

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Title:	Agenda									
Date:	Thursday 7 June 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 Rona Burt</p> <p><u>Conservative Members (8)</u></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">Chris Barker</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Brian Harvey</td> </tr> <tr> <td>John Bloodworth</td> <td>Christine Mason</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rona Burt</td> <td>Robert Nobbs</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Simon Cole</td> <td>Nigel Roman</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>West Suffolk Independent Members (1)</u></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">David Palmer</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>UKIP Member (1)</u> Reg Silvester</p>	Chris Barker	Brian Harvey	John Bloodworth	Christine Mason	Rona Burt	Robert Nobbs	Simon Cole	Nigel Roman	David Palmer
Chris Barker	Brian Harvey									
John Bloodworth	Christine Mason									
Rona Burt	Robert Nobbs									
Simon Cole	Nigel Roman									
David Palmer										
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.	
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Personal Information	Any personal information processed by Forest Heath District Council or St Edmundsbury Borough Council arising from a request to speak at a public meeting under the Localism Act 2011, will be protected in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. For more information on how we do this and your rights in regards to your personal information and how to access it, visit our website: https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Data_and_information/howweuseinformation.cfm or call Customer Services: 01284 763233 and ask to speak to the Data Protection Officer.
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Agenda

Procedural Matters

Part 1 – Public

1. **Substitutes**
2. **Apologies for Absence**
3. **Minutes** **1 - 14**

To confirm the minutes of the meetings held on 16 April 2018 and 19 April 2018 (copies 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 and any other updates from the Chairman**
6. **Draft West Suffolk Annual Report (2017-2018)** **15 - 98**

Report No: **OAS/FH/18/014**
7. **West Suffolk Homelessness Reduction Strategy** **99 - 172**

Report No: **OAS/FH/18/015**
8. **Review of the Garden Waste Collection Service (GWCS) - Scoping Report** **173 - 178**

Report No: **OAS/FH/18/016**

9. Shadow Scrutiny Committee Nominations

On 30 May 2018, the Shadow Council will be asked to establish a Shadow Scrutiny Committee made up of 8 existing members of St Edmundsbury's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and 5 existing members of Forest Heath's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with the Chairman from each Committee being automatically nominated as one of the representatives.

Therefore, subject to the agreement of the Shadow Council on 30 May 2018, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is being asked to nominate 4 members to sit on the Shadow Scrutiny Committee.

10. Cabinet Decisions Plan: 1 June 2018 to 31 March 2019 **179 - 196**

Report No: **OAS/FH/18/017**

11. Work Programme Update and Re-appointments to Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny **197 - 206**

Report No: **OAS/FH/18/018**

Part 2 – Exempt

NONE

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Extraordinary Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Extraordinary Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Monday 16 April 2018** at **6.00 pm** at **Palace House, The Mews**, Palace Street, Newmarket, CB8 8EP

Present: **Councillors**

Chairman Simon Cole

Vice Chairman Ruth Bowman J.P.

Chris Barker
John Bloodworth
Brian Harvey

Christine Mason
David Palmer
Reg Silvester

By Invitation:

Andy Drummond, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture

Also in attendance:

Chris Garibaldi, Director of the National Horseracing Centre for Horseracing and Sporting Art
Peter Jensen, Chairman of the Home of Horseracing Trust

215. **Substitutes**

There were no substitutes declared.

216. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Rona Burt and Nigel Roman.

217. **Public Participation**

There were no questions/statements from the public.

218. **National Horseracing Museum, Newmarket**

[Councillor Ruth Bowman arrived at 6.07pm]

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee wished to thank Chris Garibaldi (Director of the National Horseracing Centre for Horseracing and Sporting Art) and Peter Jensen (Chairman of the Home of Horseracing Trust)

for giving the Committee the opportunity to visit the National Horseracing Museum and for the opportunity to scrutinise the Project.

The Committee then received Report No: OAS/FH/18/009, which provided information on the background to the scrutiny exercise to review the Home of Horseracing Project, now referred to as the National Heritage Centre for Horseracing and Sporting Art, which proposed two objectives for this review:

1. To carry out a routine post implementation scrutiny review of the Council's involvement in the Home of Horseracing Project, a year after its official opening; and
2. To review the National Heritage Centre's future plans and how the Council can assist in their delivery as a partner.

It was proposed that this piece of scrutiny be carried out over two sessions. The first higher priority session being carried out at this meeting, and involving external partners would look at:

- a) Whether the Council's involvement in the project had resulted in the desired objectives?
- b) What role the Council could have in supporting the National Heritage Centre's future plans for growing visitor numbers, in the context of the wider Newmarket Vision?

Once the capital project was formally closed down, a second, internally focused scrutiny session would be held to look at any learning that could be applied to future Council projects.

At this session the review started at 5pm with Scrutiny members being given a tour of the facility and at 6pm the formal Scrutiny Committee commenced with a presentation from the National Heritage Centre and discussions took place between the Committee and partners to explore the following main issues:

1. How had the capital project achieved the original objectives set for it by the partnership?
2. How had the National Heritage Centre performed in its first 18 months against its original business plan?
3. What does the National Heritage Centre's new business plan say?
4. Where does this fit into the Newmarket Vision and the Council's strategic plan?
5. How would the Council be involved in taking this forward, and what specific assistance does the National Heritage Centre need?

The Committee received a detailed presentation from Chris Garibaldi which included information on the context of the project; project partners; where the capital came from to fund the project; work carried out by the three

existing charities; key achievements (including being shortlisted for the 2017 Art Fund Museum of the Year within a few months of opening, and winning Suffolk Museum of the year 2017); visitor numbers; admission tickets; repeat visitors; where visitors came from; gift aid collected on tickets; visitor spend and what it was worth to the local economy; special exhibitions; National Portfolio Organisation status from the Arts Council; fund raising initiatives; the importance of volunteers in running the site and with over 9,000 hours gifted; engagement with the local community; the learning offer; and the focus of the new business plan.

The Committee considered the information provided on the tour and the presentation in detail and asked a number of questions of Chris Garibaldi and Peter Jensen to which comprehensive responses were provided. These included opening times, booking arrangements and support for visitors.

Arising from this questioning and discussion, the Committee acknowledged that the National Heritage Centre (the Centre) was striving to be a world class visitor experience and asked how this would be measured. In response Mr Garibaldi explained this was achieved through external validation. In particular by the national bodies. The map of visitor postcodes highlighted in the presentation also showed how far visitors travelled across the UK to the Centre. He stated that the Centre was more than a museum, it was an experience.

The Chairman of the Committee stated that what the Centre had to offer was outstanding, and asked how they were marketing the Centre as an international product as it was felt that Newmarket was difficult for international travellers to get to. In response Mr Garibaldi informed members that the Centre was using Discover Newmarket and he had recently joined as Board Member on the "Visit Cambridge and Beyond". Cambridge had a tourist management challenge and he was working with the Board through their contacts to develop a visitor triangle (Cambridge, Newmarket and Ely), as well as working with coach companies. He further explained that the Home of Horseracing was helping to support the local economy, in particular through the High Street Redesign Project which was very important as the Centre wanted the High Street in Newmarket to reflect quality. The Newmarket Vision Tourist Group was also looking at how to market Newmarket as a visitor destination.

In response to question raised regarding whether the Centre was looking to become cost neutral, Mr Garibaldi explained that museums were rarely cost neutral and, whilst the Heritage Centre had support from third parties, it received no direct core revenue funding from the local taxpayer. It therefore had to take a commercial approach wherever possible. Notwithstanding this, he felt the Centre was exceptionally good value for money for general visitors and particularly for schools. The Centre provided a complete mixture of lifelong learning and the science offer was proving very popular with schools.

The Chairman of the Committee on behalf of the Committee asked Messrs Garibaldi and Jensen what more the Council could do to help the Centre further? In response they raised three areas where they felt the Council might be able to provide assistance:

- 1) Palace Street: There were concerns about safety issues in Palace Street. It would be a huge advantage to the Centre if Palace Street was pedestrianised or closed to through traffic when the Centre was open, say between 10am and 5pm. The Centre was also keen to understand liability if accidents occurred.

In response the Chairman of the Committee agreed that there needed to be some form of dialogue on traffic calming, perhaps rising bollards. He also stated the Council might be able to help with pre-planning advice/consultation with Suffolk County Council.

Jill Korwin (Director – Forest Heath District Council) advised that Suffolk County Council was doing a road study in the area and the Centre would be a key consideration in the work on the town centre as part of the Newmarket Vision.

- 2) Improved signage in terms of a sign over Palace Street marketing the entrance / directing people to the Centre.
- 3) General marketing support within West Suffolk and specifically road signage outside of Newmarket on the major arterial roads, and within the town particularly to car parks. Currently there were three signs along the A14/A11 which were old, advertising the old museum (Home of Horseracing), and to replace them would cost the Centre around £50,000 per sign.

In response the Chairman suggested that the Council might be able to help negotiate with Suffolk County Council/Highways England regarding the replacement of the signs with the new branding.

Councillor Andy Drummond, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture and Mr Jensen informed the Committee that the original idea for the Centre, and setting up the Home of Horseracing Trust, arose after Forest Heath District Council's compulsory purchase of Palace House in the 1990's, and therefore the Council had itself played a key part in the project from start to finish, including the vision of developing a world class museum. Alex Wilson, Director at Forest Heath District Council stated that the project had been an excellent partnership and the fund-raising achievements of the Trust had been phenomenal.

Whilst considering this report, the Committee also wished to discuss the financial contents of the new business plan which was circulated separately to members of the Committee and was available on request from the Heritage Centre. As there was to be detailed discussion of the document which would involve discussion of the financial affairs of a third party, it was proposed, seconded and unanimously **RESOLVED** for these discussions to be held in private session (see Minute Number 220 below) and the press and public were then excluded from the meeting.

Following the conclusion of the discussions in the private session, the press and public were re-admitted to the meeting. Councillor Ruth Bowman then moved the recommendation, this was duly seconded by Councillor Simon Cole and with the vote being unanimous, it was:

RESOLVED

That:

- 1) The Committee **noted** the Council's involvement in the original objectives set by the partnership had been met.
- 2) The Committee would look at how best to progress the areas of assistance requested by the National Heritage Centre and recorded in these minutes.

219. Exclusion of the Press and Public

It was proposed by Councillor Brian Harvey, seconded by Councillor Simon Cole, and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

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

220. National Heritage Centre, Newmarket

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the financial information contained within the new business plan for the Heritage Centre, which was circulated to members of the scrutiny Committee. As this would require the detailed discussion of the finances of a third party, the Committee felt this follow-up conversation to the published information should take place in closed session, since the Heritage Centre was an independent body.

In particular discussions were held on commercial revenue and financial projections and budgets (income and expenditure) through to 2022, to which comprehensive responses were provided.

Once the discussions were concluded in the private session on the new business plan, the meeting then moved back into the open session, where the press and public were re-admitted and the Committee then voted on the recommendations contained within the report (see Minute Number 218 above).

The Meeting concluded at 7.45pm

Signed by:

Chairman

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Minutes of a meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Thursday 19 April 2018** at **6.00 pm** in 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
Rona Burt
Reg Silvester

Brian Harvey
Nigel Roman
David Palmer

By Invitation:

David Bowman, Portfolio Holder for Operations

221. **Substitutes**

There were no substitutes declared.

222. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Christine Mason.

223. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2018, were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

224. **Public Participation**

Report No: [OAS/FH/18/011 \(Car Parking Annual Update\)](#)

The Town Council Manager from Newmarket Town Council addressed the Committee to make them aware of the thoughts of the Town Council on car parking in Newmarket. The Town Council had recently completed the Suffolk County Council questionnaire on parking policies and their submission was summarised below:

PMS1: Strategic Parking Management

- Due to the increasing demands for tourism and business, there was insufficient capacity to meet future demand. *(The Town Council also*

expressed concerns with the occupancy figures contained within paragraph 1.3 of Report No: OAS/FH/18/011 and requested for this data to be shared with them)

PMS2: Managing Local Authority Parking Stock

- Parking spaces should not be allocated specifically to businesses under a planning approval.
- Recently installed machines in the car parks had been placed so that they were not easily accessible for wheelchair users.
- The car parks were small, inaccessible, poorly maintained and badly sign posted.

PMS3: Parking Charges

- Charges should be fair and proportionate across the towns in the district.
- Provision should be provided for very short stay parking (eg 30 minutes) which could be accommodated in the High Street, if correctly managed.

PMS4: Parking Schemes (on-street parking and parking permits)

- Due to its uniqueness, it was considered that Newmarket needed a bespoke on-street parking and parking permits solution.

PMS5: Civil Parking Enforcement

- Would like to see this implemented at the first possible opportunity.
- PCSO for Newmarket would be available from September 2018 and the Town Council would be proactively working with the PCSO to address parking enforcement in the interim.

PMS6: Accessible, high quality and safe parking

- The Town Council strongly supported this policy and looked forward to its implementation in Newmarket, where the car parking was not yet at this standard (and also referred to the car parking signage policy which had been developed by the Newmarket Vision).

225. Announcements from the Chairman regarding responses of the Cabinet to reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Chairman attended Cabinet on 3 April 2018, and presented the Committee's report on items it considered on 8 March 2018, which was duly noted.

226. Monitoring Community Safety Activities Including Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership (Report No: OAS/FH/18/010)

It is the duty of the Committee, as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee designated under the Police and Justice Act 2006, to scrutinise the work of the Partnership.

The Committee received Report No: OAS/FH/18/010, which updated Members on the community safety activity in West Suffolk, including the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership (WSCSP) from April 2017 to March 2018.

Over the past year the WSCSP continued to meet and discharge its statutory duties by carrying out an annual assessment of crime and disorder in the area; it continued to deliver the three year plan and action plan to reflect the priorities of the partnership, and carrying out Domestic Homicide Reviews, as required. In May 2016, the WSCSP considered its priorities for 2017-2018. Attached as Appendix A to the report, was the WSCSP project plan 2017-2018.

The report also set out the work of the Strong and Safe Communities Group; the multi-agency Anti-Social Behaviour Group and the Public Space Protection Orders.

Members scrutinised the report and asked questions of Officers, to which responses were provided.

During the Committee's discussions on this item, reference was also made to Appendix A particularly in relation to the work being undertaken in relation to domestic abuse. To assist with the understanding of the nature of this issue, Members requested as to whether further quantitative data for the area of Forest Heath/St Edmundsbury could be provided to the Committee. Officers confirmed that they would enquire as to what level of data could be made available and would circulate this through to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members accordingly.

It was also noted that the Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities would be making their annual presentation on this portfolio to the meeting on 12 July 2018. Therefore, thought should be given in advance of that meeting, of particular questions which Members would like to see specifically covered by the Portfolio Holder on the subject of domestic abuse.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

227. Car Parking Annual Update (Report No: OAS/FH/18/011)

The Committee received Report No: OAS/FH/18/011, which provided members with an update on off-street parking outcomes and work priorities. The report included information on usage, occupancy, issue of fines, pocket car parks, RingGo cashless payments, electric charging points, Park Mark, Disabled Parking Accreditation, Civil Parking Enforcement and future work streams.

The Committee considered the report in detail and particularly noted the statement which had been made by Newmarket Town Council on the car parking in Newmarket (as set out under Minute Number 224. above).

Discussions were particularly held on the following substantive areas:

- 1) *Current car parking capacity within Brandon:* Councillor David Palmer explained that he regularly monitored the car parking capacity within Brandon and expressed his concerns around future capacity. He also referred to paragraph 1.3.4 of the report and questioned the estimated average occupancy figures listed for the car parks in Brandon. Officers

explained that work on estimating occupancy testing was on-going to ensure that best estimates could be provided. Councillor Palmer stated that he did have some suggestions which could increase the car parking capacity within Brandon, which he would share with Officers outside of the meeting.

- 2) *The results of the occupancy testing undertaken in Newmarket and the modelling of future car park capacity:* Members referred to the information within the report in relation to the occupancy and future car parking capacity within Newmarket (paragraph 1.3. of the report). Some Members expressed their concerns that the effect of any future housing developments within the Town, may not have been properly taken into account when estimating the future car parking capacity. Officers explained that work was being undertaken around this and they were satisfied that there would be sufficient car parking capacity in the Town, in the short term, up to 2020. However, it was also acknowledged that the capacity figures would need to be further reviewed once future housing developments started to come through. Members were keen to ensure that Newmarket Town Council, the Newmarket Vision and businesses within the town were fully consulted regarding any future options on car parking provision.

Taking into account the statement made by Newmarket Town Council with regard to the state of the car parks, including the facilities for disabled people, Officers referred to paragraphs 1.8 and 1.9 of the report which explained that the Council's pay and display car parks had been recognised for their high quality of management with a Park Mark Award. Also the car parks in Newmarket had been assessed in 2017 and had received Disabled Parking Accreditation. Officers explained that they would be willing to share the content of these assessments with the Town Council.

- 3) *The consideration of introducing very short stay parking in Newmarket (ie 30 minutes):* Following on from the statement made by Newmarket Town Council to support the introduction of very short stay parking, which was also supported by some Members of the Committee, Officers confirmed that they would further consider this suggestion when reviewing the car parking charges later this year.
- 4) *Implementation of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE):* Paragraph 1.10 of the report explained the current position with regard to the implementation of CPE and for the potential transition of on-street parking enforcement in Suffolk to move from the Police to Local Authorities. All parties were keen to ensure that this could be implemented from 1 April 2019, but confirmation was still awaited from the Department of Transport.

As a result of the implementation of CPE, Officers would also need to give consideration for the potential for vehicle displacement from on-street parking to the car parks in Newmarket.

- 5) *The increase in the number of cars parking on grass verges in Newmarket:* Some Members raised concern with the increase in the

number of cars parking on the grass verges in Newmarket. The Councillor David Bowman, Portfolio Holder for Operations (who was also present at the meeting) explained that Members should inform Officers as to where this was occurring, which could then be further investigated to see if it was on grass verges owned by the Council.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

228. Review of Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre - Scoping Report (Report No: OAS/FH/18/012)

The Committee received Report No: OAS/FH/18/012, which sought the establishment of a West Suffolk Joint Task and Finish Group to conduct a review into the delivery of the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre for 2019.

A formal review of the Fayre was last carried out in 2015 by a St Edmundsbury scrutiny Task and Finish Group and reported its recommendations to Cabinet in December 2015. The review concluded that "St Edmundsbury Council should commit to the Christmas Fayre for the remainder of the current administration" (May 2019) and made a number of recommendations that had been or were being implemented.

It was now proposed that a further review of the Christmas Fayre be carried out by way of a West Suffolk Joint Task and Finish Group comprising of four members from St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and four from Forest Heath District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, supported by officers including the Service Manager for Economic Development, Markets Development Officer, Service Manager (Health and Safety), a Policy Business Partner and the Portfolio Holders for Planning and Growth. The review was needed for the following reasons:

- The current commitment to continue with the Fayre only runs until April 2019, so decisions were needed as to what should take place in winter 2019;
- Planning for the Christmas Fayre started in the preceding year. As such, a decision would need to be made in 2018 for the 2019 Fayre;
- If the event went ahead as planned, the 2019 Christmas Fayre would be first to be run by the new West Suffolk Council as opposed to St Edmundsbury Borough Council. For this reason, current members from across West Suffolk needed to be involved in the decisions about the future of the Fayre; and
- The new anti-terrorist requirements for large scale events was not in place in 2015 when the previous review was carried out. These requirements had financial and other implications and it would be helpful to consider these alongside a wider review of the Fayre.

The Director also updated the Committee of the discussions by St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting which had been held on the previous evening. It was explained that

discussion had been held as to the membership of the Task and Finish Group and the importance of ensuring that rural areas and other towns were represented. However, the precise extent of involvement of Forest Heath Members was also carefully considered, to balance the fact that the event had historically been led by St Edmundsbury, versus the benefits from Forest Heath Members giving a different perspective. Various options were discussed, including splitting the review into retrospective and forward looking elements; the former being considered by St Edmundsbury Members only and the latter being constituted by the Shadow Authority.

Therefore, to reflect the outcome of the discussion, St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved that a Joint West Suffolk Task and Finish Group be established with six members from St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and up to six members from Forest Heath District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to carry out a review of the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre and to make recommendations for 2019.

The FHDC Overview and Scrutiny Committee acknowledged the importance of the Christmas Fayre for Bury St Edmunds and the surrounding area and expressed their appreciation to having the opportunity to be involved in this review, particularly taking into account that the 2019 Christmas Fayre would be the first to be run by the new West Suffolk Council.

The Chairman expressed concerns to ensure that the size of the Task and Finish Group did not become too unwieldy and would not wish to see the size exceed beyond 10 Members, but did indicate that in terms of the FHDC representation on the Group, then he would wish to at least have Members who represented the towns of Brandon, Mildenhall and Newmarket.

The Committee considered the report in detail and asked a number of questions to which Officers duly responded.

It was moved, duly seconded and with the vote being unanimous, it was:

RESOLVED

That:-

1. A Joint West Suffolk Task and Finish Group be established, with up to four Members from Forest Heath District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Councillors David Palmer, Robert Nobbs, John Bloodworth and Christine Mason) and six Members from St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to carry out a review of the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre and to make recommendations for 2019.
2. Final confirmation of the Members nominated to sit on the West Suffolk Task and Finish Group be delegated to the Chairmen of both St Edmundsbury Borough Council's and Forest Heath District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

229. **Work Programme Update (Report No: OAS/FH/18/013)**

The Committee received Report No: OAS/FH/18/013, which updated Members on the current status of its rolling work programme of items for scrutiny during 2018-2019 (Appendix 1).

The report also requested the Members identify questions they would like the Leader of the Council to as part of his overall presentation of the Draft West Suffolk Annual Report (2017-2018) on 7 June 2018.

The Committee considered the report and at the time of the meeting had not identified any questions they wished to put to the Leader of the Council, but would submit any questions following this meeting, to the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny).

It was also noted that at the meeting on 12 July 2018, along with the Annual Portfolio Holder presentation on Families and Communities (where it was again reiterated that thought should be given in advance of that meeting, of particular questions which Members would like to see specifically covered by the Portfolio Holder), there would also be a Families and Communities Evaluation Report, which would also give Members the opportunity to provide input and scrutiny on the monitoring information contained within this document.

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

The Meeting concluded at 7.35 pm

Signed by:

Chairman

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	Draft West Suffolk Annual Report 2017/18	
Report No:	OAS/FH/18/014	
Report to and dates:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	7 June 2018
	Cabinet	26 June 2018
Portfolio holder:	Councillor James Waters Leader of the Council, Forest Heath District Council Tel: 07771 621038 Email: james.waters@forest-heath.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Davina Howes Assistant Director (Families and Communities) Tel: 01284 757070 Email: davina.howes@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	The draft West Suffolk Annual Report highlights the key activities and developments that have been achieved over the financial year 2017/18, with regard to the priorities set out in the West Suffolk Strategic Plan.	
Recommendation:	<p>Overview and Scrutiny Committee:</p> <p>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that, Overview and Scrutiny Committee:</p> <p>(1) Considers the draft West Suffolk Annual Report; and</p> <p>(2) Makes any amendments and recommends the draft West Suffolk Annual Report to Cabinet.</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:		The draft Annual Report summarises progress in achieving the priorities set out in the West Suffolk Strategic Plan which was informed by feedback from residents, business and stakeholders.	
Alternative option(s):		It is good practice for councils to report on progress against their priorities in this way and ensures transparency on how they spend public money. Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury could report separately on their work to achieve their priorities. However, this would not reflect some of the excellent work which has been delivered jointly across the whole of West Suffolk. Also, it would not show the continued joint working between Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury.	
Implications:			
<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> • The Annual Report covers evidence to support the achievement of the equality objectives from the Strategic Plan.	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		None	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
Misunderstanding of the role of the report (i.e. it can only give highlights of W Suffolk's activities, not every action taken).	very low	Develop a communications plan to clearly explain the role of the report	Negligible
Ward(s) affected:		All wards	
Background papers:		West Suffolk Strategic Plan 2014-2016	
Documents attached:		Appendix A - Draft Annual Report 2017/18	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

1.1 Draft West Suffolk Annual Report 2017/18

- 1.1.1 The draft West Suffolk Annual Report highlights the key activities and developments that have been achieved over the financial year 2017/18, with regard to the priorities set out in the West Suffolk Strategic Plan. Following a decision by Portfolio Holders, this year's annual report will be a designed typeset document.
- 1.1.2 The draft report also contains a number of case studies and examples from West Suffolk to illustrate the achievements described. These have been carefully drawn from a range of localities, urban and rural locations, and service areas, in order to demonstrate the range of activities undertaken by the councils. In some cases, initiatives were only focused on one specific area, however, so examples are necessarily drawn from these localities.

2. Questions raised by Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2.1 Forest Heath Overview and Scrutiny Committee have raised the following questions for Councillor Waters to answer as part of the Annual Report item. The questions are as follows:

- 1. What do you think will happen among the Suffolk district councils with this unitary council idea that SCC has?
- 2. Any more news on Barley Homes or the Airbase situations?
- 3. What is the biggest advantage you see for emerging West Suffolk Council at the national table?
- 4. With so much going on is there anything Overview and Scrutiny should be looking at in your view between now and May 2019 that concerns you?

3. Response to Questions by Overview and Scrutiny Committee

3.1 What do you think will happen among the Suffolk district councils with this unitary council idea that SCC has?

- 3.1.1 Given the pressures and challenges facing local government and the wider public sector, it's important to always be reflecting on whether there are better ways of doing things to save money and achieve better outcomes with our communities. But as the district and borough Leaders made clear in our joint letter to the then Leader of Suffolk County Council in April, we believe that the best way to proceed is through partnership and that large-scale organisational change at this stage would be disruptive, and a distraction.
- 3.1.2 The district and borough leaders have jointly committed to looking at alternative solutions to unitary governance that will deliver proper, more transparent and collaborative reforms that will help address our shared financial challenges more swiftly and sustainably and will improve services

for the people of Suffolk at grass-roots level, rather than focussing on governance and structural reform.

- 3.1.3 My belief remains that the 'Suffolk System' is working for our communities and that we need to put our collective efforts into sustaining and improving that approach, building on our success and achieving even more, through effective and innovative partnership working.

3.2 Any more news on Barley Homes or the Airbase situations?

Barley Homes

- 3.2.1 Leaders of all three shareholding Councils (St Edmundsbury Borough Council, Forest Heath District Council and Suffolk County Council) met on 29 March and agreed the primary purpose of Barley Homes is to:

- Firstly to deliver homes which would not have otherwise been built; including providing market housing which better meets local needs and more affordable provision.
- Establish Barley Homes as a reputable house builder which other local authorities will want to do business with, and which provides an alternative market operating model for the future.
- Generate additional revenue streams for the councils through dividends, capital receipts and rental income.

- 3.2.2 We also agreed that we should proceed with the planning applications for the three Haverhill sites in the approved business plan at Town Hall, which was submitted on 17 May and Westfield's and Castlehill (in tandem with preparing a development brief).

- 3.2.3 In addition, we agreed officers should work on drawing up a pipeline of sites and the governance model would now include the introduction of a client side relationship management group, to include senior managers from all councils, who would further support and brief the Shareholder Advisory Group (SAG).

- 3.2.4 We would also continue to meet quarterly to review progress, however, following the change of leadership at Suffolk County Council we are now waiting for the appointment of the new Cabinet member with responsibility for Barley Homes and confirmation of who they wish to include on SAG and reconfirmation of the direction of travel.

- 3.2.5 Meanwhile work will continue on the three committed sites and an interim business plan is being prepared by Barley Homes, which it is intended will be presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in July 2018.

Airbases

- 3.2.3 **RAF Mildenhall:** The next stage in the RAF Mildenhall project was to work with Homes England and their appointed contractors to undertake further studies and produce a development brief for the base. Homes England have

now been informed by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) that at this stage, the decision has not been made to pass the site to Homes England for development, so Homes England have put a halt to this work.

- 3.2.4 We have followed this up with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) who have advised that following the US announcement, they will not be vacating RAF Mildenhall until 2024 at the earliest. Mildenhall is no longer a priority site for the MOD and no further decisions will be made until there is more clarity about the departure date.
- 3.2.5 We continue to liaise regularly with both the MOD and DIO and will ensure that as soon as there is any change in this position we will be actively involved.
- 3.2.6 **RAF Lakenheath:** In my statement at full Council on 25 April, I spoke about encouraging local suppliers to contract with the US for routine work on the base. In addition, opportunities exist through the work to develop the base to receive the two new squadrons of F35 fighter jets, being managed by the MOD (DIO).
- 3.2.7 We brought together a partnership of Councils, Chamber of Commerce, Local Enterprise Partnerships, West Suffolk College and Job Centre Plus to ensure that our local businesses are well placed to take advantage of the supply chain opportunities that will arise from these significant contracts that will deliver over \$1billion investment at the base.
- 3.2.8 We are aware of reports in the press regarding the concerns of MPs about sites earmarked for closure and will monitor the situation.

3.3 What is the biggest advantage you see for emerging West Suffolk Council at the national table?

- 3.3.1 We said in our business case for a single West Suffolk Council that it would give us a unified voice to more effectively lobby Government and attract internationally recognised businesses. The recent debates in Parliament showed what a strong reputation West Suffolk has at the national level, and how the process of becoming a single council has added to that, especially in terms of how strong local support was from our partners. Indeed the Minister echoed this in his own speech in the Commons.
- 3.3.2 I believe that with that good reputation, and a more resilient financial situation, we will be in an even better position in the future to attract investment into West Suffolk for housing and growth. We are already a trusted partner that Government wants to work with because of our strong track record in public service reform, and so I believe that will continue to be the case and bring us new opportunities. We have already seen interest from the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in our area and working more closely as well as the possibility of helping encourage investment.

3.4 With so much going on is there anything Overview and Scrutiny should be looking at in your view between now and May 2019 that concerns you?

- 3.4.1 Firstly, I would like to thank Overview and Scrutiny for the important work they have done this year.
- 3.4.2 Having looked at the existing work programme, it already includes many of the things I might suggest in terms of operational and policy matters – so I am very happy that we continue doing as we are doing, as I am sure that the committee will invite Cabinet when needed to consider (and keep up to date on) items that are going to Joint Cabinet Planning – giving the Cabinet a chance to come along and discuss specific projects, and inviting officers as necessary.
- 3.4.3 It is now about looking to the future of Overview and Scrutiny, and the committee can add value in thinking about how scrutiny will work after 2019, and that’s something it might do jointly with St Edmundsbury Overview and Scrutiny members.



West Suffolk Annual Report 2017/18

Foreword from the Leaders

West Suffolk is a national success story and a UK leader in transforming how councils can deliver benefits that make a real difference to the people they serve.

This Annual Report is a small part of the great work Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council deliver day in, day out in West Suffolk.

At the heart of all we do are the needs and aspirations of the communities we serve and includes delivering high quality services while encouraging prosperity, good quality of life and a vibrant local economy. This means investing in initiatives that support our communities and businesses while working more closely with partners and residents.

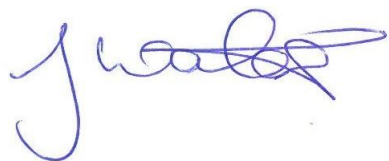
This year we have either secured, embarked upon or invested millions of pounds in leisure facilities, the creation of new jobs, better education, open spaces and development of much needed homes. At the same time we have recycled thousands of tonnes of rubbish, supported businesses with our licensing and enforcement work, as well as kept our streets clean, making West Suffolk such a great place to live and grow a family or business.

Nationally, councils are facing tremendous challenges. This report and the decisions we have been making show we are meeting and exceeding those challenges while continuing to look to the future. Alongside growing our prosperity, we have been able to protect our services while many authorities nationally are reducing theirs. We have also been able to better support and work with our communities and organisations through our Families and Communities work – growing community networks and their self-sufficiency.

Our innovation and aspiration is not only reflected in this report but has also been recognised by Government. We are also pleased that both Councils this year adopted our new Strategic Framework as well as some of the policies that back up our ambition and vision, including our West Suffolk Growth Investment Strategy.

We have worked even more closely together as councils to look at what is the best way to continue to support our communities and manage growth for the benefit of our residents. The public, businesses and partners have backed our proposals to create a new West Suffolk Council which will give us a louder voice and better ability to drive prosperity, jobs and the economy. Within just a year we have had the full support of Government to make this a reality – the first proposal of its kind through Parliament.

This year has been another excellent one but there is always more we can do. We believe we are in a much better position to meet those future challenges.



Councillor James Waters
Leader
Forest Heath District Council



Councillor John Griffiths
Leader
St Edmundsbury Borough Council

Introduction

The Annual Report presents the progress that West Suffolk councils have made in delivering our vision and priorities.

