart' decision making.)

An approach to Information Management and data sharing is therefore needed that delivers more with our data (such as providing staff with a single view of the customer) – improves the accessibility and usability of our data which can then allow greater analysis and (when linked to data and information from our partners) leads to better informed decisions and more effective services.

It is important though to also to continue to deliver to the needs of our customers and service users that may not have access to the internet or internet connected devices, therefore this framework (and subsequent strategies) will ensure that services continue to be inclusive, and accessible for and by all, including a continuation of valued 'face to face' and phone services where needed.

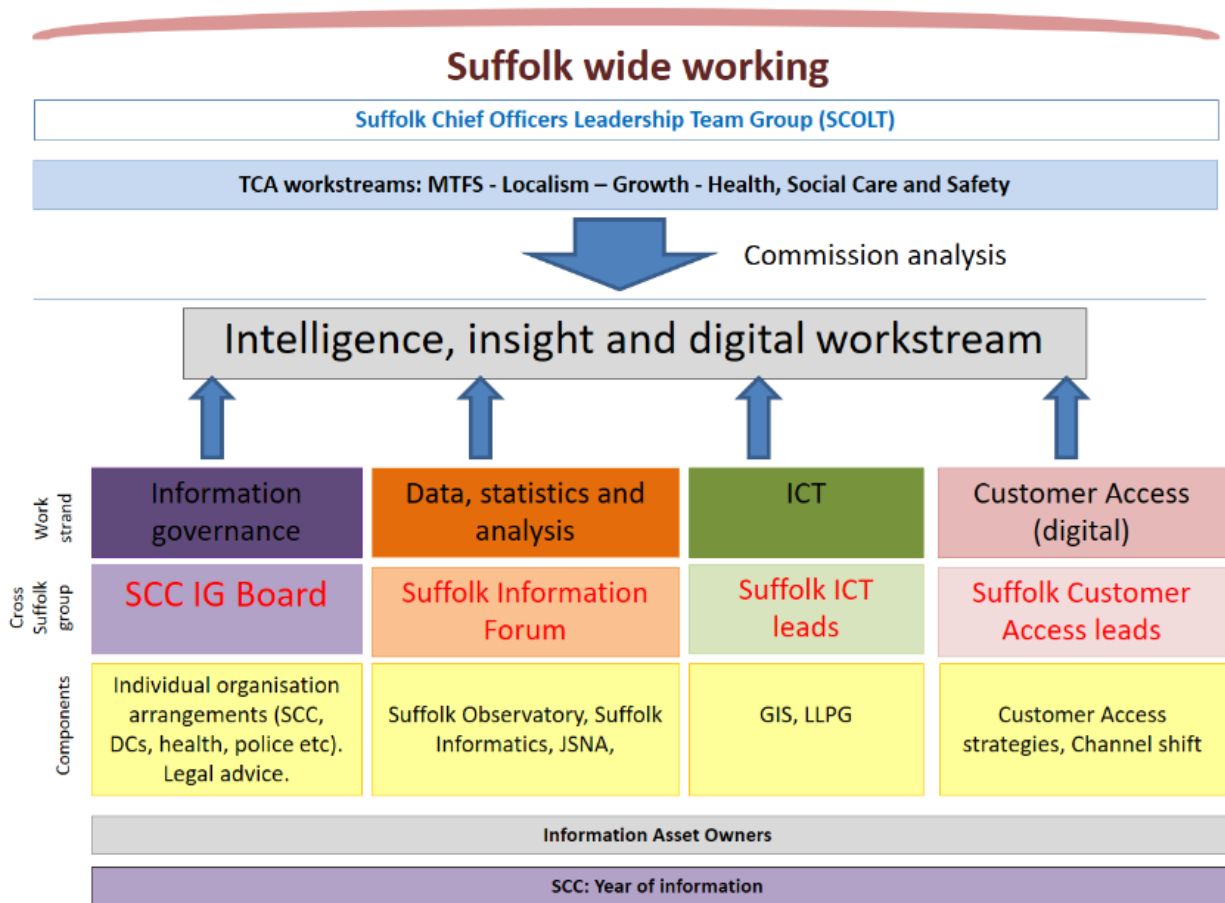
OUR 'TO BE' POSITION

Recent advances in technology have provided a range of new tools and techniques that enable accurate forecasting and modeling of service need/demand based upon a range of different variables. These tools can now take unstructured data and model it to provide valuable insights to organisations and businesses, achieved through accessing and aggregating data, and use of open standards improving the accessibility and usability of that data. Recent developments have seen the further evolution of open Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) and micro-services which simplify connections between multiple sources in a standard much quicker way without compromising the safety and security of the data, allowing a common set of tools approach – the data can then be used in a far wider range of solutions.