The vision and priorities that we worked towards during 2017-18 are set out in the West Suffolk Strategic Plan 2014-16 at: http://devwestsuffolk/Council/Policies_Strategies_and_Plans/upload/WestSuffolkStrategicPlan2014-16-full-version.pdf
[A new Strategic Framework was published in December 2017 covering 2018-20, progress towards the new Strategic Framework will be reported in Spring/Summer 2019.](#)

The rest of this document describes our achievements in detail, but some of the highlights of 2017/18 are shown below:

- We are on our way to creating a new **West Suffolk Council** after receiving support from the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in February 2018 and the Grand Committee in the House of Lords and House of Commons in May.
- We are a step closer to delivering better school and leisure facilities for our growing population of residents in and around Mildenhall after the **Mildenhall Hub** was approved by Forest Heath District Council's Development Control Committee.
- We planned to invest **£1.5 million in sporting facilities in Haverhill** using the council's Leisure Investment Fund.
- We celebrated the first birthday of **Toggam Solar Farm** in August 2017. During the year, the solar farm generated 11,682MWh of electricity, bringing in £1.2 million of income and £308,000 net income.
- The Bury St Edmunds **Eastern Relief Road** officially opened in September 2017, unlocking a 68-hectare area for business development.
- We purchased the **former Post Office and DHL buildings in Bury St Edmunds** as part of our long term investment plan to help generate income and support the future delivery of public services.
- Our **legal service**, shared between four Suffolk councils (Babergh, Forest Heath, Mid Suffolk and St Edmundsbury) had a successful first year and came in on budget.
- We opened a **winter night shelter** from December to the end of March to help the most vulnerable when temperatures plummeted. We also **expanded our housing options team** to help meet the increased demand on the service due to changes brought about by the Homelessness Reduction Act.

Priority 1 – Increased opportunities for economic growth

What we want to see:

- Beneficial growth that enhances prosperity and quality of life
- Existing businesses that are thriving and new businesses brought to the area
- People with the educational attainment and skills needed to support business growth
- Vibrant, attractive and clean high streets, village centres and markets

Why was this a priority for 2017/18?

Our first priority of economic growth underpins everything we do across West Suffolk. A thriving and diverse local economy helps support wider improvements in the quality of life for our residents. High levels of business and employment growth in a broad range of economic sectors can both support improvements to the quality of life of our residents and offer larger scale benefits for our communities.

This section of the annual report sets out our key achievements this year and it shows that we have continued our commitment to ensure that the infrastructure, homes, skills and opportunities exist to enable the economic growth for our communities. In this section we highlight our activities under the headings:

- Creating the right conditions for growth
- Skills and education
- Supporting our markets
- Creating prosperous places to live in, work in and visit

Creating the right conditions for growth	
Setting the framework for future growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that we meet our priority for increased economic growth, we will continue to work with partners and use our influence, investment, and regulatory powers to deliver growth in West Suffolk’s economy for the benefit of all our residents. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lobbying for a better connected West Suffolk, in terms of transport and digital connectivity and promoting West Suffolk as a place to do business; - developing our current and future local workforce through education, training and opportunities for all; and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - utilising the West Suffolk Investment Strategy to maximise the positive impact we have on our communities and businesses.
<p>Campaigning for the right infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have continued to campaign for fast, reliable and safe transport connections to and from West Suffolk, for example through joining the East West Rail Consortium and lobbying for more frequent train services from Cambridge to Ipswich, the dualling of the A1307 between Cambridge and Haverhill, and investment in key trunk road junctions. • Working in partnership with Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Chamber’s No More A14 Delays in Suffolk campaign, two funding bids were submitted to Highways England for much needed improvements to A14 junctions 37, 43, 44, and the A11 at Fiveways. A funding decision is expected in 2019. • £400,000 from the Department of Transport will be used to install traffic signals on the approaches to the A11 Fiveways junction and address safety concerns on the A11 immediately to the south of Fiveways. We are pleased to report that traffic signals are due to be installed in 2018/19. • We also continue to engage with Suffolk County Council on a number of infrastructure issues including potholes and other road repairs.
<p>Suffolk Business Park and the Eastern Relief Road</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want to ensure we attract the right mix of businesses to safeguard the growth of our economy now and into the future. • The Eastern Relief Road in Bury St Edmunds opened in September 2017 in the east of Bury St Edmunds, meaning we are a step closer to attracting inward investment and business growth. Crucially, the Eastern Relief Road opened up 68 hectares of employment land, a secondary school with leisure facility and land for 500 new homes. • In January 2018, the first tree was planted on the business park to mark the beginning of the £175,000 landscaping contract at the site. This contract will include 1.25 miles of hedge, 500 saplings and 22,000 route shrubs planted on the 114-acre site. • Further, Bury St Edmunds-based business Treatt plc began building a new 1-acre site at the business park. • Once finished, the site will provide 2 million sq. ft. of commercial space and opportunities for logistic services with commercial units ranging from 50,000 to 750,000 sq. ft. of business, distribution and industrial units. This will also include 37-acres which have Enterprise Zone status.

<p>RAF Mildenhall and RAF Lakenheath</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelopment of RAF Mildenhall - Although the departure of the US Air Force from RAF Mildenhall has been delayed until 2024 (at the earliest), we have continued to work with partners to ensure we have an active role in refining the Vision for the site in preparation for the master planning process. • Investment in RAF Lakenheath - The improvements to RAF Lakenheath infrastructure are scheduled to be completed in 2021 and we have continued to work alongside the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) who are leading this work. We have also engaged with skills partners to ensure we have a local workforce that can support the development and ensure its timely delivery, ensuring local businesses have the opportunity to benefit as part of the supply chain. • Information regarding the USVF changes at RAF Mildenhall and RAF Lakenheath is available here: http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Business/RAF_Lakenheath_and_Mildenhall/index.cfm
<p>Enterprise zones</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government’s Enterprise Zone programme includes two sites in West Suffolk: Haverhill Research Park and 14 hectares of land at Suffolk Park (which is part of Suffolk Business Park), Bury St Edmunds. Enterprise Zones help to grow the local economy by offering benefits to businesses, such as a potential business rates discount. • Haverhill Research Park is actively being marketed as part of the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough’s ‘Cambridge Compass’ Enterprise Zone. Similarly, Suffolk Park is being marketed by New Anglia within its ‘Space to Innovate’ Enterprise Zone. • Treatt, one of the world’s longest established solutions providers for the flavours and fragrances industry is the first tenant to sign up to the Enterprise Zone at Suffolk Park, Bury St Edmunds. • Treatt, having been in Bury St Edmunds since the early 1970s, is consolidating its current operations in the town to a new Headquarter facility over 10 acres.
<p>Investing in our commercial property</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across West Suffolk, we own over 350 industrial, commercial or retail units. We have experienced a growing demand for properties from businesses and during 2017-18, the Property Services team secured new leases in 11 properties across Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury, which are expected to generate a combined total annual rental income in excess of £120,000. • We also have seven commercial properties under offer with new leases due to complete later this year which are expected to generate a further combined total annual rental income of £150,000. • As well as the 350 commercial properties, the councils own approximately 400 operational properties and assets. From these we deliver key services, such as leisure centres, car parks and toilets. Mindful of our commitment to generate best value from our assets and support our

	<p>investment in growth, including acquisitions, the councils are undertaking a strategic review of our approach to managing land and property assets. The aim is to develop a vision and a set of core values and priorities that contributes to the achievement of corporate objectives over a period of between five and ten years in West Suffolk.</p>
<p>Small business grants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The West Suffolk small business grants scheme enables new businesses or those still within their first year (subject to criteria) to apply for a grant of up to £1,500. • In 2017/18, eight grants totalling £7,500 have been awarded across West Suffolk. We have supported a wide variety of businesses including an electric car technology business in Newmarket, a community singing company in Bury St Edmunds and a lamb charcuterie in Stoke-by-Clare.
<p>Greener businesses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During 2017/18, 12 businesses received technical and financial support through the West Suffolk Greener Business Grant for energy efficiency improvements, with LED lighting being the most popular upgrade. The grant is part of the West Suffolk Community Energy Plan and helps local businesses and organisations reduce their energy use and save money and can be used for a wide variety of measures including insulation of buildings and replacing heat controls and lighting. • Between them, the 12 businesses invested £34,081 into the energy efficiency improvements, which will result in total annual savings of £8,129 for all 12 businesses through their energy bills. • The councils have also launched a new energy efficiency investment service as part of the West Suffolk Community Energy Plan, where we provide Energy Performance Contracts. The councils manage the procurement, installation and financing and the business repays the councils financing through their energy savings. To date, three businesses have taken this opportunity to fund one biomass boiler and two LED lighting projects. • One project involved a biomass boiler which was installed in the National Heritage Centre for Horseracing and Sporting Art museum in June 2017, with the aim of reducing its carbon dioxide emissions from heating by 90 per cent. The council invested just over £100,000 to buy and install the new 200 kilowatt wood chip burner. The savings mean that the museum will save around 10 per cent on its heating costs, while the council will recoup its investment. • The scheme also supported DB Sheetmetals – a metal work manufacturing business in Haverhill - to be greener and save money.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Suffolk councils have also continued to look for suitable opportunities to invest in roof mounted solar Photovoltaics (PV) systems. A tender to install 800kWp of solar across 13 different sites in West Suffolk has been issued during this period. This will add significant generation capacity to our current portfolio of 27 sites.
<p>Supporting businesses in West Suffolk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We continue to host the West Suffolk Business Festival, which ran for its seventh year in October 2017. The festival held events from: Menta, Visit Suffolk, West Suffolk College, iliffe media, Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, New Anglia Growth Hub and Signpost2Grow. • The events provided delegates the opportunity to network, and learn more about upcoming issues that may affect them, such as funding, general data protection regulations, and tourism, and attracted businesses and organisations from all over Suffolk and Cambridge. • The festival closed with the annual Bury Free Press Business Awards which recognise the best in West Suffolk businesses, attracting 100 entries, the highest number of nominations to date. • West Suffolk councils sponsored the West Suffolk award for Innovation which was won by Herga Technology. • In October, the council supported Local Flavours 2017; an annual event which celebrates East Anglia’s food and drink industry. The event attracted more than 100 producers and more than 1,000 buyers.
<p>Investment Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2017, we developed the West Suffolk Growth Investment Strategy which sets out how we are taking the lead in West Suffolk on managing and stimulating inclusive growth for our local communities, while directly benefitting the local, regional and UK economies. The strategy aims to make sure businesses, partners and investors know what opportunities there are from working with us. Our investment principles are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investing in our place and people. - Acting commercially. - Collaborating to maximise benefit. - Using our powers and policies. • Our priority across West Suffolk is to invest our resources wisely in a range of ways so that we can continue to support day to day services and initiatives that can spur on economic growth, as well as social, community and environmental benefits.

<p>External funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Suffolk councils have been successful in attracting external funding. Including grants we would expect, both councils received £44,392,000 in revenue and £1,932,470 in capital funding in 2017/18.
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<p>Skills and education</p>	
<p>Local skills and education needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We recognise that recruitment in West Suffolk is challenging at the moment. We live in an area of relatively full employment and there is a strong pull from Cambridge within the local jobs market. This makes the need to grow our own talent through apprenticeships and other training schemes even more important. • We have continued to support young people from West Suffolk College to find work placements in the local community. This has allowed young people to pursue opportunities they were not previously aware of and broaden their employment prospects. • Further, we have been supporting those who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) in Newmarket by helping them to engage with the Prince’s Trust Programme. The programme specialises in supporting unemployed 16-25 year olds by building skills through practical tasks and gaining a qualification on completion of the 12-week programme. We have developed relationships between the Prince’s Trust and the Newmarket community, including the racing community. As a result of our involvement and liaison, the racing centre housed the programme for the majority of the 12 weeks. Out of the programme of ten people who started and finished, all but one are now in education and employment. The next course will be held in Newmarket in November and we will continue to encourage young people to engage with what the Prince’s Trust has to offer. • We have continued to offer advice and guidance to businesses about apprenticeships. In the past 11 months, we have referred businesses to West Suffolk College’s apprenticeship team between 15 and 20 times. • We also helped deliver four events alongside Suffolk Chamber of Commerce that looked at engaging with businesses to see how skills needs are best met. The events were held in Brandon, Clare, Newmarket and Haverhill and had speakers from West Suffolk College, the Greater Cambridge/Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership and New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership for Norfolk and Suffolk and other business support agencies. • At the end of 2017, we also worked with the United States Air Force to help with the recruitment of civilian staff by connecting them with West Suffolk College and the wider community.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through this work we are contributing towards one of our 2014-16 equality objectives to ensure West Suffolk has 'people with the educational attainment and skills needed in our local economy'.
<p>Developing our staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since April 2017, we have had 16 new apprentices start work at West Suffolk councils, including our first degree apprentice in Chartered Surveying. • We currently have 32 apprentices working towards an apprenticeship qualification including seven members of staff who have chosen to take up a work-based apprenticeship in subjects such as team leadership, management and business improvement techniques. • Four out of the five apprentices who completed their programmes this year have been offered employment with the organisation. • The Planning service has continued to help address the national shortage of planning officers by supporting and developing talent across the service. This year, two members of staff completed their dissertations for their Town Planning Masters and our apprentice and previous intern were appointed as Planning Officers. • Our Information and Communications Technology (ICT) team has also appointed two of their apprentices as full time members of staff. • This demonstrates our commitment to investing and developing the skills of young people and retaining talent by providing developmental opportunities in West Suffolk. • In the last five years we have employed 60 apprentices, of whom 26 have stayed with us in either permanent or temporary jobs. • Of our current workforce, 49 started their careers as an apprentice with West Suffolk councils at some point in the past.
<p>Graduate programme, internships and work experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This year, 11 work experience students have spent time with us at the councils. We have also visited schools such as Thurston Community College, Haverhill Apprenticeship Fair and Newmarket Academy jobs and apprenticeship fair to talk about apprenticeships at their 'Next Steps' events. • We are also excited to be involved in an innovative new Graduate programme with our public sector partners in Suffolk. The overall objective of the programme is to grow future leaders by creating a Suffolk system talent pool for future management and leadership roles. The graduates will be provided with a joined up public sector experience working not just in councils, but also the police and health sectors.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In September 2017, the first cohort of 11 graduates joined the programme, with one based with us at West Suffolk. Each graduate has a six month placement. So far, we have hosted two graduates in the Policy Team, where they have been supporting a range of departments to deliver projects and develop a range of policies. • During the summer of 2017, West Suffolk councils ran, for the fourth successive year, its highly successful internship programme, welcoming eight new interns to work across the organisation. The internship, which is part of the Suffolk-wide Rising High Programme, is designed to encourage young people to take up careers in the public sector and provides paid opportunities for undergraduates during their summer break from university. During the 12-week work placements, our interns were given responsibility for aspects of work within the service where they were based. They worked on challenging and worthwhile projects as well as a group community challenge called "Want What You Waste", where they worked with Sainsbury's to help reduce food waste across West Suffolk. Currently, three employees took part in an internship with us at some point in the past.
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Supporting our markets	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local markets - Developing our markets - Christmas markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our commitment to develop the regular markets and introduce special events and additional markets has continued this year. We recognise the importance of a thriving market to local residents but it is also a good way to provide employment and opportunities to new businesses, as well as increasing footfall in our towns by attracting visitors and boosting the local economy. • We have continued to work with Suffolk County Council to improve the offer of Newmarket market for local residents and businesses. With support from market traders and High Street partners, plans were unveiled for the move of the market to the High Street from its current location behind the Guineas. The project is still in progress and we hope there will be further developments throughout 2018. • Haverhill market held its first community market in partnership with Castle Manor School in May 2017. Supported by our market development officer, pupils helped with the planning, organisation and promotion of the event. Teams of students organised their own stalls which included vegetables grown in school, homemade cakes and gifts made in art and design classes. • A Christmas market was held in Queens Street as part of the Haverhill Family Christmas Weekend in early December. Stalls in Queens Street included food, drink and gifts and

	<p>additional entertainment was provided on Saturday as part of the regular street market. Market traders reported an increase in footfall and visitors enjoyed the festive farm and carols by the Salvation Army.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We had another successful year at the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre with visitor numbers estimated at 130,000 with a 4.6% increase in footfall recorded on Abbeygate Street and 7.3% increase recorded at the Arc. • A community arts project between St Edmundsbury market traders and students from St Benedict’s Catholic School won a national award for Best Market Event in the Great British Market Awards held by the National Association of British Market Authorities. The project aimed to show the importance of the market to communities and businesses and was funded by Arts Council England and further supported by locality budget funding. • Following calls from local residents and businesses, St Edmundsbury in partnership with Clare Town Council reinstated Clare market in August 2017 after an absence of 20 years. Businesses from Clare were offered stalls at reduced rates and a free stall was offered to local charities and community groups to use on a monthly basis. The free community stall offer has been taken up by five local charities and groups which have raised money for local causes. • The community of Clare came together to celebrate the countdown to Christmas at the first Clare Winter Festival from 24 November to 16 December. As part of the festival, a special Christmas market was held in December. The market was hailed a success with traders reporting good footfall and visitors saying they enjoyed the seasonal atmosphere.
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Creating prosperous places to live in, work in and visit	
Haverhill Masterplan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are continuing to work with the ONE Haverhill partnership on the implementation of the Haverhill town centre masterplan that was adopted in September 2015. • The masterplan continues to be progressed through five workstreams: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Workstream 1: Highways and movement</i> – including delivery of highway improvements ○ <i>Workstream 2: Marketing</i> – such as advertising Haverhill and specific sites ○ <i>Workstream 3: Site assembly</i> – gaining control of sites, investing and influencing to bring sites forward ○ <i>Workstream 4: Development briefs</i> – creating briefs from a planning perspective ○ <i>Workstream 5: Place management</i> – for example, the town centre work delivered by the town and borough councils

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the projects currently being realised through the delivery of the masterplan include our work on highways by continuing to work with Suffolk County Council to look at ways to improve accessibility to the town for all methods of transport.
<p>Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Masterplan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The final version of the Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Masterplan was adopted at a meeting of full Council in December 2017. The council shared the top priorities of the masterplan shortly after. • The aim of the masterplan is to attract investment, set the guidelines for the future growth and development of Bury St Edmunds town centre, and to provide a framework against which individual development proposals can be assessed when they come forward. The masterplan is also about recognising that growth in the town and the wider area is happening and the need to look at how we accommodate that, as well as changes in technology and changes in shopping patterns. • Working with Peter Brett Associates and David Lock Associates and Bury St Edmunds residents, workers and visitors to the town, we explored how the masterplan could address a number of town centre issues such as traffic management (including parking), heritage conservation and accessibility. • This work was led by a working group of partners including the Business Improvement District, Suffolk Chamber of Commerce in Bury St Edmunds, Bury market traders, the Bury Society, the Bury Town Trust, Bury St Edmunds Town Council, St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Suffolk County Council. • Suffolk Mind and a range of organisations working with people with additional needs were also engaged in the process, to ensure mental and physical wellbeing and accessibility for all was at the heart of the masterplan. This included a tour of the town centre undertaken by people with a range of disabilities alongside councillors and officers, which identified some key issues to address as the masterplan is implemented. • We recognised that co-producing the masterplan with our partners, local people and visitors would help to ensure that we can best shape town centre growth so that it works for people. We undertook 20 public engagement events, going to where a number of people are likely to be, including the market, supermarkets and the library. Our staff spoke to over 1,000 people and received over 8,000 comments about what needed to change and what should be protected and celebrated in the town centre. The masterplan was built on this feedback. • Following adoption in December 2017, the masterplan is now part of our official planning guidance and work has begun to progress individual projects.

Newmarket Business Improvement District (BID)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Newmarket Business Improvement District (BID) is now in its second year of operation after a successful first year and has been involved in a number of different schemes across the town. The events organised by the BID in 2017 were extremely busy, with a 1940's weekend, a town beach, sporting activities and Christmas events. • The BID has also successfully implemented town centre Wi-Fi along with Newmarket Vision, providing free Wi-Fi access to visitors of the town. The system also provides visitor analysis in the form of footfall counting in addition to movement data and return visitor information. 2018/19 will see the continuation of these events as the BID becomes more established in Newmarket. • More information about the BID is available at: http://www.newmarketbid.com/
Bury St Edmunds Business Improvement District (BID)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bury St Edmunds BID (ourburystedmunds) has continued to be the voice of businesses in Bury St Edmunds town centre with St Edmundsbury Borough Council a member of its Board. During 2017/18, the BID organised a number of events including the Whitsun Fayre, Independents Week study, the Food and Drink Festival, the Festival of Sport, the Christmas Lights Switch On and the recently launched Ale Trail. These events were highly successful and served to raise the profile of the town and encourage more people to visit the area and the local businesses. • More information about the BID is available at: http://www.ourburystedmunds.com/index.php
Bury St Edmunds and Beyond – Destination Management Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bury St Edmunds and Beyond is the new Destination Management Organisation (DMO), providing long-term strategic direction for tourism for Bury St Edmunds and the surrounding area. It was established in April 2017 by funding partners; St Edmundsbury Borough Council, Ourburystedmunds, Bury St Edmunds Town Council, Bury In Bloom, St Edmundsbury Cathedral and Gough Hotels. • The primary aim of the organisation is to increase tourism to the local area and encourage visitors from further afield to stay in the town. Bury St Edmunds and Beyond works closely with neighbouring organisations such as Discover Newmarket, All About Ipswich, The Suffolk Coast and Visit Suffolk. • The DMO was launched to the public and the new branding unveiled in September 2017. Businesses with an interest in the visitor economy are now joining the organisation to boost their profile to potential visitors. • In January 2018 Bury St Edmunds and Beyond along with neighbouring organisations started a joint marketing campaign, RAWSUFFOLK, aimed at under 35's to highlight the diverse range of activities that Suffolk has to offer.

<p>Street scene</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We take pride in our local area and know that living, working and visiting an attractive place can enhance wellbeing and improve the overall impression of an area. Alongside our local communities and invaluable support from volunteers, we work hard to ensure that our localities remain vibrant, clean and safe. Some highlights include: • Continuing to promote the highly successful Love Where You Live campaign and the webpage: https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/lwyl/ - which provides a wealth of information for people who want to set up group or individual litter picks. Information is provided on equipment that is available, how to ensure litter is collected at the end of the pick, risk assessment information and tips for ensuring the litter pick is carried out safely. • In 2017/18, 769 people took part in 40 group litter picking events collecting 303 sacks of waste. A further 177 volunteers were estimated to have carried out 1133 hours of litter picking. • We successfully prosecuted eight cases for abandoned vehicles with fines and costs totalling £10,158. Further, 340 abandoned vehicles were investigated and 38 were collected. • We dealt with 393 fly tipping incidents and issued three formal cautions and 22 Fixed Penalty Notices. • In summer 2018, we will be installing 70 dog bag dispensers to supply free dog bags in a project working with the Swedish firm Tikspac, to help reduce incidents of dog fouling. • As part of a project funded by Sainsbury's Waste Less, Save More scheme, we delivered 7,000 Fresh Pods to households in St Edmundsbury to help reduce food waste by increasing the life of fresh fruit and vegetables in the fridge and fruit bowl. • We worked with Sybil Andrews Academy in Bury St Edmunds to organise a Halloween event with the aim of educating pupils about reducing food waste. The event was part of our Fresh Pod project funded by Sainsbury's Waste Less, Save More campaign. We spent the day using a smoothie bike and teaching the pupils about composting. • We emptied approximately 4.95 million black bins over the year, collecting 36,402 tons of waste. • We collected 11,138 tons of garden waste from brown bins and 11,487 tons of recycling from blue bins. • We also swept up nearly 3,000 tons of rubbish from roads across West Suffolk. • We are participating in a project in Brandon with the Suffolk Waste Partnership to increase the quantity of bottles recycled by informing residents of the location of bottle banks and putting information stickers on bins.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the Suffolk Waste Partnership, we are part of the Suffolk Fly-Tipping Action Group (STAG). We contribute to enforcement events, work with Vehicle and Operator Services Agency, the Environment Agency and police. • We've achieved sign up of 39.3% across West Suffolk to our garden waste subscription service with 9,816 households paying for the service using direct debit.
<p>Improving car parks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As in previous years, the councils' pay and display car parks have been independently inspected by the police and parking specialists. The inspection considers the level of safety, cleanliness, quality of signage, frequency of patrols and uniformed attendants, and maintenance within our car parks. Both St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath car parks have again been recognised for their high quality of management with a Park Mark award. • The Disabled Parking Accreditation is a new initiative by the charity Disabled Motoring UK (DMUK) and is managed by the British Parking Association (BPA). Car parks that achieve the DPA demonstrate to their customers that they are committed to creating high quality parking facilities for disabled people. All car parks managed by St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath were assessed in 2017 and passed with only Ram Meadow requiring some upgrading to create two new Blue Badge bays. • A total of 25 machines now offer contactless card payments and Apple Pay in addition to coins and chip and pin facility. The machines across Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill now complement the pay by phone cashless payment system, RingGo. Contactless card payment machines were also rolled out across Newmarket Car Parks in spring 2018. • In 2016, there were 106,918 transactions by credit card and 200,989 transactions recorded in 2017, representing an 88% rise. • The pay by phone cashless payment system, RingGo, also continues to grow. In 2016 a total of 160,709 transactions were made on the system and increased to 208,267 in 2017 – an increase of 29.5% • This highlights the shift in our customers embracing new technology and the convenience and trust in cashless payment and how we are responding to this by offering different payment platforms. • There are now seven electric charging points available for electric/hybrid car users – four in Bury St Edmunds (Parkway Multi Storey and Ram Meadow car parks), two in Haverhill in Ehringshausen Way Car Park and one in the Guineas shopping centre in Newmarket. The electric charging points provide a source of electricity to enable a vehicle to be fully charged

	<p>within three to four hours. Given the councils’ commitment to the promotion of green energy, vehicles are not charged for parking but are required to pay a charge for the electricity.</p>
<p>Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In last year’s Annual Report, we talked about a number of changes to the way the councils and police can deal with anti-social behaviour. PSPOs are now in place in town centres in Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill, Newmarket and Brandon. • In Bury St Edmunds, there are three restrictions as part of the order; anti-social behaviour relating to alcohol consumption, begging and dog fouling. In the remaining town centres, the restrictions include dog fouling and alcohol related anti-social behaviour. These came into force on 1 October 2017 and remain in place for a period of up to three years, after which they will be reviewed. The orders can be enforced by West Suffolk enforcement officers or Suffolk Police. • The aim remains to work with communities to reduce incidents of dog fouling and to work with those who are begging by continuing to engage with them to ensure that they access relevant support services.
<p>Building control</p>	<p>Our Building Control Service has had another busy year dealing with a range of matters and we are exceeding a number of our performance targets. Some highlights from this year include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealing with 31 dangerous structures incidents, including out of hours, such as George Lampton Avenue Flats fire, Cycle King fire, cash machine robbery in Lakenheath and Barton Mills petrol station fire. • Carrying out over 3,750 site inspections. • Maintaining our market share. • Registering 90% of applications within three days. • Checking 75% of plans within ten working days and 94 % within 15 working days. • Carrying out 100% of site inspections on the day of request. • We also won a national award with Seamons Builders as best local builder for Cupola House for the work carried out to restore it following a fire. The Local Authority Building Control (LABC) Building Excellence Awards highlighted how this demonstrated what positive working relationships with local council building control teams delivers.

<p>Tree services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2017, we successfully prosecuted a landowner for the unlawful removal of five trees within the Flempton conservation area. This meant we avoided having to serve a formal notice requiring replacements, at no cost to the council. Five new trees have now been planted at the Greyhound Inn. The replacement trees were stipulated by the council and they have now been planted as per our instructions. The trees planted are sufficiently youthful to enable them to adapt and grow into their new environment. Older, more mature trees would struggle with the upheaval of being moved to a new environment. • We have now taken on tree work in Forest Heath North (Mildenhall, Brandon etc.) in November 2017 and will be undertaking work in the south of Forest Heath later this year. • We are on track to exceed the budget income target of £40,000 in 2017/18.
<p>Supporting local business</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have supported our food businesses to develop healthier eating options for their customers in West Suffolk, celebrating with them and publicising their success. This year, our Commercial Environmental Health Team has raised the bar in Suffolk by helping over 50 local businesses achieve the nationally recognised Eat Out Eat Well Award. • Across Suffolk, there are now over 100 businesses who have achieved an Eat Out Eat Well Award.

Priority 2 – resilient families and communities that are healthy and active

We want to see:

- A thriving voluntary sector and active communities who take the initiative to help the most vulnerable
- People playing a greater role in determining the future of their communities
- Improved wellbeing, physical and mental health
- Accessible countryside and green spaces

Why was this a priority for 2017/18?

We are actively supporting families and communities to create better links, become more self-sufficient and sustainable, and able to deal with the changing landscape in terms of, for example, an ageing population and reduced funding for public services.

We aim to help communities to prevent problems from developing or even better still, to stop them from happening in the first place by creating connections, providing assistance and working with our partners to provide a holistic approach to empowering communities.

This section covers our activities under the headings:

- Making connections in the community
- Community funding
- Parks and green spaces
- Arts, heritage and leisure
- Improved health and wellbeing
- Communicating with our residents

Making connections in the community	
<p>In line with our Families and Communities Strategy, the councils work with local communities to identify and implement initiatives that help communities become more resilient and able to care for themselves and preventing crises by building a network of support. Much of the work detailed in this section contributes to our equality objective to ensure we have 'a thriving voluntary sector who take the initiative to help the most vulnerable'.</p>	
EPIC Dads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Chest funding from Forest Heath District Council was granted in April 2016 for Epic Dads; a project based in Lakenheath that celebrates, supports and empowers fathers and male carers to be their best for their children and thrive in the role of being a dad. • The project encourages connections and friendships so that everyone feels valued and supported. In the first year of being established, the project has run a number of successful groups. • They have also held a social and support group for dads and male carers called 'Time out for Dads', along with family events and parenting courses aimed at male role models, which has successfully engaged over 70 people. • An 'EPIC Tots' group is also held which provides those engaged with EPIC Dads an opportunity to meet other dads with younger children in the community. In future, we hope to expand the project into neighbouring areas. • The Families and Communities team provided support for EPIC Dads to become a community interest company and helped expand the project into other areas of Forest Heath.
Sharing Parenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing Parenting link parents with a range of services and parenting support across Forest Heath as well as engage with service providers to ensure that parents can feel supported and informed. • In 2017/18, Sharing Parenting received a community chest grant to continue the work they do with parents. By working closely with Families and Communities officers, this funding was used to employ two outreach workers with the main focus on normalising parenting support. The outreach workers have been working across Forest Heath since September 2017. • Over the last six months, both workers have been working within our communities, talking to parents, signposting to support and attending a range of "meet and greet" activities for parents. This includes drop-ins at schools, pop up stalls within supermarkets and making links with preschools, schools and toddler groups.
Exercise classes in Newmarket	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have been networking to understand what is on offer for communities in Newmarket.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We noticed how the Gracewell of Kentford care home, Newmarket Racing Centre, and Newmarket Day Centre were all running similar chair based exercise classes for older people but they were not joined up and there was very little interaction between the groups. • We brought the organisations together to discuss the similar sessions they were running and how they could be joined together. • As a result of this, the Racing Centre agreed to provide a venue to expand the sessions run in the Day Centre and widen audience participation. Further, Abbeycroft provided funding for transport and a venue using Sports England funding, and instructors if required in the future. • The council played a crucial role in bringing the organisations together to connect the older population with the exercise classes.
<p>The Shed, West Row</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2016, a team of community volunteers known as 'The Shed' identified a piece of overgrown land in West Row as having potential to be a community asset. • In 2017, the volunteers worked hard to clear the area and turn the land into a community garden. The stable buildings were cleared with plans to turn it into a kitchen, meeting rooms and storage facilities. A number of social events for the community were also held and the kitchen garden was used to grow seasonal vegetables. Further events and enhancements to the project are scheduled for 2018. • This project demonstrates how our residents play a vital role in determining the future of their communities by working together. • The Families and Communities team also provide support in terms of locality budgets, providing funding advice, along with general support dependent on the needs of the group (for example, advertising).
<p>Newmarket Gymnastics Club</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to summer 2017, Newmarket Gymnastics Club used the Sports Hall of the former Scaltback Middle School site in the town. The school building had been closed for five years and the hall was in disrepair. Concerns over the conditions of the building from Suffolk County Council led to the closure of the sports hall, leaving the gymnastic club without a venue. • The Racing Centre in Newmarket offered to host the club, but needed time to prepare the building. The council played a vital role in getting approval for the eviction date to be extended, allowing the Racing Centre time to prepare the new venue for the 170 members of the gymnastics club. • With support and facilitation from Forest Heath, the gymnastics club are now using the space twice a week at their normal time slots, reducing disruption to gymnasts.

The Racing Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have been working with the Racing Centre in Newmarket to encourage the wider community to utilise the centre as a community hub so that community groups can take advantage of facilities for events and meetings.
Newmarket Interfaith Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2017, Forest Heath has been working with representatives of the Muslim community in Newmarket to help further bring together the wider faith and non-faith communities. By working with the leaders of the Muslim community group, the council enabled the wider community to come together in January 2018 for the first Newmarket Muslims and West Suffolk Interfaith & Community Forum. Over 100 people attended the event and more work is being done to establish an Interfaith forum to support future gatherings. We have also supported the Muslim community by arranging alternative venues for Friday Prayers, when their place of worship is being used by another community group. By having these relationships and linking people together at the right time, a platform for integrated working and community cohesion is developed, ensuring our families and communities are resilient. We have also been working with the Bury Islamic Cultural Organisation to help find them an alternative home in Bury St Edmunds since their place of meeting and prayer became unavailable, and as part of the new West Suffolk Inter-Faith and Community Forum.
St Olaves community space, Bury St Edmunds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> St Olaves Community Space was an exposed area of tarmac owned by St Edmundsbury Borough Council, with one bench, adjacent to a well-used local shopping precinct on a popular housing estate in Bury St Edmunds. The previous effort to improve the appearance of the area, which included a painted kite and sky design undertaken by the local middle school, had faded and the area was in need of further improvements. The local residents' association (HEART) took action and, with our help, some new designs were developed. These incorporated raised flower beds in the shape of a kite to honour the original design by the school, with a kite tail of block seating, all within an attractive, hard-wearing bonded surface. We assisted HEART to make an application for funding to the Tesco Bags of Help grants scheme, which provided £8,000 of the cost. The remaining £6,452 was funded through Suffolk County Council's Locality Budget Scheme. We also liaised with local horticultural charity Bury in Bloom, who donated the plants for the scheme.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work began in early December 2017 and finished with a planting session involving children from nearby schools in January 2018 and a formal opening of the area by Bury St Edmunds MP Jo Churchill. St Edmundsbury has taken on the ongoing maintenance of the area and it is already well-used. • This is a great example of partners from all sectors – public, private and voluntary - working together for the benefit of residents.
<p>Increasing youth provision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By working with young people and increasing youth provision, we can help make a positive, sustainable difference, and prevent social isolation. The examples below show how our Families and Communities team have been engaging with young people in 2017/18: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Newmarket and Brandon 'Teen Chill' – In summer 2017, the council engaged with young people in Brandon and Newmarket to increase understanding of youth provision in the community. Around 80-100 young people in Newmarket were previously using a scheme run by Catch 22 called 'Positive Futures', but as a result of funding issues, the service came to an end in July 2017. - Following closure, surveys were completed with young people to find out what it is they are interested in and what types of schemes they would engage with. In Brandon, a series of events were held using the 'on the spot van'; a mobile youth centre from Haverhill, which was funded by localities and partnership budget from Suffolk County Council. At Teen Chill, young people can use games consoles, music speakers, WiFi and engage with the youth workers who support the sessions. - Teen Chill will be launching in Brandon and Newmarket later this year. - Newmarket Skate Park – Due to its old design, Newmarket Skate Park closed for a short period of time for maintenance in summer 2017. The closure led to an increase in skaters using industrial estates in Newmarket instead. - As a result of the tensions in the community, the council met with them in October 2017 to discuss how to re-engage the skaters. - To achieve this, we began working with 14 skaters from Newmarket Academy on a community project. With our support, the students are working towards developing the new design of the Skate Park and bringing together the skating community to discuss related issues such as the new location and fundraising ideas. - Suffolk Assembly of Youth (SAY) - SAY is a platform for young people in Suffolk to make their voices heard and influence those who make decisions about services and support for young people. The council has been working with SAY to increase

	<p>attendance among young people after discovering low participation. As a result, the engagement hub that runs SAY is now supporting young people in making further developments to the platform. The council played a crucial role in future direction of SAY, and encouraging the links with the young people across West Suffolk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Haverhill Youth Action Group (YAG) – The Youth Advisory Group in Haverhill are responsible for overseeing the delivery of Haverhill Town Council’s Youth Strategy that was adopted in March 2016. The group consists of professionals from across the public sector and also councillors. Young people are encouraged to get involved with the design and delivery stages of the individual projects developed by the group. A survey conducted with young people in 2015 by the charity YMCA highlighted activities for young people as a key area for development in Haverhill. The council has subsequently supported the delivery of the following projects in Haverhill: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A BMX Pump Track in Greenfields Way (discussed below) • A social media project that will develop an online resource of information for young people, including activities • Developing a range of participatory activities including a Spoken Word project and heats for the Bury Sound competition at the Haverhill Arts Centre - Haverhill Pump Track – The council supported the development of a new BMX Pump Track in Greenfields Way in Haverhill by carrying out a consultation with the community where they could see the proposed plans for the track and provide feedback. 49 local residents attended and gave their views. The community-led project is the flagship project of the Haverhill South People’s Forum, in partnership with Haverhill Community Trust. The planning application for the track will be submitted in spring 2018 and we look forward to updating you on the progress of the track in the next financial year.
<p>West Suffolk Parish Conference and Forums</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We held our second West Suffolk Town and Parish Conference for town and parish councils from across the area in November 2017. • The free conference gave town and parish councils the opportunities to exchange information, share experiences and grow their knowledge by hearing from expert speakers and taking part in workshops.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This year’s conference was themed around health, with speakers and workshops covering topics including ageing well, GP Patient Participation groups, Fit Villages and Onelife Suffolk services. • In 2017/18, several Parish Forums were also held across West Suffolk. These events give parish and town councils the chance to discuss issues of importance to them. Topics in 2017/18 included Neighbourhood Planning, social media and the new General Data Protection Regulations.
<p>Leiston Community Centre transfer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In July 2017, St Edmundsbury Borough Council formally transferred ownership of Leiston Community Centre to the Haverhill Community Trust; the charity which already manages the Haverhill Arts Centre on behalf of the people of Haverhill. • The busy community centre located in Leiston Road on the Clements Estate has three main rooms, making it suitable for a range of different activities. It provides a venue for local community groups offering activities from martial arts and zumba to lunch groups and sequence dancing. The centre is also used for community meetings, birthdays and is the local polling station too. • The councils believe that communities who run their own centres are able to better identify and meet the needs of their local community, enabling them to play a greater role in determining the future of their community.
<p>Newbury Community Centre transfer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Edmundsbury Borough Council has continued working with the Newbury Community Association, (NCA), Suffolk County Council, Havebury Housing Partnership and the local community to ensure the replacement of the Newbury Community Centre in Bury St Edmunds is designed by the community to meet their requirements. • Turning 50 years old in 2018, the community centre has been an important facility for local residents since the Howard estate was built and it has been a priority to ensure its design is shaped by the people it serves. • In 2017/18, partners have built on the view of the community expressed in the public consultations and are working towards a new combined development of much needed housing and a new community centre. The development received outline planning permission in late 2017 and a development contractor will be sought, with the delivery of the new centre at the heart of the specification.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project was also awarded £670,000 of Government funding and will be used to help with things like demolition costs. The grant, from the One Public Estate programme’s Land Release Fund follows a joint bid for that amount from site owners Suffolk County Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council. • Further local consultation and information sessions will be held as the development moves forward.
Carols on The Green, Flempton-cum-Hengrave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A community came together in December 2017 to enjoy Christmas carols in what is hoped will be the start of a series of village events. • The event was organised by a local resident alongside Flempton-cum-Hengrave Parish Council and was backed by £440 of locality budget funding from St Edmundsbury Borough Council. • It is hoped that Carols on the Green not only becomes an annual event, but also part of a series of events throughout the year that will bring residents of Flempton and Hengrave together to socialise and make new friends.
Studlands Park Residents Association, Newmarket	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Studlands Park residents association have been putting on a summer event for the last two years. • The group has been building on the success of bringing not only the Studlands community together but having an open event for the wider community to attend. • The event, supported by the council locality budget funding, looked at issues such as traffic calming and village signs for the estate, as well as raising awareness of and encouraging support of the various community groups serving the area.

Community funding	
Locality Budgets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our locality-based approach is supported by our Locality Budget scheme, where councillors each have an annual budget of £2,500 that they can allocate to community-led activities in their ward. Locality Budgets help residents take ownership of issues that they care about and help councillors ensure that funding gets to the heart of their communities. • In 2017/18 West Suffolk councillors contributed £164,369.86 towards initiatives and projects in their ward areas. From supporting a new Walking Netball initiative in Bury St Edmunds for people who want to play a gentler version of the sport to encouraging people to get creative with the Mildenhall Art Forum, and purchasing an indoor curling for Red Lodge Millennium

	<p>Centre and establishing a group who can now, on a weekly basis, enjoy sport while within the centre.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A full list of projects funded by councillors, together with information about how the scheme works can be found here: (web link to be included)
Community Chest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The West Suffolk Community Chest gives voluntary and community sector groups the opportunity to apply for funding for projects and services which will bring benefits to local people and help West Suffolk councils achieve their priority of supporting families and strengthening communities. Community Chest funding forms a key part of our Families and Communities agenda. • In total, £593,264 has been paid to voluntary groups and organisations across West Suffolk in 2017/18 to support their valuable work. • Annex 1 sets out the organisations that have received Community Chest funding across West Suffolk in 2017/18.
Rural Initiatives Grant Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Edmundsbury offers the Rural Initiatives Grant Scheme to match fund organisations for one-off specific capital projects in rural areas that contribute towards the councils' priorities. • During 2017/18, £27,049 was committed towards five projects. One project included replacing the flooring in Ixworth Village Hall to enable more community activities. A grant was also used to improve kitchen facilities at Thurlow Sports Club to increase their community offer and widen the age range of participants.

Parks and green spaces	
<p>We are proud of our parks and open spaces which have again been recognised at a national and local level. This would not be possible without the dedication of volunteers who spent some 7,000 hours working in our parks and green spaces during 2017/18.</p>	
Achievements this year across West Suffolk include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We worked with Suffolk County Council to secure the future of Brandon Country Park. Previously the park had been managed by Suffolk County Council with some funding provided by Forest Heath District Council. Both councils had been in talks over the site following Suffolk County Council's decision to transfer ownership of its parks and nature reserves to another organisation. Following agreement by Forest Heath District Council's Cabinet in February,

	<p>Forest Heath took over the ownership and running of the park. The council sees parks as not only important for supporting the local environment and attracting visitors to the area but as part of its investment in supporting communities keep healthy and active while supporting wellbeing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council began installing a new play area on the Studlands Estate in Newmarket which is expected to be finished by spring 2018. • East Town Park, the Abbey Gardens, Nowton Park and West Stow country park all retained Green Flag awards in 2017. The international award tells the public that the spaces are beautifully maintained, with excellent visitor facilities and that they boast the highest possible environmental standards. • We were also successful in the Anglia in Bloom competition with our partner Bury in Bloom and received accolades for both Nowton Park and the Abbey Gardens, which means that Bury St Edmunds is through to the national finals later this year. • We installed a green gym and relocated the play area at Heldhaw Road in Bury St Edmunds. • We resurfaced and improved car parking facilities at Castle playing fields in Haverhill for Haverhill Rugby Club. • We installed new play areas in: Howe Road - Haverhill, Severn Road - Bury St Edmunds, Oakes Road - Bury St Edmunds and Bedell Close - Bury St Edmunds. • We received a £40,000 Heritage grant from Historic England for the production of our Conservation Plan. The heritage assessment will bring together all the information about the Abbey of St Edmund, and the Conservation Plan will then draw up a series of policies for heritage conservation and interpretation. The works will protect the whole Abbey of St Edmund area and will be completed in the next financial year.
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Arts, heritage and leisure	
Historic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In May 2017, St Edmundsbury Borough Council intervened to prevent the historic Corn Exchange in Haverhill from falling into further disrepair. An Urgent Works Notice was served requiring the owner to board up the main windows, clear the gutters and cut back the vegetation, ensuring it was weather-tight and secure until such time as it is sold. • It became apparent later in the year that a section of guttering was still leaking. A further Urgent Works Notice was served in November, requiring the owner to rectify this. Again, the

	<p>Council instructed the works to be carried out and these were completed in January. The next step is to serve a Demand for Payment for the works, which is currently being prepared.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have supported the new Guildhall project with interpretation and object support, condition checking/removing and storage of painting collections during renovation. We have also provided historic buildings advice throughout the project. This work is still in progress while the finer details of the scheme are being finalised. • The first Bury St Edmunds Literature Festival was held in October 2017 and supported by locality budget funding. The festival was organised by a group of avid local readers who wanted literature to be among the cultural offerings in the town. The festival programme featured award-winning authors and was heralded as a great success. • We achieved triple successes at the Museum of the Year Awards ceremony in October 2017 where we scooped key awards for three of West Suffolk’s museums: National Heritage Centre for Horseracing and Sporting Art (Suffolk Museum of the Year), Moyse’s Hall Museum (Family Friendly Award) and West Stow Anglo Saxon Village (Learning and Access Award).
<p>Museums</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We were successful in our application for an Arts Council Grant and received £108,000 from the Arts Council Resilience Funding Grant. The grant will be used to pursue various improvements to ensure our museums are more sustainable. So far, the funding has been used on a variety of key elements to improve learning outcomes for visitors. For example, new interpretation panels have been installed for all display cases, including professional research into key items and re-dating. New display cabinets have also been built bespoke to unique items. • We have also started installing Info-active software in Moyse’s Hall so that entire collections can be accessed along with details on various research data. This work will be completed by 2020. Staff and volunteers have also been given training in latest conservation techniques and identification. In addition, we have developed two new websites for West Stow and Moyse’s Hall to improve online usage of the collections and sites. • We are pleased to report that the box office income for West Stow Country Park is up 9% on last year and Moyse’s Hall box office income is up by 4% compared to 2016/17.
<p>Events and tourism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership announced that it is preparing to organise Millennium Celebrations in 2020. A steering group including representatives of Bury St Edmunds Town Council, West Suffolk College and local schools as well as several existing

	<p>partners, have started discussing ideas and planning events. In March 2018, the first project which will create two new tennis courts was announced. It is anticipated that the new courts will be open for public use by the summer of 2019.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bury Festival is working very closely with Bury St Edmunds and Beyond this year to increase the number of cultural tourists visiting Bury St Edmunds and West Suffolk. Some of the work includes target campaigns in the Home Counties and East Midlands. • This year the festival will be working with an external promoter to put on a number of outdoor shows in Nowton Park during the festival. Some of the shows include Jools Holland, UB40, Gilbert O’Sullivan and an Abba tribute show with fireworks. The capacity for each show is 4,000 people. • We launched the What’s on West Suffolk magazine in 2017, which has been very well received and has really helped to raise the profile of the leisure and culture offer in West Suffolk, as well as the work of the councils, including; The Apex, Moyse’s Hall Museum, West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village, the Bury Festival, the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre, The Guildhall, National Horse Racing Museum in Newmarket, The Abbey of St Edmunds Heritage Partnership, Abbey Gardens, East Town Park and Nowton Park.
<p>Mildenhall Art Forum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To celebrate 100 years of the High Street and Mill Street in Mildenhall, locality budget funding was used to host a number of workshops to document the history and teach new skills through mosaic art workshops. The project was led by the Mildenhall Art Forum after huge community interest was shown at the Mildenhall Showcase Event in September. • ‘Taster’ workshops began in October 2017. These were for those living or working in the identified buildings to learn mosaic making skills using a 15cm square board and other interested local people were encouraged to participate. • Five sessions were held in October 2017 with 43 people attending and in November, a further four workshops were held with 28 people attending. • The project now involves nearly 50 people with the art work produced being featured in shop windows in Mildenhall town centre.
<p>Creative People and Places Programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market Place – The Market Place project is part of the Creative People and Places programme. Creative People and Places is about people taking the lead in choosing, creating and taking part in art experiences in the places where they live.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market Place initially ran for three years from 2015 but received further funding from Arts Council England at the end of 2017 to help develop Phase two, which will open in October 2018 and continue until 2021. • The project aims to increase the number of people inspired by the arts and help develop skills, grow ambition and creativity in local communities. • The project spans across seven market towns in Forest Heath and Fenland, including Brandon, Mildenhall and Newmarket. The vision is for the seven market towns to become centres of creativity and inspiration for their district. • The council provided match funding for the project and assists with the development and management of the various events that are held. • Talkin’ Bout My Generation – Also part of the Creative People and Places Programme is Talkin’ Bout My Generation; an arts project in Mildenhall and Brandon (and two towns in Fenland) aimed at encouraging those who were teenagers in the 1960’s, 70’s and 80’s to share their memories of music and style from their youth. • Some of the ways people can get involved is by hosting a memory café or providing music memorabilia for exhibitions. Forest Heath helped make the project possible by assisting with the application for Heritage Lottery funding, resulting in an award of £63,000 for the four participating towns. We also help with the development and management of the events.
<p>The Apex</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Apex’s new mobile compatible website was launched in August 2017 following the culmination of many months of hard work between the Apex’s Marketing, Communications and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) teams. Online ticket sales saw a 6% rise within three months following the launch, taking the total amount of tickets sold via the Apex website to more than 70%. • In 2017/18, the Apex presented 231 shows and sold 105,000 tickets, which is an increase of 6% on 2016/17. • In 2017/18, the Apex box office took £2M, which is an 11% increase on 2016/17 and an increase of 27% since 2015/16. • The Apex has also attracted 13,000 new customers in 2017/18, who purchased 29% of total ticket sales.

Improved health and wellbeing

Working with Abbeycroft Leisure, we deliver sports and leisure services across West Suffolk. Abbeycroft undertakes outreach work that contributes to our priorities and is in line with the Promoting Physical Activity Framework that was adopted in July 2016

- Examples of projects that Abbeycroft has run in this year include:
- **Active Mums** (previously known as Monday Mums), operates in Bury St Edmunds and Newmarket and holds weekly sessions for pregnant women with a BMI of 30 or higher. This is a partnership with the community midwives and aims to:
 - develop understanding of fitness and healthy eating during pregnancy and beyond for mums-to-be
 - improve body image and increase self-confidence in mums-to-be
 - reduce obesity levels in adults and children in West Suffolk
 - increase the number of active people in West Suffolk
 - reduce costs to the National Health Service
- 2017/18 has seen 50 women benefit from the programme. A Buggies and Baby session also started in January, allowing parents to continue engaging in activity and their support networks. To date, 18 women have benefitted from taking part.
- **Teen Chill Out** has been operating in Haverhill for a number of years, with an average of 90 young people attending each month. The sessions are aimed at 11 – 16 year olds with the aim of reducing anti-social behaviour and to provide a safe and supportive environment. Newmarket launched Teen Chill Out in October 2017 and has seen an average of 60 – 70 young people attend each month. Early feedback from parents suggests this activity is having a positive impact on the young people's lives.
- **Keep Active** is a lottery funded project awarded through the Community Sport Activation Fund supported by Sport England. Keep Active focuses on the engagement and activity provision for over 55's and 14-25 year olds in the Forest Heath community with the aim of increasing participation.
- Over 55's activities include walking football, walking netball, boccia, archery and with a walking football tournament taking place this year.
- The work with 14-25 year olds is run in partnership with Catch 22, and they deliver dance, fitness, and football and multi-sport sessions, with some of these being girls only.
- Overall, 2017/18 has seen 673 people access these activities with just over 5,000 attendances.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bury St Edmunds has seen two new initiatives develop: • A partnership with the Children’s Physio Services from West Suffolk Community NHS sees children and young people attend six weekly sessions with the aim of overall mobility, strength and conditioning for young people with disabilities. Children aged between six and ten take part in mobility games and activities with a physio and sport development instructor whilst 11-16 year olds use the gym facilities supported by both physio and gym instructor, which has led to a number of young people continuing with teen fitness memberships. • Cancer Rehabilitation Swim works in partnership with Macmillan, with referrals made from the hospital. The aim of these weekly sessions are to reduce isolation and increase recovery times. There are on average six people attending each session.
<p>Promoting physical activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The councils’ Promoting Physical Activity Framework sets out our commitment to enable and encourage people to lead active lives, thereby increasing activity levels across West Suffolk. This will lead to improved health and wellbeing for our communities resulting in less reliance on health care services. The following examples demonstrate how we have met this commitment in 2017/18: • We are pleased to report that we received planning permission for a new leisure centre, swimming pool and health centre at the proposed Mildenhall Hub site. The hub will create opportunities to improve health and wellbeing of local people by offering top class facilities and working with health providers to encourage more active lifestyles. More detail about the Mildenhall Hub is included later within this annual report. • We committed to investing £1.5 million from our Leisure Investment Fund to increase sports facilities in Haverhill. The funding will increase the range of activities and sporting facilities and also reduce the management fee that the council pays its sports and leisure provider, Abbeycroft Leisure, towards the running costs of the Leisure Centre, eventually to zero. Work is planned to begin later in 2018 and we look forward to updating you on the progress of the project. • We provided locality budget funding to assist with the refurbishment of the Brandon Community Tennis Court that opened in July 2017. The refurbishment of the tennis court will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of those within the town and surrounding areas as participating in sport leads to healthier and more active lives. • We also started a new parkrun in Puddlebrook Playing Fields in Haverhill by working in partnership with Suffolk County Council, Haverhill Town Council and Abbeycroft Leisure. 123

	<p>adults and children participated in the first parkrun that took place in March 2018, with 17 volunteers helping to make the event a success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Newmarket, we were proud to sponsor and host stage six of the OVO Tour of Britain. Stage six of Britain’s premier road cycling race began in Newmarket and passed through Mildenhall and Bury St Edmunds and was a great way to encourage local residents to take up cycling and live a more active and healthy lifestyle. • Last year, we talked about the Breaking New Ground Partnership which delivers a range of exciting heritage and landscape projects in the heart of the Brecks, including Brandon and West Stow. This year, as part of the Brecks project, we plan to open a new long distance footpath between West Stow and Brandon Country Park. The Brecks Trail will link West Stow Country Park and Brandon Country Park with a 15-mile off-road route suitable for walking, cycling and horse riding. The path will pass through some of the Brecks most iconic landscape; alongside pine belts, past open heathlands and through forests. • As reported in last year’s annual report, we recognise that in Bury St Edmunds there is a need for clubs to grow and increase their capacity in order to progress and provide facilities that are needed for the future. We have been working with a number of local sports clubs looking at options for a shared sports facility in Bury St Edmunds. Following the feasibility work that was carried out during 2017, we are now building on options in terms of location, partners, scope of the facility and how it will benefit local clubs and the wider community. • Detailed work is taking place to consider how this scheme could work and we will update further throughout the year.
<p>Dementia Action Alliance (DAA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The councils have continued to be part of the Dementia Action Alliance (DAA) to help meet the aim of becoming a Dementia Friendly Community (DFC). • We now have two Dementia Action Alliances operating in west Suffolk; Bury St Edmunds DAA and Newmarket DAA. We have worked together with different voluntary, community and private organisations to establish these alliances. • West Suffolk councils have also committed to becoming a Dementia Friendly Organisation and began rolling out Dementia Friends awareness sessions in April 2018. Dementia Friends sessions focus on what it is like to live with dementia and is used as an awareness raising tool. This enables individuals, businesses and the community to look at what they can do differently to accommodate the needs of someone living with dementia. • Further details about our commitment can be found here: https://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/members_and_action_plans/8182-west_suffolk_councils

<p>Social Prescribing Pilot in Haverhill – Life Links</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In July 2017 we appointed two co-ordinators for Haverhill LifeLink; a social prescribing project run by ONE Haverhill and the Council. The two year pilot project aims to combat the high percentage of GP appointments which are for social needs, rather than medical and is for anyone aged 16 or above who lives in Haverhill or the surrounding villages. • The focus is on early help and prevention, providing a person centred model of support for individuals who may be socially isolated, have low mood and anxiety, poor life skills or those managing long term conditions. • Initial feedback from agencies, community groups and patients has been positive. Anecdotal feedback from users shows increased structure in everyday lives and improved wellbeing. Other positive impacts for participants include; better coping methods for anxiety, access to the right benefits through signposting, socialising with others through community groups and generally feeling more positive. • We have started to collate quantitative data to evidence the positive impact the project has had on participants and the health care system. In addition we are currently working on a cost benefit analysis to evidence potential cost avoidance across the system moving forward. • The key reasons for GPs to refer to LifeLink are social isolation, connectedness and low confidence. • 57% of participants to date are claiming a working age benefit. We have therefore established a 'Moving Towards Work' scheme which has been funded by the Department for Work and Pensions and Suffolk County Council. This means that social prescribing will feature as part of an individual's journey into suitable and sustainable employment. We are currently in the early stages of this development. • Further information about Haverhill LifeLink can be found here - http://www.onehaverhill.co.uk/lifelink • This work contributes towards our equality objective to improve physical and mental health and wellbeing.
<p>Innovative ways of working to meet the needs of an ageing population - Buurtzorg</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The councils are supporting a test and learn of an innovative model of care designed in the Netherlands known as Buurtzorg to help meet the increasing demands on our health and care system brought about by an ageing population. • The project is in collaboration with the East of England Local Government Association, Suffolk County Council, West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group, West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust and Suffolk Community Healthcare.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The model empowers individuals – in this case nurses – to deliver all the care that patients need. The nurses provide a holistic service, delivering both personal and health care to those in their charge, enabling nurses to focus on prevention and early intervention. • The first Buurtzorg team was established in early autumn 2017 to help deliver the 12 month pilot. Funding of £200,000 has been secured from the Transformation Challenge Award, and 'match funding' of £50,000 has been agreed by each of four key stakeholders. A Memorandum of Understanding and project steering group has also been established to support the governance of the Test and Learn. • Buurtzorg team members started work in Barrow in early 2018 and we have been supporting nurses by introducing them to the community and linking them to existing groups and activities.
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Communicating with our residents	
Customer services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2017/18, the Customer Services team has continued to go from strength to strength, fully embedding new practices following the adoption of a number of service areas into the main work of the team over the past few years. • The focus in the past year has been on identifying opportunities for further improvement in relation to providing front line advice and support to customers. One of the ways of achieving this has been to appoint Service Champions to work with the service areas supported by the Customer Services team. Service Champions work with the service areas to identify improvement opportunities relating to process and procedures. • A recent review of the activities of the team revealed that between 2013/14 (when the team was first put together) and 2016/17 phone calls have reduced by 17% and face to face volumes have reduced by 60% as online contact options have increased. This demonstrates success against the aims we set out to achieve when the team was initially set up 5 years ago, in terms of improvements for customers and how we manage day-to-day enquiries. • The team has been instrumental in the partnership working with the Department of Work and Pensions, overseeing the relocation of Haverhill Job Centre Plus into Haverhill House. This is a very positive development in advance of the Universal Credit roll out for the Forest Heath area in late 2017.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal Credit was successfully implemented in the St Edmundsbury area in October 2017, with the Council leading the partnership arrangements put in place to ensure a smooth roll out of the initiative. Universal Credit continues to be successfully delivered and received in the St Edmundsbury area.
<p>Online Success</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team continues to work with Information and Communications Technology (ICT) colleagues to identify and develop improved online functions for customers. • The UK trend shows that customers tend to prefer dealing with organisations who have a significant online presence for example, Amazon, and Councils across the country are learning the lessons from this way of working. At West Suffolk, we are actively looking into opportunities to take advantage of technology that has been designed with the customer in mind, looking ahead to when we replace our current Customer Relationship Management system. • Customers are now familiar with using a number of online forms which have been designed to make reporting, paying and applying as easy as possible.
<p>Social media conversations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Suffolk councils have improved the use of social media, introducing more use of engaging and targeted materials such as films, infographics and advertising which has seen a 76% rise in Facebook followers and 44% in likes over the year. The councils are proactively using a range of social media platforms, including Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and Facebook to engage with residents and businesses. This has also included live streaming on social media channels various events, including Development Control Committee and the Mayor Making. Information is tweeted to over 8,000 followers (an annual rise of 17%) giving other Twitter users the opportunity to share the news with their own followers. Comments on both Facebook and Twitter and enquiries are monitored and answered by the Customer Service Team and Communications officers. • Tweets are also used to direct residents to more information posted on our website as part of supporting the use of online engagement and channel shift. Frontline staff have also been piloting posting onto the councils’ social media channels. The communications teams meanwhile have used Facebook to engage with a growing audience of nearly 60 community Facebook groups. Some of these groups have membership levels in excess of 18,000 people. Not only is there the potential for these individuals to share the councils’ status with friends, but even more importantly this offers the councils the opportunity to have direct conversations with residents, explain changes in more detail, expanding on the reasons that have led to them and politely correcting residents on statements that are misinformed or untrue.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A particular success has been the use of social media to support and engage with our communities during and following a fire in Newmarket and Bury St Edmunds as well as the work we have been doing over the winter with people who are homeless. This has seen us not only being used to put out information but to connect residents and local groups to provide donations for those involved. In addition to traditional methods of communications, social media was used in engaging with communities and businesses around the proposals for a new West Suffolk Council. This included the use of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram as well as a Facebook Advert. Posts were also shared in 45 local Facebook Group pages across west Suffolk which have a combined membership of 71,000 members. Over the campaign the councils' messages had a reach of 67,000 through Facebook and 39,000 impressions through Twitter.• We also worked with Newmarket Community Choir to record a song to celebrate the success of our Forest Heath solar farm in a fun, engaging and informative way. The song was promoted and shared on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter and was reported on by ITV Anglia. A similar approach was used with The Voice Squad in Bury St Edmunds to celebrate the Local Government Association's #OurDay in November, informing residents about the diverse everyday work that West Suffolk councils carry out on behalf of its residents and businesses. This was again promoted via Facebook, Youtube and Twitter. Both campaigns received national praise.
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Priority 3 – Homes for our communities

We want to see:

- Sufficient housing for current and future generations, including:
 - More affordable homes
 - Improvements to existing housing
- New developments that are fit for the future, properly supported by infrastructure, and that build communities, not just housing
- Homes that are flexible for people's changing needs

Why was this a priority for 2017/18?

Our third priority is to ensure that we have an appropriate and sufficient supply of housing for our communities. Not only are we working hard to raise the standard of housing in the private rented sector and bring empty homes back into use, but we have also established a company to build homes, in partnership with Suffolk County Council. We know that good housing can play an important role in improving the health and wellbeing of people in our area, and it is vital to realising our ambitions for economic growth. We have seen a significant change in Government legislation and policy on housing in 2017/18 including the Housing White Paper, the Homelessness Reduction Act and further welfare reform, all of which have significant implications for how we plan for, deliver and continuously improve the availability and affordability of housing in West Suffolk.

This section covers our activities under the headings:

- Ensuring a sufficient supply of housing, including affordable housing
- Improving the quality of existing housing
- Reducing homelessness and supporting vulnerable households

Ensuring a sufficient supply of housing, including affordable housing	
Forest Heath Local Plan and St Edmundsbury Borough Council Vision 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local plan sets out the long-term planning and land use policies for an area. We use our planning policy framework to ensure appropriate business, housing and infrastructure development across the area. • The Forest Heath Local Plan is at an advanced stage in preparation. The Single Issue Review and Site Allocations Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State in March 2017. The examination hearings were held in September and October 2017. The council is now carrying out a consultation on the main modifications proposed by Inspectors. Following this, Inspectors will consider the comments received and reopen the hearings before writing their report on the Plan's soundness. • St Edmundsbury has a complete and up to date Local Plan. The Vision 2031 suite of documents allocates 11,480 homes for the period 2012 – 2031. • Between 2012 and March 2017, 1,655 dwellings have been completed across Forest Heath and 1,613 dwellings across St Edmundsbury.
Neighbourhood plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A neighbourhood plan is a community led framework for guiding the future development, regeneration and conservation of an area. Neighbourhood plans have a different status to other community led plans. Subject to a few basic conditions, they will become legally binding and will become part of the development plan for the area. • Neighbourhood plans are currently in preparation for Newmarket, Great Barton, Hargrave, Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe, Exning and Barningham.
Barley Homes (Group) Ltd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Suffolk is continuing to move forward in partnership with Suffolk County Council on bringing forward a number of housing development schemes through Barley Homes, the councils' jointly owned housing company. Throughout 2017, Barley Homes worked to deliver the sites included in its first business plan. Plans are in place for the delivery of three of the sites included in the business plan. Challenges remain around the increasing costs of construction and viability of sites.
Increasing the supply of affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We continue to work with a number of registered providers and private developers to secure the delivery of 254 much needed new affordable homes, an increase of 112 homes from the 142 delivered in 2016/17 and the highest number achieved over the past ten years. Through achieving this number, we have also been able to deliver West Suffolk's policy of building 30% affordable housing on all new housing developments.