We are planning to work with our Services and our partners to seek initially to rationalize our data stores to improve the quality, accessibility and reliability of our data, to develop a 'golden record' where possible (a single customer record), and to invest in tools and skills to allow this data to be used to greater benefit. This is likely to also include a move to Open Standard APIs and a flexible Cloud

strategy to ensure that we meet our future storage and processing demands. Further details or the technical Roadmap will be within the ICT Strategy (to follow).

HOW WILL WE WORK WITH OUR PARTNERS?



West Suffolk Councils’ already have very strong data and information governance links across the County, being part of the ‘Suffolk Wide Working’ programme (as shown above) with active senior level membership of SCOLT – and are already using data analytics tools and techniques to help shape policy and service performance. This Framework seeks to build on and expand that work to maximize the value of our data assets across the County.

Also, West Suffolk are about to engage with SCC and Suffolk University on a multi-agency data enabling project, again seeking best use of our data and information across multiple sources and agencies – this will prove to be a further excellent pilot of new technologies with revised ways of data sharing to seek to improve the health and wellbeing of some of our communities, the intention being to use any best practice to help test theories and technologies, and to use the outputs to shape future data strategies and projects.

OUR NEXT STEPS - HOW DO WE GET THERE?

We have described our 'As Is' position, and our 'To Be' position – the next sections describe our steps/stages that help to achieve delivery of our framework (the ICT Strategy (prepared separately) being the technology enabler that delivers the underlying technology platform to support this Information Framework.)

Our Vision is ...to use information to its maximum potential in West Suffolk in order to improve services and create better outcomes for our residents, customers, visitors, businesses, partners and communities.

Our Approach/key Principles are as follows:

- **TO UNDERSTAND OUR DATA AS AN ASSET – IMPROVING OUR INFORMATION ASSET MANAGEMENT;**

Information is an asset which is fundamental to the efficient and effective delivery of public services. Effective management of this asset becomes more critical as our reliance on it increases.

- **Action needed:** Undertake Information Asset Register/data audit, review governance and procedures around asset and information management to ensure this is effective and meets current and future needs.
- **Outcome:** Revised Information Governance/Information Management Principles/Policy documents
- **Lead:** Service Manager – ICT
- **When:** Work underway currently – to conclude by Q3 2018

- **TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND SECURITY OF OUR INFORMATION ASSETS;**

Data quality is key to quality decision making. Our data needs to be reviewed for accuracy and quality alongside our current GDPR activities. Security of data and protection of our data against cybercrime and other risks will continue to be at the forefront of our service – recognizing that this is a significantly increasing risk.

- **Action needed:** Following comprehensive review of Information Asset Register/Data Audit, determine quality of data, and value of undertaking potential data cleanse activities. In parallel, continue to focus on protecting the security and integrity of our data through effective application of security technologies and Information Security education and awareness campaigns.
- **Outcome:** Better understanding of the quality of available data (ours and our partners) and also continued investment in security technologies to protect that data.

- **Lead:** Service Manager - ICT
- **When:** Underway – will be an ongoing activity

- **TO USE DATA AND INTELLIGENCE TO SUPPORT DECISION-MAKING;**

The value of information can be multiplied by re-use, and therefore opportunities to re-use should be looked for proactively. Cross matching of data can provide new intelligence – and allow us to work in ways that add greater value to our service users.

- **Action needed:** Explore the possible value of linking of current data assets with those of our partners to determine where potential opportunities lie to generate new intelligence. Assess suitability of potential Data Analytics tools to exploit data, and work with Data Protection Lead to understand what can be shared. Review and redevelop Data Sharing Agreements with our partners where applicable.
- **Outcome:** Development of new Data Sharing agreements with key partners, identification of new opportunities, and explore use of new Data Analytics tools.
- **Lead:** Service Manager – ICT
- **When:** This work will follow Data Inventory/review of Information Asset Register – expected Q3 2018.