<p>Space standards for new housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to concerns over the size of some new properties being built in West Suffolk, the councils approved a technical guidance note setting out the minimum space standards that it would expect housing developers to build. While these requirements cannot be enforced at present, it is intended in due course to introduce a policy in the Local Plan when it is revised. • We have continued to promote our Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding register for those interested in building their own home and are now beginning to identify suitable plots of land.
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<p>Improving the quality of existing housing</p>	
<p>Bringing empty homes back into use</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have continued to take a pro-active approach to addressing the challenge of empty homes in West Suffolk. • We are pleased to report that we have reduced the number of empty homes by 50% across West Suffolk since implementing our Housing Strategy in 2014. These homes contribute to increasing the supply of housing in the area. We are seeking to make further progress through partnership working under a new Housing Strategy to be considered by councillors later this year.
<p>Improving standards in the private rented sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Though we recognise that most landlords in West Suffolk provide good standard accommodation, the Housing and Planning Act gives councils new powers to take action against those landlords who are unscrupulous. • The councils consulted and engaged earlier this year on the new enforcement rules in the Act, and a policy that gives the options to impose civil penalty fines, rent repayment orders and banning orders for non-compliance with certain housing offences, as an alternative to taking a prosecution for the very worst rogue landlords. We are now enforcing the sanctions under our new Civil Sanctions policy. • In 2016/17 we began a three year fire safety initiative to protect tenants from fires in flats above commercial premises. This is now an established Suffolk-wide programme in which councils and the Fire and Rescue Service work in partnership to ensure decent and safe living standards. Throughout 2018 we undertook a number of Impact Days where we inspected flats and remedied any hazards identified. In 2017/18, Impact Days were carried out in Clare, Newmarket and Lakenheath. • We have exceeded our targets and brought up to standard 111 homes in the private rented sector.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We currently have 215 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) on our inspection programme, the majority of which are up to standard, but many are not managed or maintained particularly well. The risk rated inspection programme means that HMOs may be inspected every six months if they are considered high risk. In 2018/19, we will be bringing in extended licensing for 300 more HMOs. • Works are also progressing to provide an online service for the HMO licence applications.
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Reducing homelessness and supporting vulnerable households	
Homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy, we have committed to do more to combat homelessness and to ensure that those affected by homelessness receive timely advice and assistance. • During 2017/18, we: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - accepted 241 homeless cases (139 in St Edmundsbury and 102 in Forest Heath) compared with 238 in 2016/17. The most common reason for homelessness across West Suffolk is termination of a tenancy in the private rented sector. This emphasises the importance of early intervention, something that is even more crucial with the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act from April 2018; - spent £221,406.89 on bed and breakfast accommodation, however the councils reimbursed £181,318.45 through Housing Benefits claims, making the net total spend £40,088.44. This is compared with £86,677 in 2016/17; - opened a night shelter in partnership with Havebury Housing in December 2017 which caters for up to 16 rough sleepers across West Suffolk. The councils recruited specialist care staff which allowed Northgate Lodge to open every night during the winter until the end of March. Rough sleepers were able to access shower facilities and engage with support services. We also opened a temporary winter night shelter in Bury St Edmunds prior to the opening of the Havebury-run shelter to provide a bed for rough sleepers when the temperature fell below freezing for a number of consecutive nights in December. The centre was run by members of staff across both councils, as well as volunteers from the Bury Drop-In Centre and other partners; - coordinated Christmas hamper donations from schools, pupils, businesses, organisations and individuals to homeless families in temporary accommodation; and

<p>Rough Sleeper Prevention and Support Officer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increased the provision of temporary accommodation by funding additional units in Newmarket (Open Door) and in Bury St Edmunds (YMCA and Home Group). • Our Rough Sleeper Prevention and Support Officer joined the councils in May 2017 for a two year period following a successful bid for Government funding. Since appointment, he has been successful in building relationships and gaining the trust of those sleeping on the streets, which in turn has led to more rough sleepers engaging with support. The worker covers Forest Heath District Council, St Edmundsbury Borough Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and Babergh District Council. • They have now engaged with 89 rough sleepers across St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath and provided 97 accommodation solutions. You will notice that the number of solutions is greater than the number of rough sleepers. This is because the individual may access more than one service provider during their engagement with the outreach service therefore more than one solution may apply. Some of the solutions include; drug and alcohol rehabilitation, supported housing, emergency accommodation and private rented accommodation. This gives an indication of the range of issues associated with rough sleeping. • Due to the success of the post in engaging with rough sleepers and demand exceeding expectations, the councils have agreed to make the post permanent across West Suffolk only, and have recruited another outreach worker using government funding. Suffolk Public Health has also agreed to fund a Drug and Alcohol Outreach worker for the area. This means that as of May 2018, we have three outreach worker posts supporting the most vulnerable in the area. • To increase the support to vulnerable people in Newmarket, including rough sleepers, the council has been working with a wider group of partners to develop a working strategy to address homelessness in Newmarket. We look forward to reporting on the progress of this next year.
<p>Supporting vulnerable households</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have continued to work with our partners to support 800 disabled and vulnerable people in their homes through various funding schemes, such as the Disabled Facilities Grant and by providing adaptations, minor aids and equipment. • By working closely with our partners, we have helped prevent hospital admissions and assisted with the smooth running of hospital discharges.

- We have also been supporting young families with children, low income couples and older people who are living in the private rented sector to maintain their homes and improve the quality of their accommodation through our Home Assistance Grants.
- Our Environmental Health and Public Health and Housing teams have been working together to support some of the most vulnerable residents in West Suffolk by identifying a project to fund energy efficiency improvements to park home properties. The Park Home Insulation project will involve installing insulation and cladding on mobile homes in West Suffolk using £140,000 in funding from the councils' Homes Assistance Grant and third party funding from Suffolk's Warm Homes Healthy People (WHHP) project and National Grids new gas connection scheme.
- The project aims to deliver improvements to three park home sites across West Suffolk to improve the quality of life for the residents and make a difference to their financial circumstances by reducing fuel costs. The proposals include gas connections, for those not currently on this cheapest form of heating, installation of approved external insulation systems, new boilers and first time central heating systems.
- The three sites will be part of a pilot with potential rollout to other sites. We will begin delivering the project in summer 2018 and look forward to updating you on our progress.
- We have been working with registered providers of social housing and the police to resolve issues of anti-social behaviour and noise complaints in the community through the adoption of early intervention strategies. A range of enforcement tools are being used to remedy the most serious cases.
- We have also commented on planning and licensing applications, advising whether developments or activities will cause nuisance or have an adverse impact on the amenity of an area.
- We are continuing to work with Suffolk County Council to identify one of a number of suitable locations for a Gypsy and Traveller transit site (temporary stopping site) across the county, to help ease the difficulties that sometimes occur during the summer months with unauthorised encampments.
- This work supported our equality objective of providing 'homes that are flexible to meet people's changing needs'.
- **Specialist Domestic Abuse Refuge** - Through a successful funding application to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), St Edmundsbury and Forest

	<p>Heath, along with Suffolk County Council and the five other District and Borough councils in Suffolk, are piloting a project to make 23 bed spaces available across Suffolk for victims of domestic abuse who are not eligible for support through the existing refuges. This could be due to substance dependency, mental health issues or they may have a male child over the age of 16 which would prevent them from accessing refuge. There is also a bed space available for a female victim who has no recourse to public funds. The specialist refuge is offered alongside Domestic Abuse and Housing Options support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic Abuse Link Worker – Part of the funding has been used to appoint a specialist link worker who sits within the West Suffolk Housing Team and offers support and advice to victims of domestic abuse when they present as homeless. The post is hosted by Anglia Care Trust and funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.
<p>Meeting our new duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Homelessness Reduction Act came into force in April 2018. The Act modifies and extends existing homelessness protection in a number of ways. Crucially, councils are required to start assessing someone at risk of being made homeless 56 days before losing their home, instead of the 28 required previously. • To meet increased demand brought about by these changes, the Housing Options team recruited 6.8 full-time equivalent posts in housing options and homelessness, funded by the Flexible Homelessness Reduction Grant. • In order to meet this increased demand on services, we have been working with our partners to establish the West Suffolk Landlords Forum to ensure private landlords understand changes that may affect them and their tenants under the new Homelessness Reduction Act. The Forum is held quarterly and open to all private landlords in the West Suffolk area. The councils are keen to work with landlords to ensure that the availability and suitability of homes meet growing demand. • We have worked hard to strengthen our partnerships to prevent and tackle homelessness arising from the new duties. In 2017, 350 partners attended an event organised by Housing Options which discussed our duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act. The team have further events scheduled for the next few months to continue to raise awareness of housing and homelessness. • We have also been working with Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP), the Department for Work and Pensions, local Jobcentres and the Citizens Advice to ensure robust plans are in place to deal with those who are moving to Universal Credit in order to prevent rent arrears. We have funded additional posts for Suffolk West Citizen’s Advice to provide personal

	<p>budgeting support for claimants. These posts are located in the Haverhill and Bury St Edmunds jobcentres. We are also preparing for the introduction of Universal Credit in Forest Heath in December 2018.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the next 12 months, we plan to review our Home-Link policy, Homelessness Strategy and Housing Strategy to respond to changes to legislation and welfare reform and the different challenges this presents to the councils.
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Ways of working

Why was this important to us in 2017/18?

Changes in the way the Government funds local councils have meant we need a new approach to our finances, becoming less reliant on central government budgets and more self-sufficient, including generating our own income streams. Throughout this annual report we have already highlighted ways in which we are focusing on local growth, investing in our assets and 'behaving more commercially' to help make the transition to self-sufficiency. However, we need to take this further by developing our organisation, our estate and our people. All of this will mean new ways of working with public and private sector partners.

By working together as West Suffolk councils, we already know that Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury have made significant savings to taxpayers, but we need to become even more flexible and effective in the future.

This section covers our activities under the headings:

- Transformation
- Managing our finances – investment and commercial opportunities
- Developing the public sector estate in West Suffolk
- Developing our people

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Transformation	
Single Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In September 2017, Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils agreed a business case to Government to create a single council for West Suffolk from April 2019 in order to drive prosperity, jobs and meet future challenges. In September 2017, the Secretary of State indicated that he was minded to support the process, which triggered a legal process. Plans to create a new West Suffolk Council were supported by the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in February 2018. • Public engagement showed that 70% of residents supported the proposals. The draft business case demonstrated that making no changes or going back to two separate councils would have a negative impact on achieving the aims of both authorities and services. It showed how a single council will better meet the challenges facing our communities, such as increased population, demand on healthcare and reduced funding. At the same time it will better drive jobs, deliver services and continue investment to

	<p>support our communities. In addition it will generate hundreds of thousands of pounds of savings and efficiencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will mean the council is the right size to still deliver local and tailored solutions but also have a large and unified voice to champion the aspirations of our communities nationally and to attract new businesses. • Internally, work is progressing to ensure all services are prepared for the new Council, which is being facilitated by a new Single Council Programme Manager. • Since writing this report, the orders to create a new West Suffolk Council have been supported by the Grand Committee in the House of Lords, following a debate in the House of Commons a week before where MPs also supported the proposals.
<p>Suffolk-wide working</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformation Challenge Award (TCA): In November 2014, a Suffolk-wide bid to the Government’s Transformation Challenge Award (TCA) programme was successful in securing funding, to develop new ways of collaborative working that support communities, reduce costs and generate benefits for residents. Throughout 2017/18, the TCA funding continued to support Suffolk-wide collaboration, particularly in the area of Data and Intelligence, examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Launch of a virtual network for researchers, analysts, data, knowledge, intelligence, GIS and insight specialists where collaborative work is initiated; analysis and insights are shared; and where knowledge, innovation and best practice around analytical techniques, presentation & visualisation techniques, data systems and tools and data sources is shared; - Development of a Business Rates Forecasting Model to support Suffolk’s Chief Finance Officers to gain a better understanding of the Business Rates income stream; - In 2016/17, a wide-ranging review of the Suffolk Observatory was conducted to understand whether it was still fit for purpose. Based on user feedback and a wider understanding of existing data and insight needs across all public service organisations across Suffolk, the web site was re-designed and re-launched in 2017/18. The site now provides easier access to the most up-to-date third-party, published data and information about Suffolk and its residents, businesses and communities, thereby supporting local government officers and commissioners, elected members, parish councils, the police, and others in evidence-based decision making and shaping of policies, services and business cases. It is therefore one of the key sources of data,

	<p>information and evidence to focus resources and improve services across the public sector in Suffolk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of an Evidence and Evaluation Framework to enable ongoing measurement of 'Community Resilience' – understanding how well communities are doing in terms of crime, employment/economy, wellbeing, poverty and social relationships. • Joint posts with Suffolk County Council and Clinical Commissioning Group: Last year, the Families and Communities team expanded the team through multi-agency working with the successful secondment of the Building Community Capacity Officer for the west. The officer is now a full time member of the team with a locality and specialism and provides a great link between the district and the county council. The team now also host two posts which are shared with West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group which has increased opportunities for patient and community engagement. It also links the work that councils do in terms of wider determinants of health and our focus on prevention, with the CCGs need to reduce demand on the health service. • Suffolk Design Guide: In a bid led by West Suffolk, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government awarded £300,000 to Suffolk Local Planning Authorities to deliver a Suffolk Design Guide and an aligned training programme for staff and members setting out policies and approaches to master planning and design for major strategic sites / developments. The project will be taken forward on a joint basis across the Suffolk's Local Planning Authorities as part of the Suffolk Growth Programme Board's planning workstream.
<p>Success of working with the Anglia Revenues Partnership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Suffolk councils continue to play a key role in the Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP), which administers Council Tax and business rates revenues, and benefits, on behalf of the seven partner councils. The partnership continues to develop its role in line with recent changes to local government funding, providing advice and support to partner councils. <p>Highlights from ARP in 2017/18 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enforcement Agency service (bailiffs): ARP provides an enforcement agency service (bailiffs) which was launched in July 2015 for all seven partner councils. Enforcement has continued to perform well in 2017/18 with the team collecting £9.3 million since the service began, of which £4 million has been in this financial year. ARP has continued to meet the cost of running the service through fees

	<p>collection and produced a surplus this financial year. The surplus will contribute to each partner councils' efficiency targets and help them to fund essential services.</p> <p>- Digital Transformation: 11,039 council tax payers and Housing Benefit recipients have now opted entirely to receive their bills and notifications electronically, rather than by traditional letter.</p> <p>- Fraud prevention: ARP were tasked with identifying and preventing fraud in the following areas; local Council Tax support, single person discount, Council Tax and business rates and, tenancy fraud, with the aim of this leading to an increase in Council Tax income. ARP exceeded their financial saving 2017/18 target of £1,300,000 by reaching £2,574,613 in February 2018 including over £696,200.15 for West Suffolk. The team also continue to participate in national DWP and local authority Housing Benefit Steering Groups to have input into shaping and influencing current and proposed operational matters. Current topics include Universal Credit plans, tackling fraud and error, local authority financing and data share.</p> <p>- Working together: West Suffolk's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) team were part of the annual billing project; a multi team involvement that tests the seven databases, with over 340,000 Council Tax bills alone in January 2018.</p>
Shared legal service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In November 2016, four councils (St Edmundsbury Borough Council, Forest Heath District Council and Mid-Suffolk and Babergh councils) established a shared legal service. • We united the service using our existing budget and used no new additional funding. We are pleased to report that we came in on budget in our first year as a shared legal service. • In future, we plan to expand the service to support the councils' growing business needs. Our focus is on developing our existing team members. Full structure has now been established and we are looking at how we may improve in future.
Planning Improvement Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-applications planning advice - In last year's report, we outlined how our new paid-for-service that enables the delivery of timely planning advice was set to exceed the budgeted income of £50,000. We are pleased to report that we have exceeded this income with the current forecast for 2018/19 at £85,000. We are currently reviewing the service to look at how we can fine tune it further. However, the first 20 months of implementation have been successful and proved itself to be a popular and useful service.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paperless parishes – We are pleased to report that 50% of our parish consultations are now done electronically, removing the need for paper copies of plans that was costing the service approximately £19,000 per year.
<p>General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In May 2018, the councils will be required to ensure it has taken all appropriate steps to become compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). In October, Cabinets agreed to support funding to appoint a GDPR coordinator, and undertake the relevant organisational development to ensure compliance. This work is now well progressed and staff awareness of GDPR has increased by completing mandatory training modules.
<p>Cyber security</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public sector organisations have fallen victim to an increasing number of cyber security attacks in the past year. The councils have recognised that the public sector is increasingly vulnerable to these types of attacks and took measures in 2017/18 to prevent service failures by reviewing our practices and considering ways we can be more resilient. • Our Information and Communications Technology (ICT) team have continued to prevent and intervene with malware, viruses, threats and cybercrime. The councils receive 30,000 emails per day, however nearly half of these are flagged as suspicious, and less than 1% represent emails with known malware attachments, which are trapped and blocked by ICT to protect our systems and services. • The councils have achieved cost efficiencies in its telephony system by phasing out its main ISDN voice lines and replacing with SIP Trunks. The new system provides greater resilience, better performance, improved site to site resilience and business continuity, all whilst saving the councils around £50,000 per annum. • Other achievements in ICT include extending our Abbeycroft and ARP contracts by switching to three year contracts rather than previous rolling annual contracts. The councils also adopted an Information Framework in 2017/18 which is the first step towards becoming more of a data driven organisation, improving services for our customer base through a more integrated approach to data and sharing of data with our key partners.

Managing our finances – investment and commercial opportunities	
Managing our finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Local Government Finance Settlement for 2017/18 was announced in December 2016. Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury were both successful in being included in the settlement which confirmed our figures from the four year Revenue Support Grant settlement in 2016 and gave details of the revised New Homes Bonus figures and rules. • Both St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath have been able to create a Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) that balances out income and expenditure to 2021. There were six key themes behind the creation of these plans: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. aligning resources to both West Suffolk councils’ Strategic Framework and essential services; 2. continuation of the shared service agenda and transformation of service delivery; 3. behaving more commercially; 4. considering new funding models (e.g. acting as an investor); 5. encouraging the use of digital forms for customer access; and 6. taking advantage of new forms of local government finance (e.g. business rate retention). • Each MTFS highlights the change in relationship between central and local government through the increase in local funding from business rates, council tax and other revenue streams, as well as reduction in central government grants. • Suffolk has been awarded 100% Business Rates pilot status for 2018-19 (this is a one-off, one year only pilot) based on the proposal submitted in October 2017. The proposal builds on the Business Rates Retention pool which Suffolk has successfully operated since 2013. In all pilot areas, the councils within the pool have to forego the funding streams of the revenue support grant and rural services delivery grant in return for higher shares of business rates. The Suffolk pilot is based on a no detriment to each of the councils and therefore the risk to the Council’s budget of not achieving the business rates anticipated in the 2018-19 budget is low. Any additional business rates collected in Suffolk will be invested in inclusive growth. This is unique nationally and reflects our ‘place based’ way of working which better supports both the urban and rural areas. • In 2015, the Local Audit and Accountability Act was published. A key area of these regulations was that from the 2017/18 financial year, the timetable for the preparation and approval of accounts will be brought forward to a draft accounts deadline of 31st May and an audit deadline of 31 July.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a reduction in preparation time of 30 days for the final accounts (moving from 30 June to 31 May) and 62 days for the audited accounts (moving from 30 September to 31 July). The Government believes that this change will reduce the burden of the closure process, enabling finance staff to give more time to in-year financial management.
Our approach to investment - Solar Farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forest Heath District Council celebrated the first birthday of its Toggam Solar Farm in August 2017. During the year, the solar farm generated 11,682MWh of electricity, bringing in £1.2m of income, £308,000 net income (taking into account the capital outlay) to contribute towards funding local services. It is one of the biggest local authority-owned solar farms in the UK, producing enough electricity to offset the carbon footprint of 1,700 cars and enough electricity to power 3,500 homes. The solar farm, along with other initiatives such as the councils' Solar for Business roof-top solar scheme, is saving a total carbon footprint of around 4,900 tonnes each year.
Purchasing the DHL building/Development of Western Way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In November 2017, St Edmundsbury purchased a 3.26 acre warehouse in Olding Road for £4m. This long term investment will help deliver income to support the future proofing of local services. The DHL purchase was completed at the end of 2017. The purpose of the purchase is to enable the realisation of Western Way Development Masterplan that was adopted in 2016. We continue to work with Public Sector Partners and stakeholders to develop the vision for Western Way Development both in terms of the development itself and the opportunities that arise to improve efficiencies and customer experience through colocation and integration of services.
Purchasing the Post Office building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site at 17-18 Cornhill, due to its relationship with Cornhill/Buttermarket, St Andrews Street South and Market Thoroughfare, was identified by the Council as having strategic importance in relation to the emerging Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Masterplan (adopted in December 2017). Following the announcement by Post Office Ltd that Bury St Edmunds main post office facility on 17-18 Cornhill would close, the Council subsequently purchased the site. Two of the aspirations of the Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Masterplan, which was shaped through public engagement, are "Market Thoroughfare – improvements to provide continuity from the historic centre to the arc" and "Develop area between the arc and Cornhill i.e. St Andrews Street South to provide for a mix of uses and to establish

	<p>closer integration.” The purchase of 17-18 Cornhill, although not a masterplan aspiration in itself, offers the opportunity to deliver on some of these improvements and in so doing to encourage other land owners and investors to also make improvements in line with both of these masterplan aspirations. In addition, the site provides the Council with an opportunity not only to bring a historic building back into use but also to deliver wider social, economic and financial benefits for the town.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are currently working to develop options for the site including associated financial modelling with the above key aspirations in mind.
<p>Civil Parking Enforcement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Suffolk councils have submitted an application to the Department for Transport (DfT) for taking over responsibility for enforcing on street parking restrictions from the police (known as civil parking enforcement or CPE). This enforcement includes yellow lines, loading bays, taxi ranks, bus stops and school ‘keep clear’ restrictions. • The benefits of CPE include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More local accountability and the ability to be adaptable to local needs - Safer traffic conditions and improved traffic flow - Easing congestion caused by inconsiderate parking - Improving access and response times for emergency vehicles and public transport - Reducing abuse of specific parking bays designed for blue badge holders - A more cohesive and cost effective operation achieved through a coordinated approach between on and off street parking enforcement • Public sector leaders across Suffolk have sponsored this transfer of enforcement powers including East, West, Babergh and Mid Suffolk councils. • The set up cost of implementing CPE will be in the region of £1.1million and will include a review of all traffic regulation orders, signs and lines, recruitment and training of new enforcement staff and any new equipment and ICT systems required. These set up costs will be met by Suffolk County Council and the police. • West Suffolk councils will manage CPE within their boundary as well as managing enforcement in parts of Mid Suffolk and Babergh. • The recent application to the DfT anticipates an implementation target date of April 2019.

Developing the public sector estate in West Suffolk	
Mildenhall Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In November 2017, Forest Heath's Development Control Committee gave approval for the Mildenhall Hub following submission of the planning application in May. The Mildenhall Hub brings a new school, leisure facilities, larger swimming pool, health centre, library and other public services together on one site close to the heart of the existing town centre. • The council is now a step closer to delivering better school and leisure facilities for our growing population of residents in and around Mildenhall.
West Suffolk Operational Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The West Suffolk Operational Hub (WSOH) is an initiative between Forest Heath District Council, St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Suffolk County Council (the 'partner councils') to manage waste by relocating a number of facilities to a single site. The aim of the hub is to increase efficiency, reduce costs and future-proof waste management for West Suffolk's growing communities. • A planning application for the site was submitted in March 2017. Detailed designs were then prepared and planning permission was granted in November 2017. Construction contractors Moran Sindell have now been appointed and started on site in April 2018 following the conclusion of archaeological work.

Developing our people	
Supporting our staff through training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the section on priority 1 (increased opportunities for economic growth), reference was made to the success of our apprenticeship scheme across West Suffolk councils. We are committed to the development of our workforce and the learning of new skills, behaviours and competencies. The ways in which we have supported our staff in 2017/18, are set out below: • This year has seen an increase in the number of training sessions offered with 105 events and 1,007 attendances at training events recorded. We have seen the introduction of the new GDPR regulations and the Agresso upgrade. These training programmes have been delivered by internal subject specialists. We have continued to offer ICT skills development with a series of advanced Excel and Powerpoint training. For those new to management we offer access to the Suffolk-wide blended learning resources for the "21st century manager training". This has included a new offer of Coaching conversations for managers, Presentation training and chairing and facilitating meetings. The Itrent self-service system has seen increased

	<p>efficiency in the administration of events and the waiting list facility to ensure we are delivering repeat courses on evidence of demand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have 28 members of staff working towards accredited professional qualifications across a range of subjects including; Foundation degree in Payroll management, CIH level 5 diploma in housing, MSC Town Planning and Accountancy ACCA. This year we have seen an increase to 10 members of management staff doing the Institute of Management and Leadership (ILM) qualifications at level 3 and level 5. In addition five staff members are about to start the ILM mentoring qualification which will take our cohort of internal qualified mentors to 15.
<p>Improving wellbeing and mental health at work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time to Change – In 2016 we introduced our Mental Health at Work policy. In September 2017 we signed up to the Time to Change Employers pledge which was supported by the portfolio holders and the mayor. This pledge represents a commitment to an action plan which says we will continue to support staff, increase awareness, initiate actions to prevent and manage issues and support managers to help support their staff to stay well and in work. We also worked with ACAS to shape its new mental health guidance for employers which was launched in October 2017. This year, 112 members of staff have attended one of the mental health training interventions we have offered, including 48 managers. Suffolk Workplace Wellbeing Charter - We have made a commitment to the Suffolk Workplace Wellbeing Charter which focuses on an organisation’s commitment to the wellbeing of staff. To deliver this we are working with the following partners: Suffolk County Council, East of England Local Government Association, occupational health providers, neighbouring local authorities, and hospitals including Ipswich and Addenbrooke’s and the Clinical Commissioning Group. In November 2017, as the first of the partners, we submitted our evidence for assessment for the Charter. We were successfully awarded a Certificate of Accreditation in December 2017, with four excellence and four achievements against the eight standards.
<p>Councillor Learning and Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This year we launched the member’s e-learning portal with nine courses including LGA programmes on Licensing and Regulation, and Planning and Scrutiny for councillors. To date, 12 councillors have used this resource and we are continuing to promote this in the coming period. We have delivered 14 member development events this year with topics based on; the Training Needs Analysis outcomes from members, key changes in legislation such as housing and Universal Credit and key West Suffolk strategies such as Energy Matters. This year, we

	<p>have delivered three external LGA sessions with a focus on the role of the councillor in the 21st century.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We recorded 113 attendances at the events giving an average attendance at each event of eight. The Joint Member Development Group with Democratic Services continues to monitor and manage the programme and are working on new initiatives such as e-learning and small seminar sessions to improve attendance.
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The future

You will have seen from this report that we have made significant steps towards achieving our strategic priorities in 2017/18. We also know there are challenging times ahead and that we need to utilise the opportunities available to us in the future.

Our Strategic Framework 2018-2020 sets out our vision and priorities for the next two years:
https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Policies_Strategies_and_Plans/upload/StrategicFramework2018-20.pdf

Community Chest funding

The following organisations have been supported with Community Chest funding in Forest Heath for financial year 2017/18:

Organisation	Funding provided to support:	Location of delivery	Amount for 2017/18
HomeStart	Parental and Family Support	Available to people across Forest Heath	£9,800.00
Newmarket CAB	Advice, Support and Advocacy Services	Newmarket	£34,970.00
Relate	Relationship Counselling services	Available to people across Forest Heath	£2,000.00
Suffolk West CAB	Free Information, Advice and Advocacy	Available to people across Forest Heath	£39,650.00
The Voluntary Network	Community transport	Available to people across Forest Heath	£18,400.00
Rural Coffee Caravan	Funding to visit 6 rural villages lacking in amenities or social activity	6 locations across FHDC area	£3,210.00
Sharing Parenting	Parenting programmes	Available to people across Forest Heath	£35,500.00
Our Special Friends	Animal support services for vulnerable adults	Available to people across Forest Heath	£6,000.00
Suffolk West Citizens Advice Bureau	MoneySmart service	Available to people across Forest Heath	£27,192.00
YOPEY Befriender	Young adult intergenerational service	Newmarket	£4,000.00

Alumah CIO	Domestic abuse support group	Brandon & All Wards	£3,700.00
Unit Twenty Three	Play production – young carers	Available to people across Forest Heath	£5,000.00
Epic Dads	Fathers support and empowerment group	Lakenheath	£24,491.03
Arts For Us	Out of school children's activities	Available to people across Forest Heath	£9,520.00
The Volunteer Network	Befriending	Available to people across Forest Heath	£10,299.33
Fresh Start New Beginnings	Sex Abuse Support Sessions	Available to people across Forest Heath	£10,000.00

The following organisations have been supported with Community Chest funding in St Edmundsbury for financial year 2017/18:

Organisation	Funding provided to support:	Location of delivery	Amount for 2017/18
Gatehouse Caring	Home Furnishings for disadvantaged families	Bury St Edmunds & All Wards	£5,000.00
HomeStart	Parental and Family Support	Available to people across St Edmundsbury	£45,475.00
REACH	Foodbank and Supported Volunteering	Haverhill and surrounding	£5,000.00
Relate	Relationship Counselling services	Available to people across St Edmundsbury	£5,000.00
The Voluntary Network	Befriending Scheme and Community Car Service	Available to people across St Edmundsbury	£15,234
Suffolk Rape Crisis	Counselling Services	Bury St Edmunds	£4,800.00
Gatehouse Caring in East Anglia	Funding towards Dementia Hub	Available to people across St Edmundsbury	£10,000.00
Millennium Farm Trust	Learning disabilities support group	Available to people across St Edmundsbury	£10,000.00
Suffolk Accident Rescue Service (SARS)	Specialist Medical equipment	Available to people across St Edmundsbury	£2,000.00

Suffolk Mind	Community allotment	Haverhill & All Wards	£4,970.30
Upbeat Heart Support	Health support group	Bury St Edmunds & surrounding	£7,875.00
Catch 22, Suffolk Positive Futures	Free weekly sports project for young people	Haverhill & surrounding	£8,189.00
Suffolk Cruse Bereavement Care	Community Support project	Available to people across St Edmundsbury	£9,458.00
Survivors in Transition	Sex abuse support group	All Wards	£11,560.00
Bury St Edmunds Women's Aid Centre Ltd	Family support project	Bury St Edmunds	£5,400.00
Our Special Friends	Animal support services for vulnerable adults	Available to people across St Edmundsbury	£6,000.00
Suffolk West Citizens Advice Bureau	Operational costs	Available to people across St Edmundsbury	£182,000.00
Theatre Royal (Bury St Edmunds)	Arts Wellbeing programme	Bury St Edmunds & All Wards	£5,000.00

Case study: DB Sheetmetals

In February 2018, a specialist sheet metal company in Haverhill needed to replace old lighting to help with inspection and reduce costs but did not have the time or funding available to make the project happen.

By working with West Suffolk's Community Energy Programme, DB Sheetmetals were able to get technical and financial support from the council's Environmental Health team to help them reduce costs and save money on their energy bills. This enabled the company to undertake a site wide replacement of the old lighting with new energy efficient LED bulbs with minimal disruption. This has not only improved light levels for vital inspection work but has also saved energy, reduced bills by over £3,400 and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

The council's innovative energy performance approach provided 100% finance of the project costs and mirrors the latest innovations in the energy efficiency industry. DB Sheetmetals are repaying the cost of the project monthly and the council's Community Energy programme, working closely with the installer IC Lighting, has provided a guarantee that the energy savings will repay the capital expenditure in 3.7 years.

Caroline Law from DB Sheetmetals, said: *"Replacing this lighting was important for the business to help us modernise, provide a better service and reduce energy costs. But like most small businesses finding the finance and having the time to do this is difficult. The Council and its Community Energy Programme were able to project management the procurement and installation as well as helping us gain a grant from Business Energy Efficiency Anglia. This has meant we have been able to install the new LEDs and pay back the secured loan over time. Quite simply, it is unlikely the project would have happened without the Council's Environment and Energy Team support."*



Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury councils

West Suffolk

working together

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Case study: Summer internship programme

We are committed to developing and retaining talent in West Suffolk and providing opportunities for young people.

During the summer of 2017, West Suffolk councils ran, for the fourth successive year, its highly successful internship programme, welcoming eight new interns to work across the organisation.

The internship programme, which is part of the Suffolk wide Rising High Programme, is designed to encourage young people to take up careers in the public sector and provides paid opportunities for undergraduates to experience work in a local authority during their summer break from university.

During the 12 week work placement, our interns were given responsibility for aspects of work within the service where they were based. They were also given the opportunity to work on challenging projects, as well as a local community project in partnership with Sainsbury's called "Want What You Waste".

One of our interns described their experience:

"Working here has exceeded any expectations I could have set and has been a really great experience. The work I have been given has made me realise that working in local government can be very stimulating. I would definitely recommend working in local government and particularly West Suffolk as it really feels like a local authority who has ambition and drive to grow and adapt to the times. Whilst working here everybody has been so friendly and welcoming and it really feels like the council is invested in you as an employee."

We are proud to have three current employees who have previously worked with us on the programme.



Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury councils

West Suffolk
working together

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Case study: How we are trying to help the homeless

Although we strive to resolve individuals' situations when they approach our housing options team, there are inevitably some who require additional support and find themselves sleeping rough through no fault of their own. We understand that there are a range of issues that come with rough sleeping, such as drug and alcohol abuse and mental and physical health problems.

The councils have continued to assist those most vulnerable people and accommodate those in need. In 2017/18, we have worked with Havebury Housing Partnership to open a winter night shelter to provide a bed for people sleeping on our streets during the coldest months.

The night shelter opened in December 2017 in part of Northgate Lodge in Bury St Edmunds and can cater for up to 16 rough sleepers from across West Suffolk. People are accommodated at the centre by referral to the housing team, although the council continues to assist rough sleepers through referrals from the Bury Drop-In Centre and through our Prevention and Support Worker speaking to people sleeping rough on the streets. The centre offers additional facilities and the chance for people to engage with various support services.

We also opened a temporary winter night shelter in Bury St Edmunds prior to the opening of Northgate Lodge to provide a bed for rough sleepers when the temperature fell below freezing for a number of consecutive nights in December. The emergency night shelter was run by volunteers from West Suffolk councils, the Church and The Bury Drop-In.

The increase of street homelessness is a stark reality, and we are keen to work with our partners to address this challenge. Last year, we also appointed a rough sleeper prevention and support officer who works to encourage people across West Suffolk away from a life sleeping on the streets. Successes reported by our outreach worker include people who have been chronically homeless coming forward for help and engaging with services.

The councils continue to make use of over 100 units of temporary accommodation, including bed and breakfast, hotels and hostels, all the while trying to help people to find more settled homes. We also work with partners who are specialists in mental health and wellbeing, as well as substance misuse.

We are committed to working with our partners to provide accommodation and support for those most in need to help break the cycle of rough sleeping.

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Case study: Rogue landlords

Private landlords are an important provider of housing for local people. The Public Health and Housing team work proactively to support landlords to improve the standard of privately rented accommodation and to raise awareness of the expected standard with tenants, so they too can work with their landlords. There are however a small minority of irresponsible rogue landlords who knowingly rent out accommodation that is unlicensed, substandard and/or unsafe and for whom the current sanctions are not a sufficient deterrent.

Following a decision at Joint Cabinet in January 2018, West Suffolk councils began taking the first steps to adopting new powers to combat rogue landlords under new powers in the Housing and Planning Act 2016. A new policy is therefore required for us to make use some of the new powers.

The focus of the new policy is on tackling and dealing with the very worst private landlords, and deterring any rogue landlords from starting to operate in west Suffolk, while working with those that wish to grow the sector through much needed, better quality housing.

Consultation on the new enforcement routes was carried out in early 2018. Some of the enforcement routes include the option of civil penalty fines, rent repayment orders and banning orders for non-compliance with certain Housing Act 2004 offences, as an alternative to taking a prosecution for the very worst landlords.

Wherever possible, West Suffolk councils take a staged approach to enforcement to ensure solutions are initially sought through advice, co-operation and agreement. The new legislation provides a streamlined alternative to prosecution, albeit with same level of evidence and an appeals process in place, which is designed to deal with cash for rent landlords working outside of the law.

The new policy will help us protect tenants and compliant landlords by targeting the small minority of rogue landlords for whom previous enforcement has not been effective. The aim is to drive up standards in the private rented sector and improve the quality of existing housing for our residents.

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Case study: Haverhill LifeLink – one year on

In August 2017, the two year pilot for the Haverhill LifeLink project began. The project, run by St Edmundsbury Borough Council and ONE Haverhill Partnership, has already seen small successes, which can be demonstrated by the stories of the two participants below:

Bob's story

Bob was visiting his GP on a frequent basis with feelings of depression and anxiety. He felt that things were out of his control and found himself becoming more and more anxious. His GP spoke to him about Haverhill LifeLink and explained how it could potentially help him. Although Bob felt anxious about meeting his co-ordinator the first time, he attended and talked through his current situation. Through this process, he identified what his goals and aspirations were. This proved useful for Bob as he was able to explore different coping methods for his anxiety and also provided him with someone he could turn to if he felt overwhelmed. After several appointments with LifeLink, Bob began implementing different coping mechanisms and found that his days were more structured. This made him feel much better about his life and gave him a clearer sense of how he could move forward to reach his goals. Bob is still engaging with the LifeLink project and is exploring his next goals around meeting new people and volunteering.

John's story

John was referred by his GP to Haverhill LifeLink because he wanted to see what was available in the town to help with his feelings of boredom and low mood. After speaking to John to understand his situation, his LifeLink coordinator provided him with signposting to Citizens Advice so that he could get advice on benefits relating to his disability. LifeLink also introduced him to a lunch group that meets on a weekly basis. Due to John's disability, he struggled to get out and about so LifeLink organised community transport which allowed John to attend the weekly lunch group. John was delighted to feel part of his community and asked his coordinator what else he could do within the town. He now attends two community groups in Haverhill and is enjoying being more active within his community.

John said; *"LifeLink has made a difference to my life because I have met new people, got out of the house and overall feel more positive. I feel brighter and more upbeat since starting Haverhill LifeLink."*

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Case study: Brandon Country Park

The 32 acre Brandon Country Park sees around 175,000 visitors a year and is currently managed by Suffolk County Council with £20,000 funding provided by Forest Heath District Council.

With a range of walks and cycle ways the park is an important local facility. It also hosts a Parkrun every week and a regular programme of guided walks and events throughout the year.

Following Suffolk County Council's decision to transfer ownership of its parks and nature reserves to other organisations, Forest Heath District Council supported plans to secure the future of the park.

The district council sees parks as not only important to support the local environment and attract visitors to the area but as part of its investment in supporting communities keep healthy and active while improving wellbeing.

In recent years, the county council has invested in the site and made some significant improvements. These have included investing in the café (including additional space for café seating, a new purpose built kitchen and a new shop area) and achieving the Visit England's 'Quality Assured Visitor Attraction' award.

By working closely with the county council, we have secured the future of the country park for our local communities and visitors to the area. We understand how parks are not just important in protecting our local environment and wildlife but vital in improving health and wellbeing. It demonstrates how we are best placed to work with local communities and deliver services such as this. We are now developing a ten year plan and looking at the further opportunities it brings to improve the offer at this great park.

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Case study: Purchasing the former Post Office building

The Victorian building on 17-18 Cornhill in Bury St Edmunds is in the heart of the town and had previously been home to the Crown Post Office for more than 100 years.

After officially closing in November 2016, the council bought the building and, following extensive interest, appointed Donald Insall Associates as architects for a project to refurbish and extend the building. The architects have been asked to keep the historic Victorian front, respecting the town's heritage while also bringing it back into economic use.

Two of the aspirations of the Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Masterplan, which was shaped through public engagement, are "Market Thoroughfare – improvements to provide continuity from the historic centre to the arc" and "Develop area between the arc and Cornhill i.e. St Andrews Street South to provide for a mix of uses and to establish closer integration." Purchasing the building allows us to work with our partners to improve links between these areas of the town.

Although not a masterplan aspiration in itself, the building offers the opportunity to deliver on some of these improvements and in so doing to encourage other land owners and investors to also make improvements in line with both of these masterplan aspirations.

Investing in the building not only gains financial return, but also helps deliver social and economic improvements to the area by building on its unique qualities. Further, it helps deliver income to support the future proofing of local services.

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Case study: The future of West Suffolk councils

Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils have been jointly delivering their services since 2012 and have achieved annual savings of £4million by doing so. In 2017 the leaders of both authorities agreed to build on that success by taking the opportunity to look at the option to replace the two councils with a new district-level council for West Suffolk. This was considered both locally and nationally to be an ambitious plan which would help the councils to meet future challenges and better drive prosperity in West Suffolk.

The councils produced a business case and undertook a comprehensive programme of engagement receiving strong support from residents, businesses and MPs as well as the County Council and other public sector partners. An independent poll of local residents, carried out by ComRes, identified that more than 70% of residents supported the creation of a new West Suffolk Council.

In January 2018 the proposals to create a new West Suffolk Council were backed by the Secretary of State, giving the authorities the go ahead to start to get ready for elections to the new Council in May 2019. Orders to create a new West Suffolk Council have been supported by the Grand Committee in the House of Lords, following a debate in the House of Commons a week before where MPs also supported the proposals.

The Secretary of State highlighted our bid at the District Council Network Conference and the authorities are seen as leading transformational councils nationally. This groundbreaking work is enabling the councils to meet future challenges and continuing to deliver services while encouraging growth, jobs and supporting local communities. The new council will generate hundreds of thousands of pounds of savings and efficiencies and at the same time it will be able to better support, invest in and meet the challenges facing communities, such as increased population, demand on health care and housing as well as reduced funding nationally.

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	West Suffolk Homelessness Reduction Strategy	
Report No:	OAS/FH/18/015	
Report to and dates:	SEBC Overview and Scrutiny Committee	6 June 2018
	FHDC Overview and Scrutiny Committee	7 June 2018
	Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee	26 June 2018
Portfolio holder:	Councillor Sara Mildmay-White West Suffolk 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:	<p>To present the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the draft West Suffolk Homelessness Reduction Strategy. The Homelessness Act 2002 requires all councils to review and produce a new homelessness strategy at least every five years. A review of West Suffolk's existing strategy is due in 2018. The new version of the strategy will be known as the West Suffolk Homelessness Reduction Strategy.</p> <p>In addition to this, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 came into force on 3 April 2018 and there are a number of fundamental changes to legislation and additional duties that will need to be reflected in the new Homelessness Reduction Strategy for West Suffolk. In legislation there is no legal requirement for a new strategy to be in place before April 2018.</p>	

Recommendation:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee: It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that, the West Suffolk Homelessness Reduction Strategy, attached as Appendix 1 is considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and recommended for approval by the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee on 26 June 2018.	
	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> (a) A key decision means an executive decision which, pending any further guidance from the Secretary of State, is likely to: (i) be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area in the Borough/District.	
Consultation:	The new West Suffolk Homelessness Reduction Strategy has been the subject of public and stakeholder consultation through a workshop and online survey.	
Alternative option(s):	To continue with the current Homelessness Strategy. However, this means that our strategy would not be consistent with the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 or with changes to the Housing Options and Homelessness service in response to the Act.	
Implications:		
<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"/> •	

<p>Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details</p>		<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Homelessness Act 2002 requires all councils to review and produce a new homelessness strategy at least every five years. The Homelessness Reduction Act came into force on 3 April 2018 and producing a new West Suffolk Homelessness Reduction Strategy complements the requirements of the new Act and addresses the requirement of the Government's Code of Guidance. 	
<p>Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details</p>		<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been carried out and its findings are included in paragraph 1.1.6. 	
<p>Risk/opportunity assessment:</p>		<p><i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i></p>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
Strategy 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
<p>Ward(s) affected:</p>		All wards	
<p>Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i></p>		None	
<p>Documents attached:</p>		<p>Appendix 1 – West Suffolk Draft Homelessness Reduction Strategy</p> <p>Appendix A: Homelessness data 2018</p> <p>Appendix B: Delivery plan</p>	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires all Councils to produce a Homelessness Strategy at least every five years. Detail of what the strategy should contain are included in the government's Homelessness Code of Guidance which was updated in March 2018. In summary, the code requires councils to carry out a homelessness review of their area and produce a strategy to:

- prevent homelessness in the district;
- secure that sufficient accommodation is and will be available for people in the district who are or may become homeless; and
- secure the satisfactory provision of support for people in the district who are or may become homeless or who have been homeless and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again.

1.1.2 A review of West Suffolk's Homelessness Strategy is due in 2018. In addition to this, by producing a new West Suffolk Homelessness Reduction Strategy we are responding to the fundamental changes to legislation and additional duties introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

1.1.3 In accordance with the Homelessness Act 2002, West Suffolk councils have conducted a review of homelessness in the area between November 2017 and April 2018. The review takes the form of an evidence base that is attached as **Appendix A** to the West Suffolk Homelessness Reduction Strategy (**Appendix 1**). The depth and scope of the review has contributed to a comprehensive understanding of the key issues facing West Suffolk. It has enabled us to consider where we need to focus our attention in the future in order to determine which priorities and actions we need to focus on.

1.1.4 The Act has introduced the following:

1. The definition of being threatened with homelessness be extended from 28 days to 56 days, meaning councils can start working with people at an earlier date.
2. Councils must accept a valid 'section 21' notice as evidence that the tenant is threatened with homelessness.
3. A greater duty to give advice and information to a wider range of people at a much earlier stage than previously offered.
4. Duty to assess all eligible applicants' cases and agree a plan (known as the 'personal housing plan').
5. The creation of a stronger prevention duty for anyone threatened with homelessness and eligible for assistance. This can involve assisting them to stay in their current accommodation, or helping them to find a new place to live.

6. A new relief duty which is available to all those who are homeless, have a local connection and are eligible regardless of whether they have a priority need. It requires councils to take reasonable steps to help secure accommodation. This help could be, for example, the provision of a rent deposit or debt advice. Those who have a priority need (for example they have dependent children or are vulnerable in some way) may be provided with interim accommodation while the council carries out the reasonable steps.
 7. Duties to help to secure accommodation.
 8. Incentives to people to engage in prevention and relief work by allowing councils to discharge their prevention and relief duties if an applicant unreasonably refuses to cooperate with the course of action proposed.
 9. A right for councils to discharge the prevention and relief duties by providing accommodation with a reasonable prospect of this being available for at least the next six months. This does *not* need to be social housing.
 10. A right to a review at the prevention, relief and main duty stages to ensure councils are held to account.
 11. A requirement to collect data in order to monitor the overall effectiveness of the new legislation.
- 1.1.5 The West Suffolk Homelessness Reduction Strategy is an important part of what we are doing across West Suffolk to prevent and reduce homelessness. However, other activities that support the reduction of homelessness are outlined in West Suffolk's Housing Strategy and the Strategic Framework 2018-2020.
 - 1.1.6 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been carried out on the West Suffolk Homelessness Reduction Strategy. The EqIA was an assessment of any impact there might be on any particular group. It shows that there will be no negative impact on any of the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010. The strategy contains priorities and actions that seek to prevent homelessness, respond to those in housing need and additional support is identified for those who have priority need and specific groups who may be more vulnerable to homelessness. We will use data to monitor the help and support being provided to people within the protected characteristics.
- 2.1 Resourcing the West Suffolk Homelessness Reduction Strategy**
- 2.1.1 The delivery plan at **Appendix B** has been developed to deliver on our priorities as set out in the strategy and will be resourced through existing budgets and resources. Once the delivery plan has been put in place, if it becomes clear that any of the projects or initiatives require additional funding then these will be considered by Members as separate businesses cases as appropriate.

- 2.1.2 In order to support the delivery of our priorities we will continue to access external funding opportunities through central Government and our partners.

3.1 Consultation

- 3.1.1 A consultation exercise took place in January this year with a number of our key partners. The aim of the workshop was to gain a collective understanding of the pressures, how services and partners can work together to prevent and reduce homelessness and setting our priorities for West Suffolk as a whole. Outcomes from the workshop have been fed into the development of the strategy.
- 3.1.2 The formal consultation is taking place for a seven week period between 24 April and 12 June 2018. It involves an online survey which is available on our webpages and has been sent directly to Members, parish councils and a number of our partners.
- 3.1.3 As at 22 May 2018, 29 responses have been received to the online survey from residents, partner organisations and registered providers. The responses so far show that there is strong support for the priorities and actions set out in the strategy and for the issues that we are addressing.
- 3.1.4 Through the consultation, specific comments have been received that relate to specialist accommodation for vulnerable families and individuals and around the delivery and affordability of our priorities and actions.
- 3.1.5 As a result we are not proposing any changes to the priorities set out in the strategy. However, these points have been addressed through our robust delivery plan.

West Suffolk Homelessness Reduction Strategy

2018-2023

Final design of strategy to follow consultation

24 May 2018
Draft for Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Appendix A – Data and evidence base

Appendix B – Delivery plan

Foreword

We know what a wonderful place West Suffolk is to live and work in. It is not just our beautiful countryside and our historic towns and villages that makes the area so appealing to so many – it is also the people that live here, our way of life and the strong community support that people have for each other. A great many people across West Suffolk naturally want to remain close to their families and the communities where they grew up. There are also many people looking to relocate to West Suffolk, to grow their business or to capitalise on the job opportunities that are being created here. The only drawback is with West Suffolk in such high demand, housing can be expensive which puts pressure on the Council to ensure that there are suitable and sustainable places for people to live.

Housing impacts our health, quality of life, employment and education. A home should be a sanctuary where people feel safe and secure. But for many, this is not the case. The reasons for this are varied and complex but it can often lead to homelessness, and at its worst extreme, rough sleeping.

If we are to succeed in reducing homelessness, then as agencies we will need to work even more closely than we have ever done before. That is why we have forged strong bonds with the public, private and voluntary sector agencies to not only help people find a home but to give them any support that they may need to move on with their lives and in so doing, prevent homelessness.

This strategy builds on the good work we have already carried out and shows how we, with partners, are responding to meet national challenges and new major changes to statutory duties. At the heart of what we do are individuals and families, sometimes with challenging issues, in need of our help. This strategy ensures their needs are identified and that they are assisted as they engage and work through their personalised plans.

I want to thank our partners who have helped produce this strategy and I know they, together with us in West Suffolk are committed to preventing and reducing homelessness, tackling its main causes and supporting those in need.

**Cllr Sara Mildmay-White,
Cabinet Member for Housing
West Suffolk councils**

1. Introduction

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a statutory duty on local authorities to undertake a review of homelessness in their area, and based on the findings, develop and publish a strategy to prevent homelessness.

West Suffolk councils (Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils) produced its first Homelessness Strategy in 2015, which covers the period to 2018. The strategy has been reviewed and this new strategy published. The timing of this new strategy is particularly relevant as the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the biggest change to homelessness legislation in 40 years, came into force in April 2018.

The Act has an emphasis on the prevention of homelessness and on partnership working with statutory, voluntary and third sector agencies. This ensures individuals' needs are identified and that they are assisted as they engage and work through their personalised plans.

The Act has a focus on helping individuals to access housing and we need to make sure that we have effective pathways to work collaboratively with and encourage people to secure their own accommodation.

Residents in West Suffolk need suitable and affordable housing to achieve their ambitions, whether for family life, career development or a fulfilling retirement. The local conditions in West Suffolk make housing particularly difficult to afford, given relatively high house prices and low wages. The councils therefore have an important role to play in seeking to address this situation and to ensure housing is suitable for changing demographics, including an ageing population. West Suffolk councils are also working to improve the quality of housing, so as to ensure it supports the health and wellbeing of residents, both in our towns and in our rural areas. In recent years, while the focus has increased on the supply of appropriate housing, the councils have also responded to rising homelessness in West Suffolk by investing resources in prevention and securing suitable accommodation for those people in crisis.

The development of this Homelessness Reduction Strategy is an important part of our approach to preventing and reducing homelessness across West Suffolk. Other activities that support the reduction of homelessness are outlined in West Suffolk's Housing Strategy and in the Strategic Framework 2018-2020.

Since the publication of our first Homelessness Strategy, we have made progress both in preventing homelessness and helping individuals who have, for whatever reason, become homeless:

1. In 2015, West Suffolk invested in a property and converted a former bed and breakfast facility into a property that can accommodate up to six families who have become homeless and are in need of temporary accommodation. A property was also purchased in Bury St Edmunds to provide five units of accommodation for those with low level support needs.

2. We focused much of our work on prevention – in 2017 we actively assisted or prevented some 500 households across West Suffolk, from becoming homeless.
3. We established a number of arrangements with housing providers to secure supported accommodation, including Newmarket Open Door, YMCA and Home Group.
4. We continue to ensure that no family would have to spend more than six weeks in bed and breakfast accommodation.
5. We successfully bid for funding from the then Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) domestic abuse accommodation fund. Funding of £516,244 has been granted to partners to provide accommodation for victims of domestic abuse across Suffolk.
6. We were also successful in our bid for funding for a rough sleeper outreach worker to work across the areas cover by West Suffolk, Babergh and Mid-Suffolk councils. The outreach worker helps us further achieve our aim to reduce rough sleeping by providing a point of contact for individuals who are either rough sleeping or who are homeless and at risk of rough sleeping. The outreach worker also has a role working with agencies and our partners to develop ways of preventing homelessness. This post is now included within the councils' staffing structure.
7. We have further increased our outreach services with joint funding for two more outreach workers, one of which will specialise in helping people trying to overcome drink or drug issues.
8. We invested £250,000 in the housing team to provide additional resourcing for advice and prevention. This includes the establishment of new posts to provide housing solutions including Welfare Support.
9. We provided additional funding to Citizens' Advice to increase capacity for budgeting advice to support those people who are receiving Universal Credit.
10. We established a Winter Night Shelter to provide accommodation for rough sleepers over the winter months.
11. We continue to fund a specialist post within the Probation Service to find accommodation and support those leaving the criminal justice system.
12. We have begun to develop a No Second Night Out partnership.
13. We funded two bed spaces for prolific offenders, working with police and probation to support rehabilitation.

In order to develop this new Strategy we have: (i) reviewed progress since the approval of the first strategy; (ii) undertaken detailed analysis of homelessness in the area (Appendix A); and (iii) consulted a number of partners in the statutory and voluntary sector.

In accordance with the Homelessness Act 2002, West Suffolk councils have conducted a review of homelessness in the area between November 2017 and April 2018. The review takes the form of an evidence base that is attached as Appendix A to the Homelessness Reduction Strategy. The depth and scope of the review has contributed to a comprehensive understanding of the key issues behind homelessness in West Suffolk. It has enabled us to consider where we need to focus our attention in the future.

2. Our vision

West Suffolk councils are committed to preventing and reducing homelessness, tackling the main causes of homelessness and supporting those in need.

Through this new Homelessness Reduction Strategy, West Suffolk councils are responding to a period of change, not only through the Homelessness Reduction Act but also the significant financial challenges to public services, housing demand which squeezes affordability and as a result puts pressure on social housing and the impact of welfare reforms. This strategy builds on the recent achievements already described and responds to the new ways in which homelessness and support services are delivered.

The vision of this strategy is to:

Deliver a focused and accessible service to prevent homelessness and assist homeless people to find a settled home.

The main objectives are to:

1. provide a service with a focus on preventing or relieving homelessness ensuring those people have access to effective support services
2. ensure that homeless people are supported to secure a settled home
3. work collaboratively in finding housing solutions for those people threatened with homelessness.

In order to achieve these objectives, we have identified five priorities to deliver.

These priorities have emerged from a combination of analysis of the outcomes of the first Homelessness Strategy, consultation with our partners and public, the changing national and local context which is a response to the ongoing welfare reforms and new legislation, in particular the Homelessness Reduction Act.

The five priorities are set out below and they are explored in further detail, together with actions, in section 6:

Priority one: Homelessness prevention

We will continue to focus on preventing homelessness.

Priority two: Tackling rough sleeping

Central government has set a target to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and to eliminate it altogether by 2027. We will continue to invest in tackling rough sleeping. One of the ways that we will do this is by establishing a No Second Night Out partnership which will support the Government's aims.

Priority three: Supporting vulnerable households

We will ensure that our services remain accessible to all and that there is targeted support for the most vulnerable households, such as those affected by domestic abuse, people leaving care, people with mental health issues, members of the Armed Forces and prison leavers.

Priority four: Increasing accommodation options

We will respond to the challenging local housing market conditions enabling a wide range of accommodation options, including providing advice and support to landlords to help develop a private rented sector that is better suited to local needs.

Priority five: Supporting the implementation of welfare reforms

We will work in partnership with support agencies and services to offer solutions that help people to maintain tenancies.

3. National and regional context

National and regional homelessness trends

The Homelessness Monitor: England 2017 commissioned by *Crisis* provides a useful overview of the current national and regional context in terms of homelessness.

The report shows that homelessness application acceptance rates have gone up nationally and regionally in recent years. At nearly 58,000, annual homelessness application acceptances were some 18,000 higher across England in 2015/16 than in 2009/10. With a rise of 6% over the past year, application acceptances now stand 44% above their 2009/10 low point.

The number of people sleeping rough has been increasing nationally for a number of years and more recently in West Suffolk (see Appendix A for more detail of homelessness and rough sleeping data).

Statutory duties, policy and guidance

The Homelessness Reduction Act

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 changes the way homelessness advice and assistance is provided by councils.

The Act reforms the homelessness duties to ensure that councils provide meaningful advice and assistance to those people who do not fall into a priority need category or who have been found to be intentionally homeless.

In particular this is likely to have a positive impact for singles or couples with no children where previously legislation had not prescribed much to assist them.

The Act has introduced the following:

1. The definition of being threatened with homelessness be extended from 28 days to 56 days, meaning councils can start working with people at an earlier date.
2. Councils must accept a valid 'section 21' notice as evidence that the tenant is threatened with homelessness.
3. A greater duty to give advice and information to a wider range of people at a much earlier stage than previously offered.
4. Duty to assess all eligible applicants' cases and agree a plan (known as the 'personal housing plan').
5. The creation of a stronger prevention duty for anyone threatened with homelessness and eligible for assistance. This can involve assisting them to stay in their current accommodation, or helping them to find a new place to live.
6. A new relief duty which is available to all those who are homeless, have a local connection and are eligible regardless of whether they have a priority need. It requires councils to take reasonable steps to help secure

accommodation. This help could be, for example, the provision of a rent deposit or debt advice. Those who have a priority need (for example they have dependent children or are vulnerable in some way) may be provided with interim accommodation while the council carries out the reasonable steps.

7. Duties to help to secure accommodation.
8. Incentives to people to engage in prevention and relief work by allowing councils to discharge their prevention and relief duties if an applicant unreasonably refuses to cooperate with the course of action proposed.
9. A right for councils to discharge the prevention and relief duties by providing accommodation with a reasonable prospect of this being available for at least the next six months. This does *not* need to be social housing.
10. A right to a review at the prevention, relief and main duty stages to ensure councils are held to account.
11. A requirement to collect data in order to monitor the overall effectiveness of the new legislation.

West Suffolk councils already take steps at an early stage to help those threatened with homelessness. However, the additional requirements as a result of the Homelessness Reduction Act have also meant a redesign of the way services are provided, with additional members of staff and a new approach to the way advice and support is provided.

Other legislation

In addition, the housing team has to consider duties under the following and/or are impacted by the following legislation:

- Localism Act 2011
- Welfare Reform Act 2012
- Deregulation Act 2015
- Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016
- Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities 2018
- Housing and Planning Act 2016
- National Planning Policy Framework
- Health and Social Care Act 2012
- Children and Social Care Act 2017

4. The West Suffolk context

This section provides an overview of the West Suffolk area with a focus on its population, deprivation, economic activity and housing availability.

More detailed data on housing demand and homelessness is contained in Appendix A.

Population

West Suffolk's population is set to grow significantly in the future, and with an ageing demographic in comparison with many parts of the country. This poses challenges for the councils in ensuring the right kinds of housing, together with employment and infrastructure, are available for our growing population in both urban and rural areas.

The ONS 2016 Mid-year population estimates that the total population of West Suffolk in 2016 was 177,385. It shows that 9.3% of West Suffolk's population was over 75 (compared to 8.1% of England's population). Between 2017 and 2030, the population of West Suffolk is predicted to grow by 8% (compared to 9% in England as a whole). The over 75s population is predicted to grow by 55% (compared to 47% in England as a whole).¹

This clearly presents West Suffolk with significant challenges in terms of the increased population of over 75 year olds and how we help meet their needs.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) provides indicators of deprivation at local authority and lower super output area level (LSOA). Lower super output areas are a statistical geography and are smaller in size than wards. They are a statistical cluster of around 1,500 people.

There are seven domains that look at deprivation and together they represent the IMD.

Ranked out of 326 local authorities where 1 = most deprived		
Domain	Rank	
	Forest Heath	St Edmundsbury
Overall IMD rank	140	196
Income	208	240
Employment	250	230
Education	20	129
Health	180	203
Crime	140	198
Barriers to Services	26	32
Living Environment	187	257

Forest Heath ranks poorly for education and both Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury rank poorly for barriers to services.

¹ ONS 2014-based Sub-National population projections

There are 32,844 LSOAs in England, 66 of these are in St Edmundsbury and 34 in Forest Heath. Of the 100 LSOAs in West Suffolk only two (2%) are in the **most** deprived 20% of all LSOAs nationally. 14 (14%) are in the 20% **least** deprived LSOAs in England.

Socio-economic

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

In 2016 workers in West Suffolk were employed in the five following main sectors: business administration and support services, manufacturing, health, retail and accommodation and food services².

Economic activity

Between October 2016 and September 2017, the percentage of 16-64 year olds who were economically active³ was 83.4% across West Suffolk compared to 78.1% for Great Britain as a whole.

In 2015, 83.3% of West Suffolk employees worked in services, 11.1% worked in manufacturing and 4.4% worked in construction.⁴

The weekly median pay (gross) for full time workers in Forest Heath in 2017 was £506.70, in St Edmundsbury it was £536.40 compared to £555.30 in England.⁵

Housing affordability

The infographic below shows that compared to earnings, property in West Suffolk is less affordable than England as a whole which has a significant impact on options available to local people and on the services we deliver.

As of November 2017, the percentage of out-of-work benefits claimants in Forest Heath was 0.7%, in St Edmundsbury it was 1.1% and across Great Britain it was 1.9%.⁶

It should be noted that under Universal Credit, a broader span of claimants are required to look for work than under Jobseeker's Allowance. As Universal Credit Service is rolled out in particular areas, the number of people recorded as being on the Claimant Count is likely to rise.

² Business Register and Employment Survey

³ NOMIS Annual population survey October 2016 to September 2017

⁴ NOMIS Annual population survey 2015

⁵ Annual survey of hours and earnings

⁶ ONS claimant count

Affordability

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



Ratio of average earnings (full time workers' mean gross annual pay) : (Mean semi-detached property price). Comparisons using ratios of lower quartile earnings to lower quartile house prices can also be used, which show further problems with affordability in West Suffolk. As a rule of thumb, house prices of up to 3 - 3.5 times household income are considered affordable

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

Health and wellbeing

Housing that meets the minimum standard and is suitable and warm, is essential to ensure the health and wellbeing of residents. We understand that housing is a wider determinant of health.

Male life expectancy is 80.5 years in Forest Heath and 81.9 years in St Edmundsbury compared to 79.5 years in England. Female life expectancy is 83.3 years in Forest Heath and 84.6 years in St Edmundsbury compared to 83.1 years in England. Across Suffolk, healthy life expectancy for males is 65.1 years compared to 63.4 years in England. Healthy life expectancy for females across Suffolk is 66.7 compared to 64.1 years in England.⁷ Healthy life expectancy is an estimate of the number of years lived in "very good" or "good" general health, based on how individuals perceive their general health.

In 2015, the top three causes of death across West Suffolk were cancers, diseases of the circulatory system and diseases of the respiratory system.⁸

In 2015/16, the prevalence of depression in Suffolk was 8.9% compared with 8.3% in England.⁹ In 2015/16, the prevalence of severe mental illness for those registered with a GP was 0.78%, this is lower than the England value of 0.990% and equates to 1,919 individuals in West Suffolk. In 2014/15, 7,516 of people who are registered with a GP in Suffolk have been diagnosed with schizophrenia, bipolar or other psychoses.¹⁰

In 2015/16 a personal wellbeing survey¹¹ for those aged 16+ in Suffolk found that: 1 in 3 reported low happiness (7-8%), 1 in 5 reported high anxiety

⁷ www.phoutcomes.info (2013-15)

⁸ NOMIS

⁹ HealthySuffolk.org.uk/JSNA

¹⁰ www.fingertips.phe.org mental health profile MH JSNA

¹¹ ONS.gov.uk/people, population and community/wellbeing/localauthorityupdate2015to2016

(18.8%), 1 in 25 reported low life satisfaction (4.4%) and 1 in 30 reported low worthwhileness (3.5%).