- **TO DIGITIZE OUR INFORMATION SYSTEMS THAT SUPPORT SERVICE DELIVERY;**

The value of digital information can be multiplied by re-use, and cross matching against our own, and external data sets – providing greater value from these key assets.

- **Action needed:** Develop a Data Inventory – understand what we have, and the quality/accuracy/accessibility/reliability of our current data
- **Outcome:** Will provide an understanding of our current Information Assets, and where additional could be achieved
- **Lead:** Service Manager - ICT
- **When:** Work already underway, completion by Q3 2018

- **TO SUPPORT INTEGRATED WORKING BETWEEN PARTNERS (PROVIDING ‘JOINED UP’ INFORMATION AROUND THE INDIVIDUAL / RESIDENT / BUSINESS);**

Integrating data sets across partners and within the organisation will deliver additional insights supporting improved decision making – improving lives of our service users and allowing us to deliver more effectively.

- **Action needed:** Explore further opportunities with public, private and third sector partners, share what we have and understand new areas for data sharing. Continue to develop projects such as Lifelink and other multi agency data driven projects to explore new ways to share and use data.
- **Outcome:** Further develop our data inventory with partners to develop data value propositions

- **Lead:** Service Manager – ICT
- **When:** Already underway – ongoing activity

TO POSITIVELY ENCOURAGE CUSTOMER ACCESS AND TRANSACTIONS – THROUGH A DIGITAL BY DESIGN APPROACH (WHILST CONTINUING TO SUPPORT OUR LESS ABLE RESIDENTS AND SERVICE USERS);

The opportunities and value of information greatly increase when it is made available in standardised and linkable formats. A ‘designed in’ approach will make any subsequent integrations much easier to achieve.

- **Action needed:** Further develop our Customer Access Strategy to both develop new channels for our customers to access our services whilst remaining inclusive for our less digitally aware residents and service users.
- **Outcome:** Delivery of a Customer-centric Customer Access Strategy/Digital Strategy that can provide improved services
- **Lead:** Service Manager – ICT
- **When:** By Q3 2018

TO ENCOURAGING GREATER STAFF AND COUNCILLOR ENGAGEMENT WITH OUR INFORMATION SYSTEMS (THROUGH IMPROVED DESIGN);

Citizens and businesses should be able to access information about themselves, along with an explanation of how this information is used. (This also links through to our Customer Access Strategy/Target Operating Model for Customer Services.

- **Action needed:** Identify any current information gaps in data and information provision, review Information asset Register/Data Inventory to understand what could be offered, explore new ways to improve delivery of data and information
- **Outcome:** A greater understanding of our customers’ information needs, plus a clear understanding of what can be provided and how - to service those needs.
- **Lead:** Service Manager – ICT.
- **When:** Work underway already in some areas, however this to be expanded to engage with staff, councillors and residents to help understand gaps and ‘wants’, to understand any issues with data access and to develop a delivery plan with colleagues in Customer Services to help address and improve engagement.

TO PRESENT OUR INFORMATION EFFECTIVELY (IN A WAY THAT SUPPORTS ‘TRANSPARENCY’)

Public information should be published, unless there are overriding reasons not to. Citizens and businesses should be able to access information about themselves, along with an explanation of how this information is used. Again, linking through to our Customer Access Strategy.

- **Action Needed:** Review of data inventory/information asset register with GDPR lead/Data Protection Officer and partner leads to assess what additional information we could/should be sharing

- **Outcome:** Publication of additional data and information to support the need for transparency.
- **Lead:** Service Manager – ICT
- **When:** Action to be completed after Information Asset Register has been reviewed, and work to be done alongside our key partner organisations such as Suffolk County Council

HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THIS?

The following key stages will need to be delivered in order to support our Information Framework

Stage 1 – Develop a Data Inventory

- Advanced search across all content sources, establishing our baseline and validating our information asset register (note: can be co delivered alongside GDPR activities)
- Identification of potential data users that may be 'digitally excluded'.

Stage 2 - Understand where to unify information sources

- Design, develop and create a unified information store (on or off premise) content and data combined in one index, inc external data sources where appropriate.
- Identify Information linking to seek to join data from diverse sources where possible (such as our partners/agencies/SCOLT etc) = and creation of a master data map.

Stage 3 - Delivering information and data based applications

- Rolling review of existing applications alongside delivery of ICT Strategy/Digital Strategy to identify where maximum value can be gained from an integrated data and information management approach - moving us beyond just information retrieval to support information driven applications and decision making.