5. Strategic context

This section outlines the key strategies which need to be taken into account alongside the delivery of this Homelessness Reduction Strategy.

West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2018-2020

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

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

To achieve this vision, the focus will be on the three main strategic priorities which are:

1. growth in West Suffolk's economy for the benefit of all our residents and UK plc
2. resilient families and communities that are healthy and active
3. increased and improved provision of appropriate housing in West Suffolk both in our towns and rural areas.

With a particular focus on housing, the priorities as set out in the Strategic Framework are to:

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

West Suffolk Housing Strategy

Our Housing Strategy sets out the councils' priorities for increasing the overall supply of housing in the area. The Strategy will be developed later in 2018 and will support the delivery of the councils' housing priorities which are:

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

Domestic Abuse Strategy

The Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board has widened its responsibilities around domestic abuse to include Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) which is

in line with a refreshed strategy published by central Government. It acknowledges however that victim and perpetrators can be women, men, girls and boys.

The vision for Suffolk's Violence Against Women and Girls Multi Agency Strategy is as follows:

Ensure that victims of abuse in Suffolk are safe and supported.

To achieve this the main objectives are:

1. to reduce the prevalence of all forms of VAWG in Suffolk
2. increase the early identification and intervention with victims of VAWG
3. build cross-agency skills and capability to provide effective VAWG advice and support services
4. improve the criminal justice response to VAWG.

Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Suffolk's Health and Wellbeing Board was established in 2013 and it has a duty to encourage integrated working between health, care, police and other public services in order to improve wellbeing outcomes for Suffolk. It has an important strategic influence in encouraging joined up, integrated and system wide working to improve outcomes for local people.

In 2015, Suffolk's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2012-2022 was refreshed. The following strategic outcomes for years 4-6 of the strategy were agreed:

- Outcome one: Every child in Suffolk has the best start in life
- Outcome two: Improving independent life for people with physical and learning disabilities
- Outcome three: Older people in Suffolk have a good quality of life
- Outcome four: People in Suffolk have the opportunity to improve their mental health and wellbeing

Given that housing is a wider determinate of health, it is important that the actions within this strategy support the delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Board's outcomes. Furthermore, given that the councils require the support and expertise of other agencies to meet its homelessness duties, it is vital that effective partnership working is central to this strategy. While the statutory duty to prevent and relieve homelessness rest with the councils, the reality is that input from a wide cross-section of public and voluntary partners is needed to find and retain accommodation.

Housing Forum

The councils' Chair the West Suffolk Housing Forum. The purpose of this forum is to bring together statutory and voluntary sector partners, including housing providers, to support some of the most vulnerable individuals and households. Cases discussed are usually about those people who are sleeping rough or those who are struggling to maintain tenancies. The aim is to have a joint

approach with all organisations so that information can be shared and action co-ordinated. Any organisation can add cases for discussion and outcomes are shared.

Working in partnership

The councils work closely with a range of partners in the statutory and voluntary sector and recognise that there are a range of factors that contribute to homelessness. Furthermore the solutions for these can only be found by partners working together as part of a coherent approach to tackling homelessness. Examples of joint working include:

Suffolk and Cambridgeshire partnerships: A number of Suffolk and Cambridge-sub region partnership meetings are in place to provide a forum for senior managers to discuss best practice, sharing resources and agreeing collective training and development. They also provides an opportunity for organisations to discuss strategic and operational matters with a wider range of district housing authorities.

Joint pathways for support: Suffolk housing authorities are working together to develop pathways for support, particularly for vulnerable individuals such as people with mental health issues, people leaving care, people leaving prison. These pathways will provide consistency of support for the individuals and enable organisations working across the county (and wider) to understand the requirements of housing teams.

Joint staffing: The councils continue to explore opportunities for sharing resources, including joint staffing posts, to increase resilience and access to specialist skills and support services. Joint posts are currently in place for outreach work and for domestic abuse support and the councils will continue to identify opportunities for sharing staff with other organisations where there is mutual benefit. Further conversations are being explored with partners, particularly in order to increase capacity for helping people with mental health issues.

Universal Credit partnership: The councils have coordinated the local response to Universal Credit to ensure the right level of support is in place and that organisations are able to signpost effectively. The council chairs a partnership of the Citizens Advice Bureau, local housing providers, Jobcentres and the county council.

6. 2018-2023 homelessness priorities

This five year strategy covers the period 2018-2023, and seeks to further strengthen the partnership working in place in West Suffolk and to continue to make significant improvements in alleviating homelessness.

We will continue to work to prevent homelessness and help local families and individuals. This will be achieved through the adoption of the following five inter-relating priorities. Key actions across each of the five priorities are detailed in the delivery plan attached as Appendix B.

Our priorities and actions are aligned with our Strategic Plan 2018-2020 and with the Housing Strategy.

The five priorities are:

Priority one: Homelessness prevention

We will continue to focus on prevention of homelessness in the first instance as has been our strategy prior to its emphasis in the Homelessness Reduction Act. We will work in partnership with residents, communities, registered providers and other partner organisations to prevent homelessness and ensure families and individuals are appropriately housed.

We know that many people are experiencing housing difficulties and sometimes this can reach a crisis point before they ask for advice from homelessness services. We want to reach people earlier with the right advice, practical help and support to help them to either keep their current home or move home in a planned way rather than through eviction.

The Homelessness Reduction Act enables us to support people much earlier in the process (56 days as opposed to 28 days). It also places a duty on public sector organisations to refer cases to us who they consider to be homeless or threatened with homelessness. This statutory duty does not include registered providers (housing associations). We have, however, already put in place local arrangements for these referrals so that support can be provided at a much earlier stage.

The Act strengthens our duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants including those who do not have priority need or those who may be considered intentionally homeless and regardless of local connection. Given the increased number of people who will require support, we must make sure that responses are both timely and every contact is made to count whether directly to housing or with other services.

The housing team must report to Government each quarter detailing what prevention activity has been undertaken. In order for the council to discharge the prevention and relief duties, it has to be satisfied that accommodation is available and that there is a reasonable prospect of this being available for at least the next six months. This accommodation could be social housing or private housing. As a consequence, the councils will need to provide advice and

information to applicants to ensure that they are fully aware of all accommodation options available to them. Furthermore, given the lack of social housing availability, the affordability of housing and the costs in the private rented sector, the councils will need to be proactive and enable different accommodation options. This will include boosting the availability of affordable private rented homes (see priority four for more detail).

To deliver this priority we will:

- Provide high quality timely advice to all residents on their housing options.
- For people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, we will agree a personal housing plan that sets out the actions they can take and we will take to enable the applicant to help themselves. We will review our casework management system to ensure we can monitor progress and report on the outcomes of advice given.
- Identify people at risk of homelessness at an earlier stage and develop interventions to prevent them from being threatened with or becoming homeless.
- Identify ways to encourage tenancy sustainment and prevent recurring homelessness by helping people sustain settled accommodation.
- Provide tailored advice for people at greater risk of homelessness including young single people, people released from prison, people leaving care, victims of domestic abuse, former members of the armed forces, people leaving hospital, people with learning difficulties, people with mental health issues and Gypsies and Travellers (also linked to actions around priority three).
- Develop a prevention toolkit, training and advice to help organisations respond to the risk of homelessness at an earlier stage.
- Ensure that the statutory and voluntary sector are aware of the requirements and expectations of the Homelessness Reduction Act so that they can provide the right support and advice.
- With partners, agree clear pathways and referral routes. This will include public bodies that will have a new duty to refer cases as well as implement protocols for information sharing between services working with customers at risk of homelessness.
- Improve our data collection and recording. Use data and predictive analysis to help target resources to prevent homelessness and identify and interact with people in need of support and advice, in order to prevent homelessness from occurring. This will include developing local community based responses offering specialist advice and signposting to services in those geographical areas identified as having higher levels of homelessness.
- Make better use of debt and financial advice to improve prevention work.
- Better align assessment processes with statutory services and explore housing issues where appropriate as a key line of questioning.
- Work with partners through the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure that the health benefits of individuals and families having a settled home, remain high on its agenda.
- Ensure that people in temporary accommodation are supported to access services and ensure that referrals are made to relevant floating support.

Floating support provides the flexibility to support people wherever they are living.

Priority two: Tackling rough sleeping

Central government has set a target to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and to eliminate it altogether by 2027. We will continue to invest in alleviating rough sleeping by establishing a No Second Night Out partnership which will support the Government's aims.

We want to see an end to rough sleeping in West Suffolk by doing more to prevent the risk and improve the support that is available. The main focus currently is on dealing with rough sleeping at crisis point or mitigating the impact. There are a range of services but the activity needs more co-ordination. We will concentrate more on preventing rough sleeping happening and improving the effectiveness of services for entrenched rough sleepers.

The Government defines rough sleeping as people sleeping or bedded down in the open air and people in buildings or other places not designed for habitation. A long term rough sleeper is defined as someone who has been identified as sleeping rough on at least 50 occasions over a five year period.

People who become entrenched in rough sleeping are more likely to have complex mental and physical health needs and a shortened life expectancy. Most have previously been involved in programmes of support and have lost permanent and supported housing. Supporting entrenched rough sleepers will link to our work under priority three to improve partnership work for the most vulnerable to homelessness.

West Suffolk has seen a sharp increase in numbers of rough sleepers. We have, and will continue, to work hard with partners to address that situation. In 2011, there were four rough sleepers across West Suffolk and this number increased to 29 rough sleepers¹² in 2017. Of the 325 local authorities, in 2017 West Suffolk ranked 284 out of 325 (a ranking of 325 indicates the highest number of rough sleepers per 1000 head of population).

To deliver this priority we will:

- Use dedicated support to work with rough sleepers and try to address the problems that lead to rough sleeping and being at risk of sleeping rough. This will include the development of a 'No Second Night Out' partnership. No Second Night Out is aimed at ensuring that people who spend a night sleeping rough for the first time do not spend a second night on the streets. This means that rapid support is provided to new rough sleepers so that they do not have to sleep out for a second night.
- Implement pathways for tackling homelessness, including identifying risks early, promoting self-help and resilience for those who are able to help themselves and proactive help for those who are too vulnerable to help themselves.

¹² ONS data: Rough sleepers in England: autumn 2017 (published 25 January 2018)

- Deliver robust services for those who are homeless. Our work will recognise that some people need more than just a roof over their head. We will work in partnership to provide support and stability to their lives, with the aim of breaking the cycle of homelessness.
- Work with local authorities across Suffolk and the Cambridge sub-region to improve the service offer and outcomes over the next two years including support to people leaving institutions (for example hospitals and prisons).
- Further enhance coordination across statutory, commissioned and voluntary services that are working with rough sleepers to coordinate activity, share information and work together on initiatives.
- Continue to access external funding to support outreach and prevention activity, building on the success of previous bids for funding from government and Suffolk Public Health.
- Continue to provide Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP)
- Help people with entrenched patterns of rough sleeping more holistically through better collaborative working and support tailored to their individual needs.
- If people have come from another area, should they wish, we will reconnect them back to their local community where they have support that they need. There will however be some occasions when there is a good reason why they shouldn't return to a previous area, and naturally we will respect this.
- Provide effective information to the public about rough sleeping and how they can help if they have concerns.

Priority three: Support for vulnerable households

We will ensure that our services remain accessible to all whilst ensuring there is targeted support for the most vulnerable households. We aim to increase the resilience of people and communities, equip them with the necessary skills to prevent crises, such as homelessness, before they occur.

For some people who become homeless the provision of suitable accommodation is the only problem that needs to be addressed. However, many other people can become homeless or threatened by homelessness due to a range of support needs. Some vulnerable groups are at a greater risk of homelessness and/or repeated incidence of housing instability. This includes young people, those with complex needs, substance misusers and victims of domestic abuse. There are also groups with very complex needs who may be substance misusers, have mental health issues and have had contact with the criminal justice system. We will improve our targeted interventions and partnership work to help people find lasting housing solutions. This includes how we assess needs and plan support jointly across agencies and design the specific services to be provided.

By working with our partners to provide targeted, specialist support, we endeavour to limit the number of vulnerable people who become homeless. We aim to achieve this by developing new ways of co-commissioning services with partners, exploring the Housing First model. The model is a new evidence-based approach to supporting people with high needs and a history of entrenched or repeat homelessness to live in their own homes. The aim is to

provide a stable and independent home with intensive personalised support to people with multiple and complex needs.

We will continue to influence commissioning and services provided by other organisations to ensure there is effective support in place for those who need it.

To deliver this priority we will:

- Explore options for the provision of more temporary accommodation, in order to house individuals and families, including those who have experienced domestic abuse.
- Support the monitoring of housing related support, we will work with partners to identify the resources that are available to meet the support needs of all those groups that are at high risk of homelessness.
- Explore the Housing First model and continue to influence commissioning decisions, made by other agencies, in order that contracts support the outcomes we are aiming to achieve and that appropriate resources are allocated to West Suffolk.
- Continue to monitor and review pathways and referral processes for vulnerable groups to ensure that they provide the right level of support and are fit for purpose.
- Work with partners across Suffolk to ensure there is appropriate provision of domestic abuse support and accommodation, including building on the satellite accommodation already in place.
- Continue to identify opportunities to share resourcing, including staff, to support vulnerable households. Share posts and have funding in place to support domestic abuse, and rough sleepers.
- Explore opportunities to increase access to mental health services with a view to promoting these services to housing customers.
- Continue to operate the Housing Forum to provide a multi-agency approach to vulnerable customers, including those who are rough sleeping and those in supported accommodation.
- Continue to hold and attend case management meetings with agencies, including adult and children services, to help prevent the most vulnerable families from becoming homeless.

Priority four: Increasing accommodation options

We need to improve the range of housing options available to both prevent homelessness and meet rehousing needs. As well as providing housing, we also want to improve the support available to help people keep their home and live independently. The West Suffolk Housing Strategy sets out in detail how the council will use its influence, including through its planning and regulatory services, to increase the supply of housing in the area.

The Housing Team proactively source a wide range of accommodation options, either by direct provision or encouraging providers and commissioners, including: lodging schemes; shared accommodation; six months' tenancies; temporary accommodation; supported accommodation; and increased private sector provision.

We will respond to the challenging local housing market conditions by working collaboratively with, and offering advice and support to people and landlords to develop suitable private rented sector offers.

Having a settled home enables people to access support services, integrate into their local community and to obtain and sustain work and training. We will continue to manage the expectations of customers and ensure that we maximise access and availability not only to social rented accommodation but to other housing options. This approach will help us to meet housing need, prevent homelessness and reduce the use of temporary accommodation.

The homeless legislation expands the circumstances in which we can help an applicant find a private sector tenancy. We will therefore need to increase access to private rented housing for people who we have a duty to rehouse and other groups in housing need. This will help us provide meaningful options for people that we must help under the Homelessness Reduction Act. It enables us to offer more choice of property type and areas as well as recognising that not everybody is looking for a lifetime home.

This presents a challenge, as finding enough properties can be difficult due to the supply of housing, a very competitive housing market which means more people are private renting, the pressure that then puts on social rented accommodation, and issues around benefits.

The lower security of tenure is also an issue as the loss of Assured Shorthold Tenancy is one of the main reasons for homelessness.

To deliver this priority we will:

- Improve access to good quality private rented housing to expand choices and provide affordable housing options for families and individuals. This includes supporting both tenants and landlords in developing new approaches that are attractive to all parties.
- Work with private sector landlords and developers to maximise the use of resources and opportunities for all vulnerable people across West Suffolk.
- Continue to review the effectiveness of the West Suffolk Lettings Partnership to increase access to quality private rented accommodation.
- Encourage private landlords to engage with the council by holding Landlord Forums which share best practice and offer advice and support.
- We will focus more on sustaining tenancies and providing timely advice to prevent a housing crisis arising in the rented sector and working positively with landlords and tenants to improve positive outcomes.
- Work with registered providers and voluntary sector to increase access to accommodation, including: lodging schemes; shared accommodation (particularly for under 35s); temporary accommodation; and tenancies to support move on.
- Continue to influence the provision of supported accommodation by identifying need and demand.
- Support Suffolk County Council to manage its existing contracts, by providing robust operational feedback, and influencing the new contracts from 2020.

- Monitor use of bed and breakfast accommodation to ensure use only in emergency situations. Manage move on as soon as possible to improve the outcomes for individuals and families and reduce cost to the taxpayer.
- Ensure procedures are followed to manage the use of temporary accommodation and when used, to ensure that plans are in place to manage move on.

Priority five: Supporting the implementation of welfare reforms

We will continue to work in partnership with support agencies and services to offer solutions that help households to maintain tenancies. We already support households to maximise their income and to minimise outgoings to ensure they are able to manage rent or mortgage payments. Our Welfare Support and Income Recovery roles support individuals and households and identify ways of supporting them to sustain existing tenancies or to help whilst better accommodation options are found. This can include effective use of Discretionary Housing Payments.

We already work with partners at the Department of Work and Pensions, Jobcentres, Citizens' Advice, Anglia Revenues Partnership and registered housing providers, to ensure there is a collective response to Universal Credit. The partnership ensures there is effective signposting for support and contacts for helping vulnerable people. Digital assistance and personal budgeting support is provided by the council and partner agencies, such as Citizens' Advice.

To deliver this priority we will:

- Continue to develop the role of our Welfare Support Officer and Income Recovery posts to ensure they continue to support people to maximise income and minimise expenditure.
- Develop early intervention protocols with registered providers to ensure tenants retain their accommodation.
- Work with Anglia Revenues Partnership, the Citizens' Advice Bureau, Jobcentres, Department of Works and Pensions and registered providers to support the roll out of Universal Credit.
- Work with partner organisations to provide timely financial advice to households that are homeless or at risk of homelessness due to debt.
- Support private sector landlords to understand the impact of Universal Credit and other welfare reform matters through the West Suffolk Lettings Partnership and Landlords Forum.
- Support customers with financial management advice and signpost to appropriate agencies.
- Work with Anglia Revenues Partnership to ensure effective allocation of Discretionary Housing Payment to support those who are experiencing difficulties as a result of welfare reform.

8. Equality analysis

An equality impact assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken on this strategy to ensure that there are no adverse effects for any particular group. The strategy contains priorities and actions which will be delivered to prevent homelessness and respond to those in housing need. It has relevance to equality because it impacts on West Suffolk's most vulnerable people. Additional support is identified for those who have priority needs, including people who are:

- pregnant or have dependent children
- vulnerable due to old age, mental illness or physical disability
- care leavers and young people
- veterans and those leaving the armed forces
- prison leavers
- people experiencing violence or threats of violence
- people experiencing homelessness as a result of an emergency

9. Governance and delivery of the strategy

The councils are committed to ensuring that together with partners, we have the skills, structures and infrastructure for the delivery of the strategy's priorities over the next five years.

West Suffolk councils are committed to working with partners to ensure that the priorities set out in the Homelessness Reduction Strategy are delivered. The objectives in the Homelessness Reduction Strategy will be achieved using the delivery plan (Appendix B) that identifies the main tasks needed to tackle and prevent homelessness over the next five years. Given the context of rapid change, the delivery plan will be reviewed every year to ensure that the tasks remain relevant and are revised where appropriate. A mid-term review is also planned for 2020.

Progress towards the Homelessness Reduction Strategy delivery plan (Appendix B) will be monitored with feedback, if necessary, on the barriers to delivering the Homelessness Reduction Strategy.

Appendix A: Homelessness data 2018

The purpose of this data and analysis is to support the development of the Homelessness Reduction Strategy. It is intended to determine the extent to which people in West Suffolk are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, assess the likely extent in the future, identify what is currently being done and by whom, and identify what resources are available, to prevent and tackle homelessness.

Data is provided under the following sections:

1. Identifying current and future levels of homelessness
2. Suffolk-wide support
3. Formulating a strategy to prevent homelessness
4. Reviewing accommodation needs and resources

Please note that the national tables for the period 2017/18 will be published in June 2018. The data in this evidence base will be updated when the data becomes available.

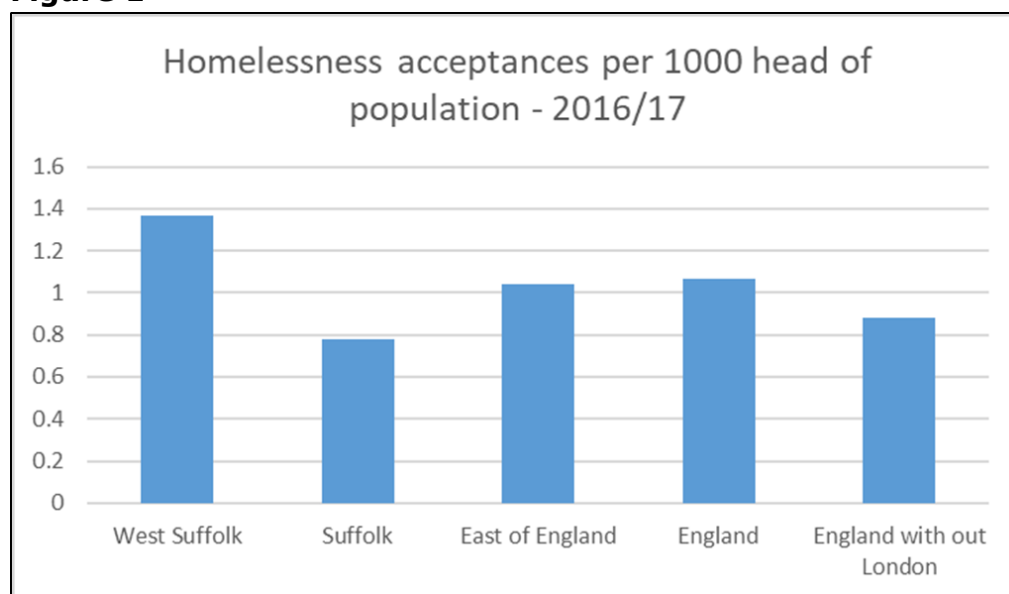
1. Identifying current and future levels of homelessness

Homelessness applications and acceptances

Detailed information on people who have made a homelessness application to West Suffolk councils is recorded on the P1E returns that are sent to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government quarterly (formerly the Department for Communities and Local Government).

The P1E provides data on households who have presented themselves as homeless to the Local Authority, and those who have been accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need. From April 2018, information will be provided to government through the HCLIC system.

Figure 1



Source: DCLG P1E return

Figure 1 shows the number of people accepted as homeless per 1000 head of population. The chart shows that there is a higher number of people being accepted as homeless in West Suffolk than across the rest of England.

Figure 2

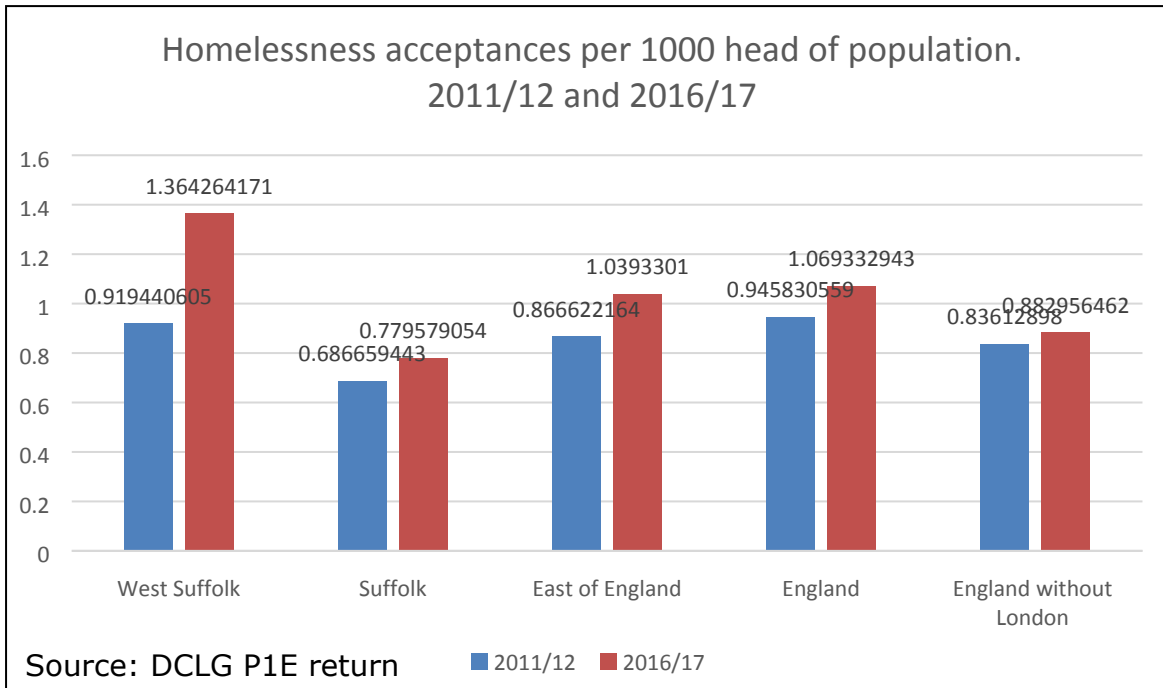
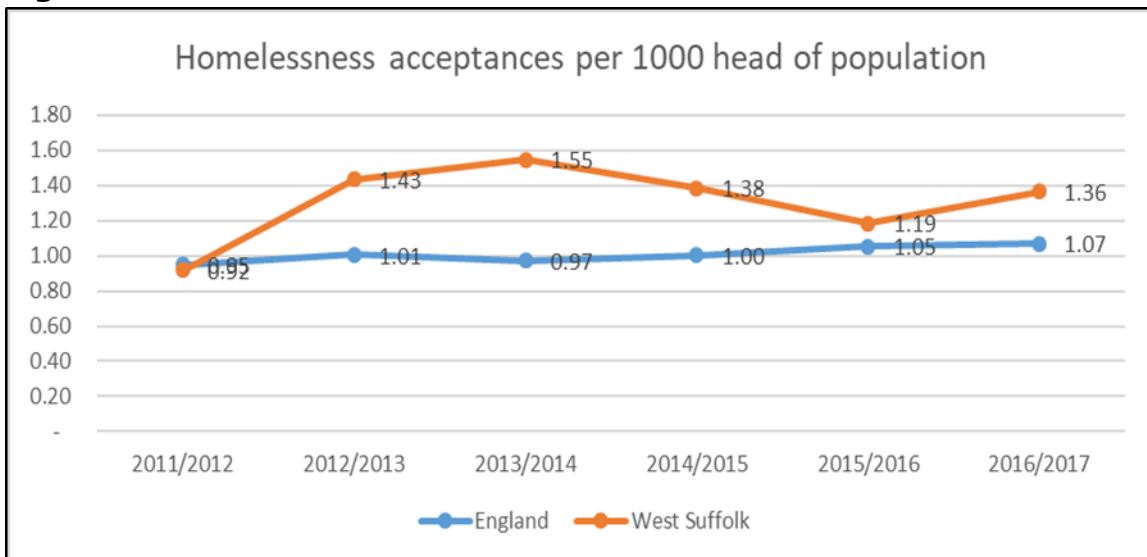


Figure 2 sets out the comparison between homelessness acceptances per 1000 head of population between 2011/12 and 2016/17. Homelessness acceptances have increased in West Suffolk at a faster rate than the rest of England.

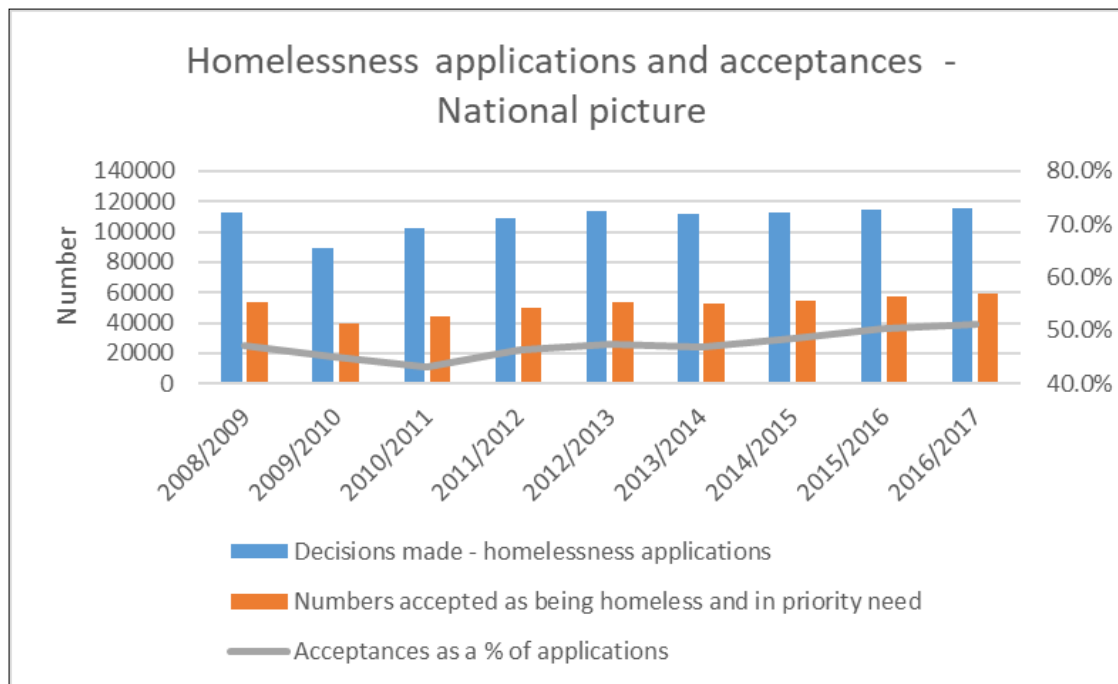
Figure 3



Source: DCLG P1E return

Compared to national trends the number of homeless applications and acceptances by West Suffolk councils has shown an increase in 2016/17. As shown in figure 3, the percentage of accepted homelessness applications remains higher than the national trend.

Figure 4

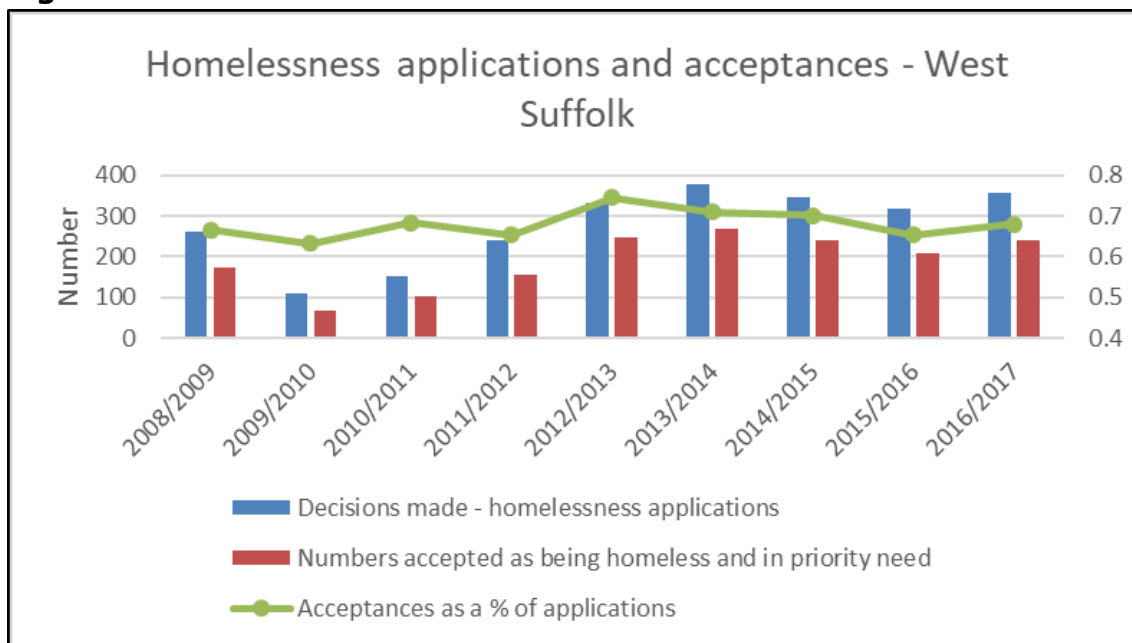


Source: DCLG P1E return

During the 2016/17 financial year, 115,550 decisions were made by local authorities nationally. This is an increase of 0.7 per cent from 114,760 in 2015/16, as shown in figure 4.

During the 2016/17 financial year, 59,100 households were accepted by local authorities as being owed the main homelessness duty. This is an increase of 2.4 per cent from 57,730 in 2015/16.

Figure 5



Source: DCLG P1E return

During the 2016/17 financial year, 356 decisions were made by West Suffolk councils compared to 320 in 2015/16, this was an overall increase in decisions of 11.25 per cent, as shown in figure 5.

During the 2016/17 financial year, there were 242 households accepted by West Suffolk councils as being owed the homeless duty compared with 209 accepted in 2015/16, this was an overall increase in acceptances of 15.8 per cent.

Figure 6

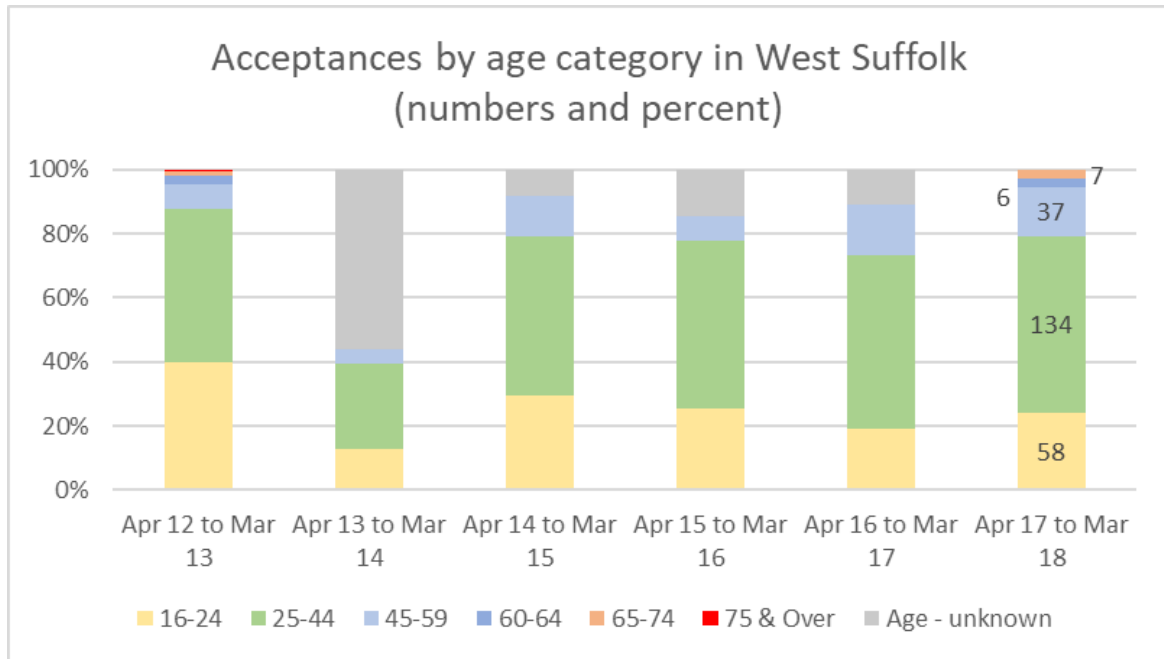
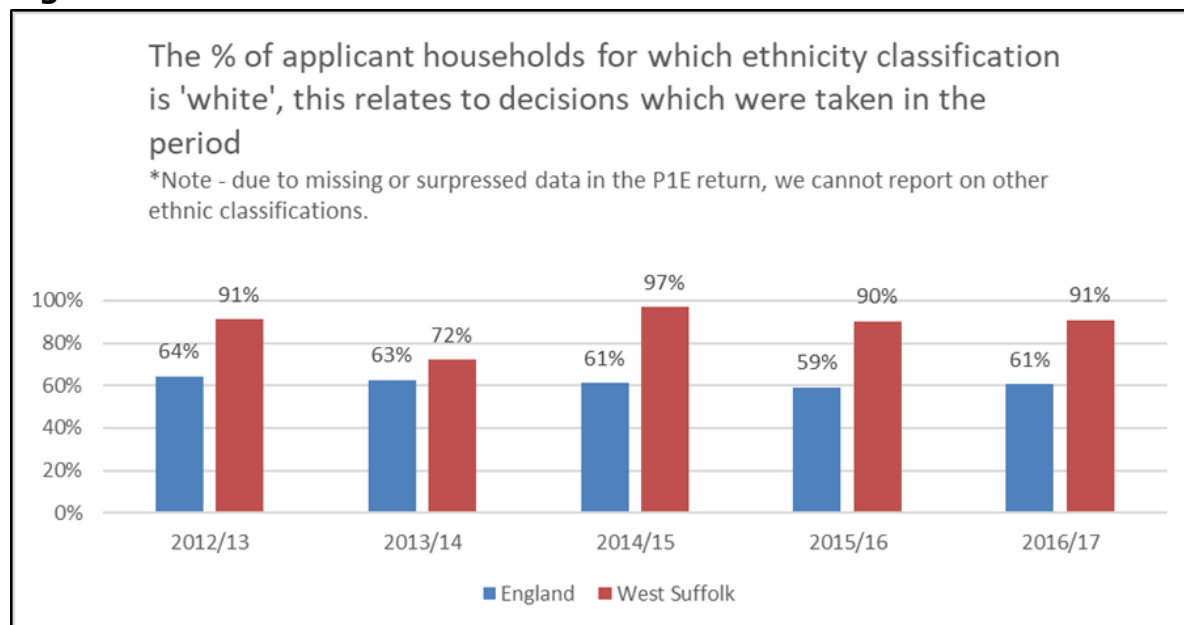


Figure 6 above shows that the highest proportion of homelessness acceptances in 2017/18 is predominantly made up of the 25-44 age category.

Figure 7



Source: DCLG P1E return

In comparison to the rest of England, a significantly higher proportion of households applying for housing is white. However this should be taken in the context that St Edmundsbury is 91.6% white (English, Welsh, Scottish and Northern Ireland) and Forest Heath is 77.2%. It should be noted that there are difficulties in using the figure for Forest Heath due to the large United States Visiting Forces (USVF) population which is more ethnically diverse but not eligible for housing support from the housing authority.

Reasons for loss of last settled home

The three main reasons why households have been accepted as homeless due to loss of their last settled home over the last five years are detailed in figure 8 below.

Consistently both nationally and locally the three main reasons why people have lost their last settled accommodation are due to loss of rented or tied accommodation due to termination of assured short hold tenancy, parent no longer willing to accommodate and violent relationship breakdown involving a partner or associated person. Over the last two years there has been a significant rise in those people that have lost their home due to violent relationship breakdown.

Figure 8

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Parent, family or friend eviction	85 (34%)	27 (10%)	40 (17%)	26 (12%)	18 (7%)	48 (20%)
Relationship breakdown (violent and non violent)	41 (17%)	58 (21%)	33 (14%)	25 (12%)	38 (16%)	73 (30%)
Violence [not involving a partner] and/or harassment	8 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	21 (9%)
Loss of Private Rented or Tied accommodation	85 (34%)	87 (32%)	83 (34%)	75 (36%)	74 (31%)	76 (31%)
Other	28 (11%)	0 (0%)	6 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	24 (10%)
Not stated	0 (0%)	98 (36%)	80 (33%)	83 (40%)	112 (46%)	0 (0%)
Total households	247	270	242	209	242	242

Source: DCLG P1E return

In response to the high number of 'not stated' information, the Council will ensure that procedures are in put in place to collate all appropriate data so that we can better understand the reasons for homelessness and in so doing, reduce the level recorded under this particular heading.

Figure 9

Priority need category	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Applicant homeless in emergency	0	0	0	0	0	6
Households with dependent children	155 (63%)	163 (60%)	153 (63%)	130 (62%)	132 (55%)	131 (54%)
Households with pregnant member & no other dependent children	42	9	6	6	8	24
Aged 16/17 years old	3	0	0	0	0	0
In care and aged 18 to 20	0	0	0	0	0	2
Old age	4	5	0	0	0	4
Physical disability	15	0	0	0	19	20
Mental illness or handicap	14	15	24	7	10	23
Drug dependency	0	0	0	0	0	0
Alcohol dependency	1	0	0	0	0	0
Former asylum seeker	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	1	0	0	0	0	2
Been in care	3	0	0	0	0	0
Served in HM forces	0	0	0	0	0	0

Been in custody/on remand	0	0	0	0	0	2
Violence/threat of violence	9	16	7	6	15	28
- of which Domestic violence	4	5	5	5	12	17
Priority need category not given	0	62	52	60	58	0
Total households	247	270	242	209	242	242

Source: DCLG P1E return

As shown in figure 9, the main priority need category for people accepted as homeless continues to be those households with dependent children. The Housing Options team continues to try to prevent homelessness for families with children by helping to keep them in their homes or helping them to access accommodation in the private rented sector.

Personal and structural factors that may contribute to people becoming homeless

Personal factors that could contribute towards people becoming homeless include **individual** factors such as a lack of qualifications, a lack of social support, debt, poor physical and mental health, and becoming involved with crime at an early age. Factors relating to **family background** such as family breakdown, abuse in childhood and previous experience of family homelessness may also contribute to homelessness. An **institutional background** such as having been in care, in the armed forces or in prison, can also play a part in the variety of reasons that lead to people becoming homeless.

Structural causes of homelessness are often social and economic and outside of the control of the family or individual concerned. These might include unemployment, poverty and lack of affordable housing.

In West Suffolk we have a very good understanding of the factors that are contributing to people becoming homeless. From figure 8 above we know that, after households with dependent children, the groups most affected by homelessness are households with a pregnant member, people with a physical disability, people with a mental illness or handicap and people experiencing violence or being threatened with violence.

Identifying those most likely to become homeless or threatened with homelessness

We recognise how important it is to understand which groups of people are more likely to be threatened with homelessness. This helps us to focus appropriate resources and advice to the right groups and at the right time. We know, from

figure 9 above, that households with dependent children represent the largest proportion of priority need for people accepted as homeless but we are working with colleagues from across Suffolk to look at trends so we can understand which groups may be more likely to become homeless or threatened with homelessness.

The range of factors that may affect future levels of homelessness

There are a range of factors that may affect the future levels of homelessness. Undoubtedly the overall availability of affordable and suitable homes to buy and rent has an impact. The provision of prevention and support services to provide advice and help to those who are more vulnerable is key as it impacts on people's ability to secure and retain accommodation. Some of these factors are addressed in the Homelessness Reduction Strategy and the Housing Strategy. All of these factors require a collective response from a number of different organisations.

2. Suffolk-wide support

Housing Related Support

Housing Related Support is available across Suffolk and it is used to help people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless to help resolve the problems that are contributing to their housing issues. This could include managing their physical or mental health, problems with drugs or alcohol, difficulties with debt, managing finance or problems with staying in work or education.

Single homeless and rough sleepers

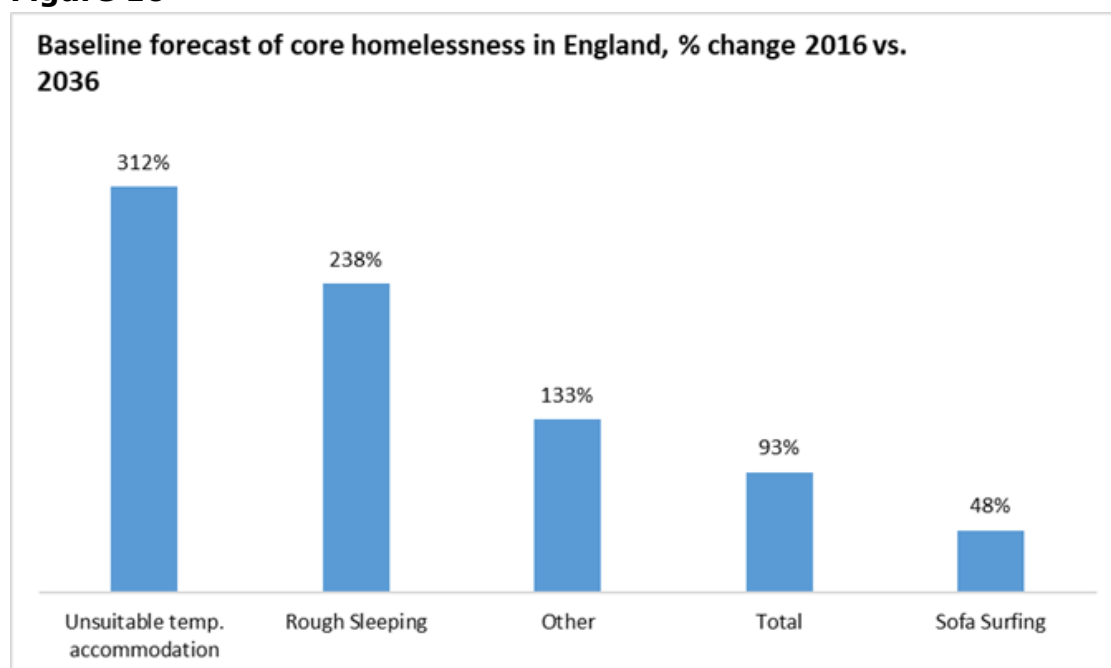
There are a significant number of single homeless people in West Suffolk that the councils did not owe a duty to house because they were not priority need as set out by Homelessness legislation. This however has changed with the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act which came into effect in April 2018.

- **Predicted levels of homelessness**

Data is not currently available at the West Suffolk level. However, the forecast for England is that homelessness will almost double (+93%) across England over the next 20 years. This forecast is based on current assumptions about the labour market and economy alongside current policy settings. It is predicted that this will lead to a 312% increase in people in unsuitable accommodation and a 238% increase in rough sleeping between 2016 and 2036.

Figure 10 below sets out how homelessness is expected to increase by 2036 as compared with 2016.

Figure 10



Source: Crisis report on Homelessness Projections: Core homelessness in Great Britain (summary report).

Figure 11 below shows that the number of rough sleepers across West Suffolk has increased dramatically.

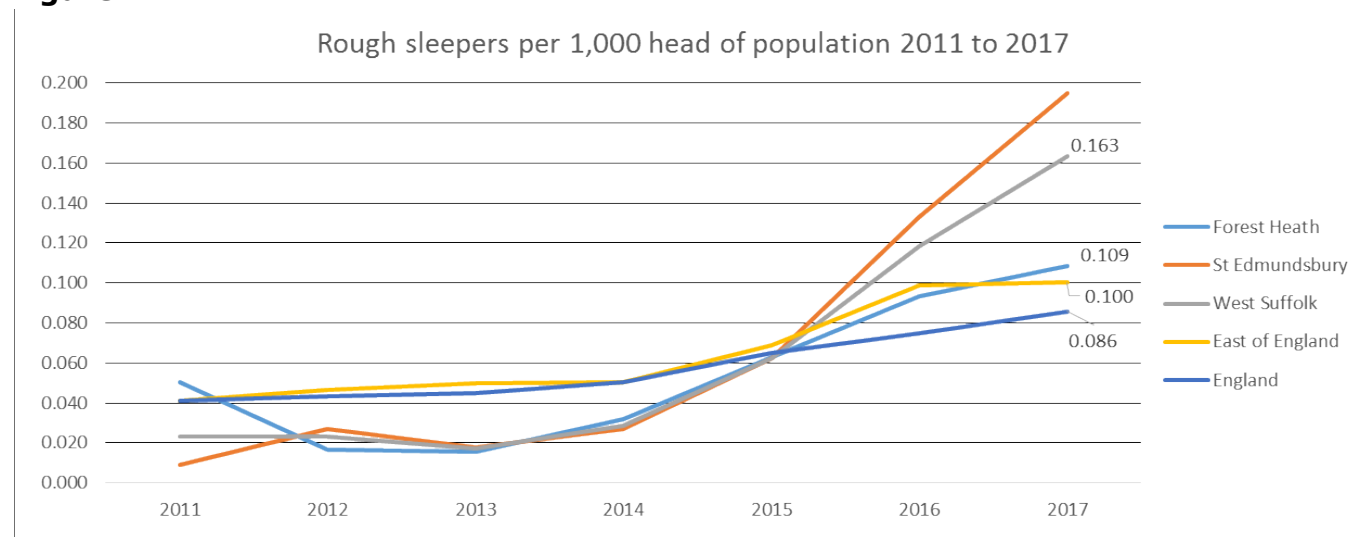
Figure 11



Source: ONS data: Rough sleeping in England: autumn 2017

Figure 12 below shows that rough sleepers per 1,000 head of population have steadily increased for West Suffolk and are now nearly double that of the England figure.

Figure 12



Source: ONS data: Rough sleeping in England: autumn 2017

Support available for young single homeless and rough sleepers through Housing Related Support.

Figure 13 below sets out the current level of Housing Related Support (HRS) housing provision for particular groups of young people:

Figure 13

Age Group	Provider	Locality	Units
Under 21	YMCA	St Edmundsbury	16
Under 21	Riverside – Cangle	St Edmundsbury	25
Under 21	Newmarket Open Door	Forest Heath	15
			56 Units

Age Group	Provider	Locality	Units
Over 18	Tayfen House and move on	St Edmundsbury	50
Over 18	Genesis Bury	St Edmundsbury	28
Over 18	Genesis Haverhill	Forest Heath	23
			101 Units

Levels of demand and the use of commissioned services

As of January 2018 there were 661 applications (509 in St Edmundsbury and 152 in Forest Heath) on the HRS database applying for accommodation-based support within West Suffolk. 390 (59%) of these were for accommodation-based support, with the balance being for an outreach worker or floating support.

The waiting list includes a number of people for whom offers of support have been considered and rejected because the person’s needs are higher than can be met by HRS services. Equally there are applications for people who have subsequently moved on but whose data has not been updated to reflect this. As a result, the figure of 661 is likely to be an overestimate.

Of the 661 applicants, 233 have been considered and declined, with 31 of these being declined three or more times.

In the six months to October 2017, 188 tenants moved-on from HRS services within West Suffolk, creating space for new services to be offered to those on the waiting list. HRS services are expected to consider those in the highest need first.

A number of voluntary sector organisation in West Suffolk provide valuable advice, support and accommodation for the growing number of single homeless people.

Figure 14 below shows the number of applicants whose nearest town is in St Edmundsbury or Forest Heath who are accessing support from other agencies for

example Turning Point, Alcoholics Anonymous, health outreach and/or probation with regards to their mental health or substance misuse.

Figure 14

St Edmundsbury	Forest Heath
118 Mental Health (mainly through GP)	28 Mental Health (mainly through GP)
99 Drug and Alcohol services	13 Drug and Alcohol services
183 in total have accessed a service	38 in total have accessed a service

HRS also takes referrals for young people. Between 1 April 2017 and 31 December 2017 referrals were received from the following agencies (in figure 15 below), split between St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath. Self-referrals are also accepted.

Figure 15

St Edmundsbury	Referrals	Forest Heath	Referrals
Housing Options	9	Housing Options	2
SCC CYPS	19	SCC CYPS	3
Probation	1	Probation	1
Housing Assoc	2	Housing Assoc	3
Lighthouse WA	1	NSFT	2
NSFT	1	Supported Housing	9
Homegroup	2		
Supported Housing	1		
TOTAL	36	Total	20

Assistance from Social Services

With Social Services, across Suffolk we are developing ways of understanding and helping vulnerable adults and children in the area. We do, however, know some of the problems we are facing, as highlighted in the following statistics:

- In 2016/17 a total of **1,972 adults** were in treatment for **substance misuse**.
- In 2015/16, **9%** of the support provided by the **Drug Alcohol Outreach Service was housing related** and this increased to 15% in 2016/17.
- Approximately **30%** of people in the Housing Related support system have a **criminal conviction**.
- It is estimated that 1 in 4 people, which equates to **186,000 people in Suffolk**, are estimated to have **ongoing mental health issues**. It is estimate that 1 in 8 people, which equates to **93,000 people in Suffolk**, are **receiving treatment** in Suffolk.
- In children's services (at the end of 2017) **1,783 early help cases were open**.
- In 2016/17, **292 care leavers were seeking accommodation**.
- As at November 2017, there were 12 care leavers under children's services.

We will continue to work with Suffolk County Council to monitor the effectiveness of its existing Housing Related Support contracts, and to plan for the new contracts which will be in place from 2020. These new contracts will be commissioned on the basis of a new government funding model which has yet to be confirmed.

3. Formulating a strategy to prevent homelessness

Homelessness prevention

From April 2018, new legislation will fundamentally change the work of housing teams and prevention and relief duties will be very different.

Figure 16

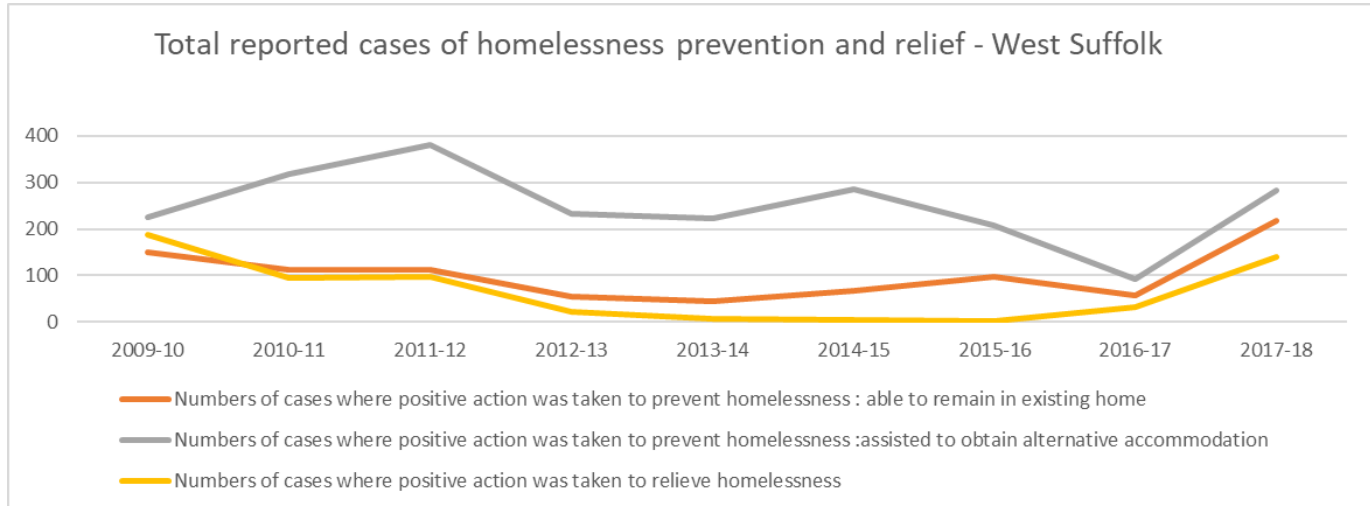


Figure 16 above shows the number of cases where homelessness has been prevented or relieved in West Suffolk.

Possession actions in the private and public sector

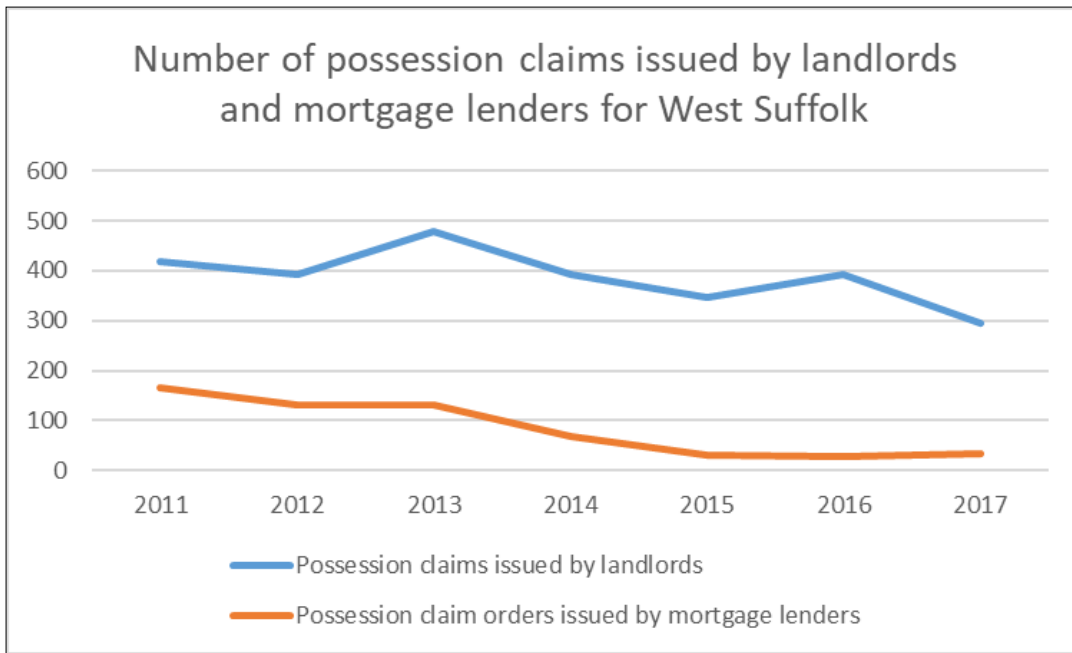
Landlord possession actions

As shown in figure 17 below the number of landlord (social and private) possession claims (or actions) have been decreasing since a peak in 2013.

Mortgage possession actions

Figure 17 further shows that since 2011 the number of mortgage possession claims have fallen. The fall in the number of mortgage possession actions coincides with lower interest rates, a proactive approach from lenders in managing consumers in financial difficulties and other interventions from the Government, such as the Mortgage Rescue Scheme. This fall in the number of mortgage possession claims could also be due to the introduction of the Mortgage Pre-Action Protocol and a decrease in the number of owner-occupiers.

Figure 17



4. Reviewing accommodation needs and resources

In this section we will look at a review of the existing supply of accommodation available to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and identify where there are gaps, or where existing resources do not match the most pressing need.

Social and affordable housing held by the housing authority and private registered providers

Figure 18 below shows the total number of social and affordable housing lets for West Suffolk (the first date relates to when the lettings database Abrisas was first implemented):

Figure 18

Date	Forest Heath	St Edmundsbury	West Suffolk
June 2016 – June 2017	231	343	574
June 2017 – March 2018	344	248	592
Total	575	591	1,166

Source: Abrisas

A further analysis of the data shows that for affordable rent and social rent, two bedroom houses are most frequently bid for across West Suffolk, followed by one bedroom houses. The average affordable rent for a two bedroom house is £131 per week and for social rent the average is £97 per week.

Households in temporary accommodation

Figure 19 below shows the number of families that have been housed in temporary accommodation between 2013 and 2018.

Figure 19

Number of families annually		
Year	Bed and Breakfast	Other temporary accommodation
2013-2014	266	136
2014-2015	203	144
2015-2016	200	163
2016-2017	155	146
2017-2018	255	61 (only goes up to September)

Source: DCLG P1E return

Affordable housing units delivered by Registered Social Landlord partners

Figure 20 below shows the number of affordable housing units delivered by registered provider schemes, where 100% is usually affordable housing, section 106 schemes, and open market schemes where we usually achieve our target of 30% affordable housing that is then managed by a registered provider.

Figure 20

	Registered provider lead schemes (units delivered)	Section 106 schemes (units delivered)
2014/15	101	44
2015/16	87	110
2016/17	101	41
2017/18 (anticipated)	90	149

Support accommodation available for particular groups of people in need of accommodation with support

The data given in the table below is for the whole of Suffolk.

Figure 21

Waiting list	1523	74%	Waiting for accommodation
Waiting list – offer made	3	0%	Waiting for support
Accepted – service pending	12	1%	In accommodation
Accepted – service being provided	315	15%	In accommodation
Manual waiting list	2	0%	On hold
Service finished	152	7%	Accommodation or support ended
Accepted – service finished	62	3%	Accommodation or support ended
Total	2069	100%	

Figure 22 below sets out the services that are available for people with a **mental health diagnosis** who are in the care of the secondary mental health team.

Figure 22

Accommodation	Units Available
Bury St Edmunds	<u>12 self-contained flats</u> 2 of these flats are used for an alternative use; 1 Short Stay Respite Accommodation and 1 Short Stay Emergency

	Supported Accommodation Admission Prevention bed (APS) <u>Assured Short Hold Tenancy</u> There are also 6 flats which although form part of the service at Hospital Road. <u>18 individual flats on one site</u>
Newmarket	3 flats
Haverhill	5 flats
Total	44

Supply and demand for low cost home ownership schemes

Supply

The number of shared ownership schemes or shared equity housing completed in West Suffolk was 17 in 2015/16, 23 in 2016/17 and 60 in 2017/18 (anticipated).

Demand

The number of people in West Suffolk applying for low cost ownership schemes was 191 in 2015, 199 in 2016 and 270 in 2017. As this data shows, the demand has significantly increased since 2015.

We are also working with registered providers to put mechanisms in place so that we know how many low cost home ownership schemes will be forthcoming.

Welfare Reform

The Welfare Reform Act introduced the most fundamental reforms to the social security system for 60 years. People who need help and support in relation to housing have mainly seen impacts from four policy areas:

- The Benefit Cap
- The removal of the spare room subsidy in the social rented sector (under occupation)
- Introduction of Local Council Tax Support

- Universal Credit

Benefit Cap – from April 2013

The maximum level of benefits, including household benefit, has been capped at £500 weekly for families and couples and £350 for single people.

In November 2017, 111 Households across **West Suffolk** were affected by the Benefit Cap. All of these were households with dependent children, with the vast majority (90) being lone parents. 16 of the 111 households had 2 dependent children, 62 had 3 dependent children with the remainder having 4 or more dependent children.

In terms of tenure, the majority of the 111 households that had their benefits capped were in social rented accommodation (90).

The average weekly amount capped amount per household was £50.81 in November 2017, however this average masks a wide range, as there were:

- 19 households that were capped between £50 to £75 per week
- 12 households that were capped £75 to £100 per week
- 18 households were capped between £100 to £200 per week

Lone parents with dependent children in West Suffolk were capped by an average of £51.67 per week.

The removal of the spare room subsidy – from April 2013

Social sector tenants of working age renting from a local authority, housing association or other registered social landlord receive housing support based on household size. A version of this already applies to private tenants.

The allowance is for one bedroom for each person or couple living as part of the household. Two children under 16 of the same gender are expected to share a room, as are two children under 10 regardless of gender.

Household size criteria will also allow one bedroom for a non-resident carer if a tenant or their partner is a disabled person who needs overnight care.

Households with a disabled child may retain housing benefit for an additional room, if the nature and severity of the child's disability disturbs the sleep of the other child that they would normally be expected to share with.

Where a property is deemed 'under occupied' the eligible rent under Housing Benefit will be reduced by 14 per cent for one room and 25 percent if under occupied by two rooms or more.

In **West Suffolk**, of the 8,933 households on housing benefit in August 2017, 7.4% (665) had a reduction of £16.21 per week to their benefits and allowances due to the spare room subsidy being applied.

Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) – from 1 April 2018

• St Edmundsbury Borough Council – Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Residents who have reached State Pension Credit Age have their Council Tax Reduction calculated in the same way as they did under Council Tax Benefit rules (pre April 2013).

The following criteria applies to those residents of working age who make an application for Council Tax Reduction:

- Applicable amounts have increased to match the Housing Benefit rates.
 - Non-dependant deductions for working age have been increased to match those for pension age.
 - New and existing claims for the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) will no longer be awarded the work related component in their applicable amount if the ESA claim does not include it.
 - All new claims from 1 April 2018 - applicable amounts will be restricted to two child premiums except in some limited prescribed circumstances. For existing claims, from 1 April 2018 onwards, child premiums for new additions to the household will no longer be awarded if the two child limit is exceeded except in some limited prescribed circumstances.
 - All new claims from 1 April 2018 for working age residents will no longer have the family premium applied to the applicable amount. This was already removed from pension age residents.
-
- Currently around 4965 residents are in receipt of LCTRS
 - 3052 of working age
 - 1913 of state pension credit age

• Forest Heath District Council – Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Residents who have reached State Pension Credit Age have their Council Tax Reduction calculated in the same way as they did under Council Tax Benefit rules (pre April 2013).

The following criteria applies to those residents of Working Age who make an application for Council Tax Reduction:

- Applicable amounts have increased to match the Housing Benefit rates.
- Non-dependant deductions have been increased to match those for pension age.
- New and existing claims for LCTRS will no longer be awarded the work related component in their applicable amount if the ESA claim does not include it.
- All new claims from 1 April 2018 - applicable amounts will be restricted to two child premiums except in some limited prescribed circumstances. For existing claims, from 1 April 2018 onwards, child premiums for new

additions to the household will no longer be awarded if the two child limit is exceeded except in some limited prescribed circumstances.

- All new claims from 1 April 2018 for working age residents will no longer have the family premium applied to the applicable amount. This was already removed from pension age residents.
- Currently around 3563 residents are in receipt of LCTRS
- 1816 of working age
- 1747 of state pension credit age

Universal Credit – from April 2013

Universal Credit aims to make the welfare system simpler by replacing six benefits and credits with a single monthly payment for those residents on a low income or out of work. It includes support for the costs of housing, children and childcare, as well as support for disabled people and carers.