Stage 4 - Converging business analytics

- Introduces more sophisticated, business analytics and business intelligence tools that further develops a service based model for data integration - including partners where possible.

Stage 5 - Achieve a comprehensive information management system

- Look to revisit best practice and successes to date to see where to extend the advantages of unified Information across the organization and our partners.
- To further emphasise the delivery of services built on a standardized and flexible information architecture that avoids problems created by technology silos.

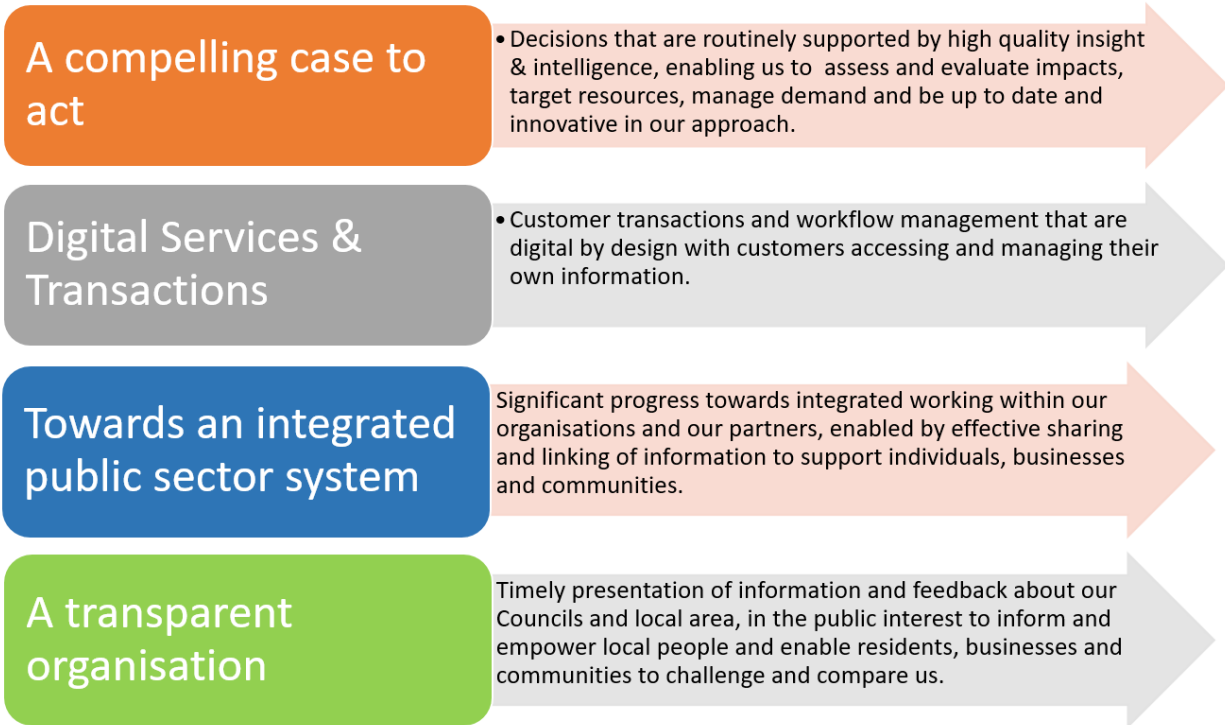
OUR ROADMAP

A suggested high level roadmap is shown below:



WHAT OUTCOMES CAN WE EXPECT?

When we successfully achieve delivery of the above stages – we can expect the following outcomes.



WHAT WILL BETTER DATA USAGE MEAN FOR WEST SUFFOLK?

For our Staff/Services

Staff/Services will be able to:

- *Access a wider pool of information, more effectively to assist with improved decision making – delivering more joined up services to their customers*
- *Help ensure resources are targeted to the right place at the right time, based on a wider pool of data evidence*
- *Work more collaboratively – making best use of skills and knowledge*
- *Find information quickly and easily*
- *Collect and use quality information that is more trustworthy*
- *Make better use of current resources – re-using and repurposing information already created and not reinventing the wheel*
- *Commission/request/access information from a much wider pool of data/data sources*

They will know:

- *How to handle and protect information, including what to share and with whom*
- *What to keep and what to dispose of – removing duplication and avoiding staff retaining their own copies ‘just in case’.*
- *Where to keep it and how to save it*

For our customers/service users:

Customers will be able to expect that:

- *Information is accurate, reliable and accessible*

- *Their transactions with the Council and its commissioned service providers and partners will be processed promptly*
- *That the security of their data is paramount, that we will take good care of their information and not use it for purposes that it was not captured for*

They will know that:

- *Information relating to them is protected and handled appropriately*
- *Consistent standards will be applied when they give consent to share information*
- *The Councils' manages information appropriately and efficiently and expects its commissioned service providers and partners to do the same.*

For our Members/Councilors:

Members/Councilors will be able to expect that

- *They will have access to a much wider pool of data*
- *They will be able to request additional data pertaining to local areas*
- *They will be able to compare and contrast data sets between wards*
- *They will be able to make better informed decisions based on a more comprehensive data set*

They will know that:

- *The wider pool of data available is managed and secured in a way that should help provide confidence and reassurance to those that we serve*
- *The Councils' are innovative in its approach to data management and usage, and that our aim is to use data and information to improve public services*
- *The Councils' commitment to is used to exploring wider ways in protects the rights of the general public*
- *on relating to them is protected and handled appropriately*
- *Consistent standards will be applied when they give consent to share information*
- *The Councils' manages information appropriately and efficiently and expects its commissioned service providers and partners to do the same.*

For our ICT Team (working on behalf of the business):

The team will be able to achieve the following:

- *Deliver faster and cheaper integration of existing (legacy) systems*
- *Provide increased data accessibility and flexibility, making it easier to change as requirements change.*
- *Make good use of an open standards-based approach to applications development*
- *Deliver more scalable applications, much quicker, on a centrally managed, highly distributed and more scalable architecture quickly and for less cost*
- *Focus more on configuration rather than code*
- *Make better use/reuse of our ICT assets*
- *Reduce cost of implementing new processes through reuse of existing application and data*
- *Reduce TCO (total cost of ownership) for West Suffolk Councils'*
- *Rely on trusted common standards and interfaces/connectors to deliver messages and data across disparate technologies and protocols*

CONCLUSION

This Framework represents an important step forward in our aim to make better use of our data and information, and recognizes the importance of partnerships and connections with external parties to add greater value to our data – and most importantly, to use data and information in new ways that improve and enhance the services that we provide.

Advances in data analysis/data matching tools and techniques means that we should be able to use our data in a way that provides a more complete picture of our service users, our communities and our places - allowing services to provide a smarter, more personal, more proactive and effective Public Service.

Overview and Scrutiny of Committee



Title of Report:	Work Programme Update	
Report No:	OAS/FH/18/008	
Report to and date:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	8 March 2018
Chairman of the Committee:	Councillor Simon Cole Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Tel: 07974 443762 Email: simon.cole@forest-heath.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Christine Brain Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) Tel: 01638 719729 Email: Christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	To update the Committee on the current status of its rolling work programme of annual items for scrutiny during 2018 (Appendix 1).	
Recommendation:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee: It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that: Members review the current status of its Rolling Work Programme for 2018-2019.	
Key Decision: (Check the appropriate box and delete all those that <u>do not</u> apply.)	<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"/>	
Documents attached:	Appendix 1 – Current Rolling Work Programme 2018-2019	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendations

1.1 Rolling Work Programme

1.1.1 The Committee has a rolling work programme, whereby suggestions for scrutiny reviews are brought to each meeting, following the completion of the work programme suggestion form, and if accepted, are timetabled to report to a future meeting.

1.1.2 The work programme also leaves space for Call-ins and Councillor Calls for Action.

1.1.3 The current position of the work programme, including Task and Finish Group(s) for 2018 is attached at **Appendix 1** for information.

1.2 Recommendation(s)

1.2.1 Members are asked to:

- i) Review the current status of its work programme for 2018-2019

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Rolling Work Programme (Forest Heath District Council)

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

Description	Lead Member	Details
19 April 2018		
West Suffolk Community Safety Partnership	Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities	To receive an annual report and scrutinise the actions undertaken by the West Suffolk Community Safety Partnership. <i>(Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006)</i>
Car Parking	Portfolio Holder for Operations	To receive an annual report on Car Parking in Forest Heath.
Christmas Fayre Review	Cabinet Member for Operations	To receive an initial scoping report to review the Christmas Fayre.
Cabinet Decision Plan	Leader of the Council	To peruse the latest Decision Plan for items on which it would like further information or feels might benefit from the Committee's involvement.
Work Programme Update	Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny	To receive suggestions for scrutiny reviews, appoint Task and Finish Groups for these reviews and indicate review timescales.
7 June 2018		
Draft West Suffolk Annual Report (2017-2018) and Portfolio Holder Presentation	Leader of the Council	To provide an input to this important document. To also include the annual update from the Portfolio Holder.
West Suffolk Housing Strategy	Lead Portfolio Holder for Housing	To provide input into the West Suffolk Housing Strategy.
West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy	Lead Portfolio Holder for Housing	To provide input into the West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy.
West Suffolk Tenancy Strategy	Lead Portfolio Holder - Housing	To provide input into the West Suffolk Tenancy Strategy.
West Suffolk Supplementary Planning Document on Affordable Housing	Lead Portfolio Holder for Housing	To provide input into the West Suffolk Supplementary Planning Document on Affordable Housing.
Decisions Plan: June 2018 to May 2019	Leader of the Council	To peruse the latest Decision Plan for items on which it would like further information or feels might benefit from the Committee's involvement.

Description	Lead Member	Details
Work Programme Update and Reappointments to Task Groups / SCC Health Scrutiny	Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny	To receive suggestions for scrutiny reviews, appoint Task and Finish Groups for these reviews and indicate review timescales. (To re-appoint the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee for 2018-2019.
12 July 2018		
Annual Portfolio Holder Presentation	To be confirmed	The Portfolio Holder has been invited to provide an update on their portfolio and to answer questions from the Committee.
Decisions Plan:	Leader of the Council	To peruse the latest Decision Plan for items on which it would like further information or feels might benefit from the Committee's involvement.
Work Programme Update	Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny	To receive suggestions for scrutiny reviews, appoint Task and Finish Groups for these reviews and indicate review timescales.
13 September 2018		
Annual Portfolio Holder Presentation	To be confirmed	The Portfolio Holder has been invited to provide an update on their portfolio and to answer questions from the Committee.
Universal Credit (Role out in Forest Heath)	Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities	To receive information on the role out of Universal Credit in Forest Heath in December 2018 and lessons learnt from SEBC.
Christmas Fayre Review – Final Report	Cabinet Member for Operations	To receive the final report on the review of the Christmas Fayre.
Decisions Plan:	Leader of the Council	To peruse the latest Decision Plan for items on which it would like further information or feels might benefit from the Committee's involvement.
Work Programme Update	Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny	To receive suggestions for scrutiny reviews, appoint Task and Finish Groups for these reviews and indicate review timescales.
8 November 2018		
Annual Portfolio Holder Presentation	To be confirmed	The Portfolio Holder has been invited to provide an update on their portfolio and to answer questions from the Committee.
Annual Car Parking Update	Portfolio Holder for Operations	To receive an annual report on Car Parking in Forest Heath.
Decisions Plan:	Leader of the Council	To peruse the latest Decision Plan for items on which it would like further information or feels might benefit from the Committee's involvement.

Description	Lead Member	Details
Work Programme Update	Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny	To receive suggestions for scrutiny reviews, appoint Task and Finish Groups for these reviews and indicate review timescales.
10 January 2019		
Annual Portfolio Holder Presentation	To be confirmed	The Portfolio Holder has been invited to provide an update on their portfolio and to answer questions from the Committee.
Decisions Plan:	Leader of the Council	To peruse the latest Decision Plan for items on which it would like further information or feels might benefit from the Committee's involvement.
Work Programme Update	Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny	To receive suggestions for scrutiny reviews, appoint Task and Finish Groups for these reviews and indicate review timescales.
14 March 2019		
Annual Portfolio Holder Presentation	To be confirmed	The Portfolio Holder has been invited to provide an update on their portfolio and to answer questions from the Committee.
Barley Homes Group Limited Annual Report	Lead Portfolio Holder for Housing	To scrutinise the Annual Report of Barley Homes Group Limited
Decisions Plan:	Leader of the Council	To peruse the latest Decision Plan for items on which it would like further information or feels might benefit from the Committee's involvement.
Work Programme Update	Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny	To receive suggestions for scrutiny reviews, appoint Task and Finish Groups for these reviews and indicate review timescales.

To be programmed during 2018

- *The Home of Horseracing, Newmarket (Extraordinary Meeting) (April / May 2018)*

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

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