Between April 2013 and the end of 2017, Universal Credit replaced:

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-based Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit

In St Edmundsbury, full service rollout of Universal Credit began in October 2017 and in Forest Heath it will commence in autumn 2018. 55 per cent of those receiving Universal Credit in St Edmundsbury in December 2017 were not in employment. Over one in four of those receiving Universal Credit in St Edmundsbury were between the age of 16 and 24 and 54 per cent were below 35 years of age. There are approximately 1000 people in St Edmundsbury in receipt of Universal Credit.

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Appendix B: Draft Homelessness Reduction Strategy – delivery plan

This plan has been developed so that we can deliver against the priorities and actions set out in the Homelessness Reduction Strategy. It will be regularly reviewed and updated as we make progress in our priorities and as circumstances change.

We will resource the delivery of our priorities and actions through existing budgets and resources including the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant, and through the use of new burdens funding that local authorities have been allocated to implement the Homelessness Reduction Act. We will also continue to access external funding opportunities through central Government, commissioning and our partners.

Priority One: Homelessness Prevention

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners
1.1	Provide high quality timely advice for all residents on their housing options.	April 2018 – targeted guides available on website and hardcopy Quarterly monitoring and update of advice guides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful homeless preventions. • Increased use of online resources on the West Suffolk website and Homelink page. • Monitoring customer contact to establish if online and self-help has affected the number or frequency of contact. • Increased use of self-help guides to ensure that those who can, are able to access up-to-date and relevant advice about housing options 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Customer Services
1.2	Agree a personal housing plan for anyone homeless or threatened with	Housing Plans in place from April 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal housing plans are developed for all housing applicants and successfully lead 	Housing Options and Homelessness team	Specialist training providers as appropriate

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners
	homelessness. We will review our casework management system to ensure we can monitor progress and report on the outcomes of advice given.	Ongoing training of staff to ensure that plans are robust and that success is measurable using the SMART principles	to the prevention of homelessness. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Locata to ensure that housing plans are tailored and monitored 		
1.3	Identify people at risk of homelessness at an earlier stage and develop interventions to prevent them from being threatened with or becoming homeless.	<p>April 2018 – targeted advice available. Ongoing monitoring.</p> <p>Quarterly monitoring of data for prevention and relief actions.</p> <p>Regular liaison with key partners to discuss case management and strategic support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tailored Housing Options advice information available for those particularly at risk of homelessness. Effective advice and prevention pathways in place to ensure they meet the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act and review to ensure they are effective. Groups who are particularly at risk of homelessness are identified and targeted, early intervention is provided to those who have housing needs, in order to facilitate planned moves rather than crisis management. Fewer homeless individuals and households, lower spend on bed and breakfast and temporary accommodation. 	Housing Options and Homelessness team	<p>Anglia Revenues Partnership, Citizens Advice, Jobcentre.</p> <p>Pathway support provided by a range of agencies, including mental health, probation and social care.</p>

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring to compare with existing statistics and national baseline against the new Act. 		
1.4	Identify ways to encourage tenancy sustainment and prevent recurring homelessness by helping people sustain settled accommodation.	Ongoing caseload management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer instances of contact meaning less cost and time spent housing people. Effective case management of households to ensure support is in place Timely interventions by the Housing Options Solutions Team to provide effective intervention and signpost to support. 	Housing Options and Homelessness team	Landlords, registered providers, housing, Anglia Revenues Partnership, Suffolk County Council and support agencies.
1.5	Provide tailored advice for people at greater risk of homelessness, including young single people, prison leavers, hospital leavers, victims of domestic abuse, people leaving care, former members of the armed forces, people with learning difficulties, people with mental health issues and Gypsies and Travellers (also linked in actions around priority three).	<p>April 2018 – targeted advice available. Ongoing monitoring.</p> <p>Quarterly monitoring data of prevention and relief actions.</p> <p>Regular liaison with key partners to discuss case management and strategic support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Groups at particular risk of homelessness are identified and tailored advice and prevention leaflets/pathways identified. Decrease the likelihood of those most at risk presenting as homeless and requiring the new statutory duty. Track frequency and referral route for these cases. Monitor expenditure for those accepted under these risk factors to see the amount of decrease. 	Housing Options and Homelessness team	Customer Services, Children and Young Peoples Services, health, probation, prisons services, adult care, police, registered providers, Anglia Revenues Partnership

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners
1.6	Develop a prevention toolkit, training and advice to help organisations respond to the risk of homelessness at an earlier stage.	October 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures a standardised approach to information for all partner organisations. Reduces cost of information from multiple streams being referred to the correct department. Reduces the risk of information being lost between partners. 	Housing Options and Homelessness team	Police, registered providers, third sector agencies
1.7	Brief the statutory and voluntary sectors of the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) so they can provide the right support and advice.	Initial briefings completed before April 2018 Programme of briefings in place by October 2018 (duty to refer implementation date).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased knowledge of HRA and approach to reducing homelessness. Improved referral times due to having information on referral process and statutory responsibilities. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Customer Services, Children and Young Peoples Services, health, probation, prisons services, adult care, police, registered providers, Anglia Revenues Partnership
1.8	With partners, agree clear pathways and referral routes. This will include public bodies that will have a new duty to refer. Implement protocols for information sharing between services working with customers at risk of homelessness.	By October 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners have access to effective and efficient referral routes for the Housing Options Service, including an online referral form. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Customer Services, children and young people's services, health, probation, prisons services, adult care, police.

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners
1.9	Improve data collection and recording. Use data and predictive analysis to help target resources to prevent homelessness and identify and interact with people in need of advice and support, in order to prevent homelessness from occurring. This will include developing local community based responses in areas with higher levels of homelessness including specialist advice and signposting.	Use of quarterly data from June 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamline resources and reduce cost at expensive relief stage. Reduced use of temporary accommodation and build more detailed picture of hidden homelessness in the West Suffolk area allowing for pin pointed strategies in housing and provision for families at risk. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	ICT, Housing Options.
1.10	Make better use of debt and financial advice to improve prevention work.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Households that are likely to be at risk identified and signposted or referred to relevant advice services. Timely intervention from the Solution’s Team alleviating crisis situations and referring to ongoing support. Locata reporting on stages of homelessness and those prevented due to financial advice. 	Housing Options and Homelessness team	Citizens Advice Bureau, Housing Options, floating support, customer services.

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners
1.11	Better align assessment processes with statutory services and explore housing issues where appropriate as a key line of questioning.	By December 2018 (and ongoing review).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective use of referral and pathway services • Reduced incidences of crisis management as partners consider housing situation as part of their assessment processes – particularly target hospitals, mental health services and probation. • Reduction in 'Relief' stage homelessness cases. 	Housing Options and Homelessness team	Hospitals, mental health services and probation
1.12	Work with partners through the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure that the health benefits of individuals and families having a settled home remain high on its agenda.	Ongoing (as Health and Wellbeing Board forward plan).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced costs and impact on health and care services. • Increased stability for households and long term community benefits. 	Lead West Suffolk Councillor on Health and Wellbeing Board, Assistant Director – Families and Communities	Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board
1.13	Ensure that people in temporary accommodation are supported to access services and ensure that referrals are made to relevant floating support.	Ongoing case management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces risk of repeat homelessness or impact of existing homelessness on health and wellbeing of the individual or family. 	Housing Options and Homelessness team	Housing options, third sector partners, health services, and other statutory partners.

Priority two: Tackling rough sleeping

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners
2.1	Use dedicated support to work with rough sleepers and try to address the problems that lead to rough sleeping and being at risk of sleeping rough. This will include the development of a 'No Second Night Out' partnership.	Additional outreach support secured (two posts for 12 months) – April 2018. Further outreach and 'in reach' support to be secured as funding opportunities emerge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in the number of rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping. • Reduction in evictions from supported housing 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness and Rough Sleepers – prevention and support worker.	'No Second Night Out Partnership', police, health, care, mental health and substance misuse partners.
2.2	Implement pathways for tackling homelessness: identifying risks early, promoting self-help and resilience for those able to help themselves and proactive help for those who are too vulnerable to help themselves.	Monthly Housing Forum meetings. Ongoing individual case management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful homelessness preventions resulting in lower risk of persistent homelessness and use of bed and breakfast. • Fewer mandatory homelessness case acceptances and lower effect on health and wellbeing services in the area. • Monitoring carried out through conversations and access to Positive Pathways leavers and those that become homeless later. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Home Group and other floating support services
2.3	Deliver robust services for those who are homeless. Working in	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure pathways to accessing support and information are available. 	Rough Sleepers – prevention	Local authorities, third sector partners, police, health

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners
	partnership, provide support and stability to people who are homeless, with the aim of breaking the cycle of homelessness.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor repeat homelessness and identify underlying causes and potential solutions. • Reduction of rough sleepers/homelessness and those at risk of rough sleeping/homelessness. 	and support worker	services and other statutory partners.
2.4	Work with local authorities across Suffolk and the Cambridge sub-region to improve the service offer and outcomes including for those leaving institutions (for example, hospitals and prisons).	Ongoing liaison meetings with hospitals and probation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of rough sleepers/homelessness and those at risk of rough sleeping/homelessness. Lower cost per head due to cross system working. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Local authorities, police, prisons, health and care services.
2.5	Further enhance coordination across statutory, commissioned and voluntary services to coordinate activity, share information and work together on initiatives.	Ongoing – regular series of meetings with key partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in persistent homelessness. • Reduced spend on bed and breakfast. • Reduced workload for outreach workers and those working directly with the homeless/those at risk of homelessness. • Increased knowledge base to aid prevention work. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Local authorities, third sector partners, police, health services and other statutory partners.
2.6	Continue to access external funding to support outreach and prevention activity building on that	As funding opportunities become available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance, and where possible, expansion of services and key homelessness provision. 	Rough Sleepers – prevention and support worker	Local authorities, central Government.

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners
	already secured from government and Suffolk Public Health.				
2.7	Continue to provide Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP).	SWEP provision for winter 2018/19 secured. Winter 2019/20 to be secured by December 2018.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower risk of homeless fatalities or injury incurred due to weather. • Increased chance of outreach and contact with those less likely to engage with statutory services. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Registered housing providers, Suffolk County Council (housing related support).
2.8	Help people with entrenched patterns of rough sleeping more holistically through better collaborative working and support tailored to their individual needs.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of rough sleepers/homelessness and those at risk of rough sleeping/homelessness. • Targeted reporting from outreach, third party organisations and customer services. 	Rough Sleepers – prevention and support worker	Local authorities third sector partners, police, health services and other statutory partners.
2.9	Reconnect those from other areas back with their local community unless there is a good reason why they should not return.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased likelihood of those in need of help receiving help from the appropriate services and established support networks. 	Rough Sleepers – prevention and support worker	Other local authorities
2.10	Provide effective information to the public about rough sleeping and how they can help if they have concerns.	Ongoing communications plan Introduce alternative given	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased public knowledge on referrals and ways to help those threatened with homelessness or those sleeping rough. • Monitor through online traffic and rate of click through to relevant service area or local authority. 	Rough Sleepers – prevention and support worker	Communications Team, Families and Communities Team, voluntary and community groups

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners
		schemes by December 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective use of alternative giving schemes to encourage people to support organisations to assist rough sleepers. 		

Priority three: Support for vulnerable households

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and Monitoring	Lead Officer	Key Partners
3.1	Explore options for the provision of more temporary accommodation to house individuals and families, including those who have experienced domestic abuse.	<p>Ongoing discussions with registered providers.</p> <p>Investment opportunities explored as appropriate (link to Asset Strategy and Plan).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sufficient availability of temporary accommodation bed and breakfast accommodation to meet demand from households who become homeless in an emergency. Effective use of move on accommodation to free up temporary accommodation. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Property Team, registered providers
3.2	Support the monitoring of housing related support (HRS) to identify resources for those groups that are at high risk of homelessness.	<p>HRS placements monitored at monthly Housing Forum.</p> <p>Re-commission of HRS contract by 2020, monitored via Suffolk Housing Board</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased knowledge on referrals and ways to help those threatened with homelessness. Higher proportion of those arriving in the prevent stage rather than the relief stage to allow for lower risk of repeat/persistent homelessness. Effective involvement in the recommission of HRS services (led by Suffolk County Council) providing a contract which prevents and relieves homelessness. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Suffolk County Council Adult Social Care and Children and Young People Services, registered providers, Housing Forum members

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and Monitoring	Lead Officer	Key Partners
3.3	Explore the Housing First model and continue to influence commissioning decisions, made by other agencies, in order that contacts support the outcomes we are aiming to achieve to ensure that appropriate resources are allocated to West Suffolk.	Monthly Housing Forum meeting Monthly Suffolk Housing Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning from Housing First pilots. • Influencing commissioning decisions to support the Housing First model. • Accessing funding to implement the principles of Housing First on individual cases. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Local authorities, central Government, registered providers.
3.4	Continue to monitor and review pathways and referral processes for vulnerable groups to ensure that the right level of support is maintained.	Monthly Housing Forum meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to maintain and improve services to ensure they respond to changing needs of people at risk of homelessness or those seeking advice. • Monitoring varied out through customer feedback, information of prevention and levels of contact with relevant services. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Customer Services, Housing Options, Housing Forum partners
3.5	Work with Suffolk partners to ensure that accommodation and support for victims of domestic abuse is appropriate; and add to pre-existing satellite accommodation.	Suffolk Domestic Abuse Forum meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued access to satellite accommodation for the most vulnerable and those potentially at risk of further domestic violence. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Suffolk’s Violence Against Women and Girls Multi Agency
3.6	Identify and share resources, including staff, to support victims of domestic abuse, and rough sleepers.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted resource management and insight to support individuals and families in need. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Housing options, local authorities, third sector partners, police, health services

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and Monitoring	Lead Officer	Key Partners
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to schemes and methods of tackling domestic violence and its lasting effects. • Monitoring carried out through referrals on Locata and Inform, the support plan system used by outreach services. 	and Rough Sleepers – prevention and support worker	and other statutory partners.
3.7	Explore opportunities to increase access to mental health services with a view to promoting these services to housing customers.	Discussions underway with Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust (NSFT). Seconded post by October 2018 (funding dependent).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure pathways to accessing mental health services for those in need of support. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Mental Health Services and Clinical Commissioning Group
3.8	Continue to operate the Housing Forum to provide a multi-agency approach to vulnerable customers including rough sleepers and those in supported accommodation.	Monthly Housing Forum meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the Housing Forum continues to be fit for purpose and helps the most vulnerable individuals and families in our communities. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Housing Forum partners.
3.9	Continue to hold and attend case management meetings with agencies, including adult and children services, to prevent the most	Ongoing – case meetings as appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer of our most vulnerable families or individuals presenting as homeless. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Children’s Services, Adult Services,

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and Monitoring	Lead Officer	Key Partners
	vulnerable families from becoming homeless.				

Priority four: Increasing accommodation options

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners
4.1	Improve access to good quality private rented housing to expand choices and provide affordable housing options for families and individuals. This includes supporting both tenants and landlords in developing new approaches that are attractive to all parties.	Quarterly Landlord Forums Self-help guides for private renting – April 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective support is in place to enable more households to retain short hold tenancies. Increase the supply of good quality housing in the private rented sector. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Landlords, registered landlords, Housing Forum, West Suffolk Lettings Partnership.
4.2	Work with private sector landlords and developers to maximise the use of resources and opportunities for all vulnerable people across West Suffolk.	Quarterly Landlord Forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring through the private sector offer currently available in the Local Authority area. Note: specific actions relating to developers included within the Housing Strategy 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Landlords, registered providers, growth, planning.
4.3	Review effectiveness of the West Suffolk Lettings Partnership to increase access to quality private rented accommodation.	Initial review undertaken by September 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor number of households housed through the West Suffolk Lettings Partnership Increased satisfaction amongst private sector landlords and tenants using the West Suffolk Lettings Partnership 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	West Suffolk Lettings Partnership

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners
4.4	Hold Landlord Forums to engage with private landlords, share best practice and offer advice and support.	Quarterly meetings established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor attendance at meetings and outcomes. Increased input and support from other partners at the Forum. 	Housing Options and Homelessness team	Anglia Revenues Partnership, Public Health and Housing Team
4.5	Focus on sustaining tenancies and provide advice and support to prevent a housing crisis arising in the rented sector and work with landlords and tenants to improve positive outcomes.	Ongoing monitoring of interventions by the Solutions Team and Advice and Prevention Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer families presenting as homeless due to lack of suitable accommodation. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Landlords, registered providers
4.6	Work with registered providers and voluntary sector to increase access to accommodation including lodging schemes; shared accommodation (especially for under 35s); temporary accommodation and tenancies to support move on.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer families presenting as homeless due to lack of suitable accommodation. Increase in variety of housing options and ease of access for single households outside of priority need. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Landlords, registered providers, third sector partners
4.7	Continuing to influence the provision of supported accommodation by identifying need and demand.	Regular liaison with the Strategic Housing Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer families presenting as homeless due to lack of suitable accommodation. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Strategic Housing Team

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners
4.8	Support Suffolk County Council to manage its existing contracts and influence contracts from 2020 through robust operational feedback (links to action 3.2 above)	HRS placements monitored at monthly Housing Forum Re-commission of HRS contract by 2020, monitored via Suffolk Housing Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the picture of the housing need in Suffolk to ensure we have the correct supply of housing and types of housing around the Suffolk area. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Suffolk County Council
4.9	Monitor use of bed and breakfast accommodation to ensure use only in emergency situations. Manage move on as soon as possible to and improve outcomes for families and individuals and reduce cost to the taxpayer.	Weekly monitoring of bed and breakfast use (reported quarterly to Performance and Audit Committee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure compliance with the legal standards for use of emergency accommodation. 	Housing Options and Homelessness team	
4.10	Ensure procedures are followed to manage the use of temporary accommodation and when used, to ensure that plans are in place to manage move on.	Weekly monitoring of case load. Escalation procedures in place to approve use of temporary accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce spend on temporary accommodation and reduce the number of people at risk of prolonged homelessness. 	Housing Options and Homelessness team	

Priority five: Supporting the implementation of welfare reform

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners
5.1	Continue to develop the role of our Welfare Support Officer and Income Recovery posts to support people to maximise income and minimise expenditure.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decreased likelihood of persistent rent arrears or incorrect benefit allocations leading to decreased likelihood of homelessness. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Anglia Revenues Partnership
5.2	Develop early intervention protocols with registered providers to ensure tenants retain their accommodation.	April 2018 – regular monitoring meetings with providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced risk of loss of short hold tenancies and ensure tenants retain their accommodation. Monitored through contact made with Customer Services and Housing Options by Landlords and those looking to prevent the loss of a short hold tenancies. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Registered providers
5.3	Work with Anglia Revenues Partnership, the Citizens’ Advice Bureau, Jobcentres, Department of Works and Pensions and registered providers to support the roll out of Universal Credit.	Quarterly meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the implementation of welfare reform and provide support to individuals and families receiving Universal Credit. 	Service Manager – Customer Service and Transformation	Anglia Revenues Partnership, Citizens Advice Bureau, Jobcentres, Department of Works and Pensions and registered providers.
5.4	Work with partner organisations to provide timely financial advice to households that are	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced risk of homelessness due to loss of tenancy resulting from financial difficulty. 	Service Manager – Housing	Citizens Advice Bureau, Jobcentres, Department of

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners
	homeless or at risk of homelessness due to debt.			Options and Homelessness	Works and Pensions and registered providers, customer services, housing needs.
5.5	Support private sector landlords to understand the impact of Universal Credit and other welfare reform through the West Suffolk Lettings Partnership and Landlords Forum.	Quarterly Landlord Forum UC guide for landlords launched – May 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased likelihood of retention of assured short hold tenancies and other housing arrangements for those otherwise at risk of homelessness. 	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Anglia Revenues Partnership, the West Suffolk Lettings Partnership and Landlord Forum, private sector landlords, Department of Works and Pensions, citizens advice
5.6	Support customers with financial management advice and signpost to appropriate agencies.	Ongoing – quarterly reports submitted to Department of Works and Pensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate financial advice and signposting provided. Ensuring that customer access support for personal budgeting and digital assistance 	Service Manager – Customer Services and Transformation	Customer services and citizens advice
5.7	Work with Anglia Revenues Partnership to ensure effective allocation of Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) to	Quarterly monitoring of DHP	Increased use of the DHP Budget Increased homeless prevention cases by resolving housing benefit and debt issues	Service Manager – Housing Options and Homelessness	Anglia Revenues Partnership.

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Lead officer	Key partners
	support those who are experiencing difficulties as a result of welfare reform.				

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	Review of the Garden Waste Collection Service (GWCS) - Scoping Report	
Report No:	OAS/FH/18/016	
Report to and dates:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	7 June 2018
Portfolio holders:	Councillor David Bowman Portfolio Holder for Operations Tel: 07711 593737 Email: david.bowman@forest-heath.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Mark Walsh Assistant Director (Operations) Tel: 01284 757300 Email: mark.walsh@westsuffolk.gov.uk Mark Christie Service Manager (Business) Tel: 01638 719220 Email: mark.christie@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	To establish a Joint West Suffolk Task and Finish Group to Review the Garden Waste Collection Service.	
Recommendation:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee: It is RECOMMENDED that a Joint West Suffolk Task and Finish Group be established, as set out in section 2 of this report, to carry out a review of the garden waste collection service and to make recommendations for 2019 onwards.	

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:			
Alternative option(s):		At the commencement of the GWCS it was agreed to undertake a review of the first three years of operation.	
Implications:			
<i>Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to the subscription charge and/or the number of subscribers will impact upon the amount of income generated. 	
<i>Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Associated with the introduction of any changes to the way the current service is administered and delivered operationally. 	
<i>Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to the ICT functionality will need to be assessed and scheduled with consideration of the other ICT projects planned. 	
<i>Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to the current terms and conditions will impact on the current service rules for customers. 	
<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)
	Low/Medium/ High*		Low/Medium/ High*
The Task and Finish Group are not able to reach conclusions on the future of the GWCS in the timeframe and with the available resources before a West Suffolk decision is needed on what should happen in 2019.	Medium	The review is properly resourced, with good quality information provided and appropriate support for engagement and deliberation.	Low
The conclusions are not able to be considered prior to the start date in 2019.	Medium	Ensure all technological implications and other risks are fully understood and assessed before a decision is made.	Low

Potential proposals relating to Garden Waste terms, conditions and processes do not complement the councils' agreed policies, including the target operating model for customer service.	Medium	Ensure all relevant Officers are involved in the review.	Low
There are insufficient resources to deliver any change to the GWCS that is adopted as a result of this review.	High	Ensure all changes are fully costed and the capacity required to implement are identified. Ensure all relevant officers are involved in the review to enable implementation plans to be considered alongside other resource and capacity demands across the councils'.	Medium
Ward(s) affected:	All West Suffolk wards		
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>	FHDC Cabinet 15SEP15 report CAB/FH/15/041 FHDC PASC 25NOV15 report PAS/FH/15/029 FHDC PASC 28Jan16 report PAS/FH/16/003		
Documents attached:	None		

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 West Suffolk councils agreed to the introduction of an annual subscription charge of £40 per bin for the Garden Waste Collection Service (GWCS); to take effect from April 2016.
- 1.1.2 The changes were driven by an impending change to the funding arrangements for organic waste and an expected increase in the organic waste treatment costs. At the time, extensive research was undertaken to review experiences elsewhere and a number of unknown variables were estimated and assumptions made in relation to:
- Household take-up rate;
 - Annual income generated;
 - Cost of waste treatment, due mainly to the procurement of a new contract;
 - Quantity and quality of material collected, considering estimated take-up and the exclusion of kitchen food waste; and
 - The impact of the change on residual waste collections.
- 1.1.3 As a result, the new service was restricted to the inclusion of garden waste only and participation was voluntary. As part of this change, a 50:50 cost/benefit sharing approach between West Suffolk councils and Suffolk County Council (SCC) was agreed by Public Sector Leaders to ensure that no single organisation would be in a worse financial position following the change.
- 1.1.4 Preparations for the introduction of the new service commenced in October 2015, involving an officer team made up of representatives from numerous council departments, reflecting the extent of the changes needed. This included:
- Establishing a subscription price and associated terms and conditions.
 - Development of a marketing plan and communication messages;
 - Development of service application and payment systems in line with the corporate customer access strategy.
 - Procurement of a new waste treatment contract;
 - Design and implementation of IT systems.
- 1.1.5 Overall the approach intended to maximise the use of technology, reduce the ongoing resource demand needed to administer the service and to provide ease of access for customers.
- 1.1.6 During the first two years of operation, around 30,000 households have subscribed each year and the service is generally operating in line with the original assumptions and expectations.
- 1.1.7 However, a review of the GWCS is now proposed for the following reasons:
- i) It was agreed that the subscription charge, and the service itself, would be reviewed after the first three years of operation.

- ii) A new funding arrangement with Suffolk County Council takes effect from April 2019.
- iii) Implementation arrangements for Year 4 of the GWCS will need to commence in October 2018 ready for April 2019.
- iv) IT improvements are required to reflect changes to the corporate CRM, online functionality and the GDPR regulations.
- v) To consider opportunities to amend the customer "application and pay experience" and the associated service terms and conditions.

1.1.8 In addition to the above, at the St Edmundsbury Borough Council meeting on 19 December 2017, Councillor Nettleton gave notice under paragraph 9.1 of the Council Procedure Rules of the following motion:

"That with effect from April 2018 new subscribers to the Brown Bin emptying service be charged at the following rates, depending on the month the subscription is approved:*

April £40: May £37: June £34: July £31: August £28: September £25: October £22: November £19: December £16: January £13: February £10.

No new subscriptions accepted in March as officers busy organising renewals.

**Subject to technical amendments"*

1.1.9 It was agreed that this matter be referred to Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee for consideration. It was recommended and subsequently agreed to review the GWCS once the main 2018/19 subscription period had passed, normally by around June, and discuss the options for Year 4 onwards.

2. Garden Waste Collection Service Review

2.1 It is proposed that a Joint West Suffolk Task and Finish Group be established to carry out a review of the GWCS to make recommendations to the West Suffolk Shadow Executive in Autumn 2018. This is subject to agreement from St Edmundsbury' Overview and Scrutiny Committee who are considering an identical paper at their meeting on 6 June 2018.

Membership

2.2 It is suggested that the Joint Task and Finish Group comprises of **eight Members; four from each council** with **at least one from each council being a member of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee**. The Group would be supported by officers and the Portfolio Holders.

Review period

2.3 The review will be carried out between July and October 2018, in order to feed into final reports for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings in

November, and a report to the Shadow Executive. This will allow time for the recommendations to be taken account of before the arrangements for 2019 need to commence (there are system and communications arrangements that need to be undertaken ahead of the annual soft launch for payments in February).

Scope

2.4 It is proposed that the Review covers a range of issues, as follows:

Finance	Review the current financial position of the GWCS and the subscription charge from April 2019 onwards.
Customer access	Examine incentivising the use of online transactions - for customer convenience and to reduce demand on customer services (channel shift and self-serve). This would require a corporate policy position that could be applied to the GWCS.
Service terms and conditions	Including payment options – how to pay and the payment period.
Impact on residual waste	The policy options for managing garden waste in the black bins.
Communications and marketing	Review the current arrangements for marketing and communication with customers.
Operational changes	Evaluating a different collection day to black and blue bin collections to further reduce service costs.
Impact of proposed changes	Understanding the impact of proposals, including implementation risks, costs and customer impact.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	Decisions Plan: 1 June 2018 to 31 March 2019	
Report No:	OAS/FH/18/017	
Report to and date:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	7 June 2018
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor James Waters Leader of the Council Tel: 01638 719324 Email: james.waters@forest-heath.gov.uk	
Lead Officer:	Christine Brain Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) Tel: 01638 719729 Email: Christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	<p>Attached as Appendix 1 is the Decisions Plan to be considered by Cabinet for the period 1 June 2018 to 31 March 2019.</p> <p>Items which have been added since the Decisions Plan was last published are shaded for Members convenience.</p> <p>Members are asked to note that the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, in most instances will receive reports on Audit and Governance related items published in the Decisions Plan.</p>	
Recommendation:	Members are invited to peruse the Decisions Plan for items on which they would like further information on, or which they feel might benefit from the Committee's involvement.	
Documents attached:	Appendix 1 – Decisions Plan: 1 June 2018 to 31 March 2019	

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Forest Heath District Council

Appendix 1

Decisions Plan

Key Decisions and other executive decisions to be considered

Date: 1 June 2018 to 31 March 2019

Publication Date: 25 May 2018

The following plan shows both the key decisions and other decisions/matters taken in private, that the Cabinet, Joint Committees or Officers under delegated authority, are intending to take up to 31 March 2019. This table is updated on a monthly rolling basis and provides at least 28 clear days' notice of the consideration of any key decisions and of the taking of any items in private.

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

Members of the public may wish to:

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

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

Appendix 1

Expected Decision Date	Subject and Purpose of Decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio Holder Contact Details	Lead Officer Contact Details	Wards Affected	Documents to be submitted
All expected decisions listed below are intended to be taken by the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee, unless specified otherwise								
26/06/18 (NEW ITEM) Page 182	Data Protection Policy In light of changes required due to the introduction of the new General Data Protection Regulations, the Cabinet will be asked to consider a revised Data Protection Policy, which has been jointly produced with St Edmundsbury Borough Council.	Not applicable	(D)	Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee	Ruth Bowman Future Governance 07966 373063	Leah Mickleborough Data Protection Officer 01284 757162	All Wards	Report to Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee
26/06/18	West Suffolk Growth Investment Strategy - Energy Framework Within the West Suffolk Growth Investment Strategy, which was adopted in February 2018, reference was made to a number of opportunities linked to energy and recognised " <i>there is great scope to invest in energy and infrastructure to not only get an economic and financial return, but social benefits too.</i> "	Not applicable	(D)	Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee	Lance Stanbury Planning and Growth 07970 947704	David Collinson Assistant Director (Planning & Regulatory) 01284 757306	All Wards	Report to Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee, including Energy Framework

Expected Decision Date	Subject and Purpose of Decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio Holder Contact Details	Lead Officer Contact Details	Wards Affected	Documents to be submitted
All expected decisions listed below are intended to be taken by the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee, unless specified otherwise								
Page 183	<p>The proposed Energy Framework provides detail around that ambition and set out the policy context for investing in energy and within the local context for West Suffolk.</p> <p>The proposed Energy Framework provides detail around that ambition and set out the policy context for investing in energy and within the local context for West Suffolk.</p>							
26/06/18 <i>(Deferred from 03/04/18)</i>	<p>Homelessness Reduction Strategy</p> <p>The Homelessness Act 2002 requires all councils to review and produce a new Homelessness Strategy at least every five years. A review of the existing Strategy is due in 2018.</p>	Not applicable	(KD)	Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee	Sara Mildmay-White West Suffolk Lead for Housing 01359 270580	Davina Howes Assistant Director (Families and Communities) 01284 757070	All Wards	Report to Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee with draft policy, overview of the existing Homelessness Strategy review and

Expected Decision Date	Subject and Purpose of Decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio Holder Contact Details	Lead Officer Contact Details	Wards Affected	Documents to be submitted
All expected decisions listed below are intended to be taken by the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee, unless specified otherwise								
Page 184	In addition to this, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 comes into force in April 2018 and there are a number of fundamental changes to legislation and additional duties that will need to be reflected in a new Homelessness Strategy for West Suffolk. The draft Strategy will have previously been considered by the FHDC and SEBC Overview and Scrutiny Committees.							results of the consultation
26/06/18	<p>West Suffolk Annual Report 2017/2018</p> <p>Following scrutiny by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Cabinet will be asked to consider the West Suffolk Annual Report 2017/2018, which has been jointly produced with St Edmundsbury Borough Council.</p>	Not applicable	(D)	Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee	James Waters Leader of the Council 07771 621038	Davina Howes Assistant Director (Families and Communities) 01284 757070	All Wards	Report to Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee

Expected Decision Date	Subject and Purpose of Decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio Holder Contact Details	Lead Officer Contact Details	Wards Affected	Documents to be submitted
All expected decisions listed below are intended to be taken by the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee, unless specified otherwise								
24/07/18 <i>(Deferred from 22/05/18)</i> Page 185	Custom and Self Build Interim Policy Statement The Cabinet will be asked to agree an Interim Policy Statement which will be used to assess whether or not an application for self/custom build should be granted planning permission and how the West Suffolk Councils (Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury) plan to meet the self/custom build demand in West Suffolk.	Not applicable	(D)	Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee	Sara Mildmay-White West Suffolk Lead for Housing 01359 270580	Julie Baird Assistant Director (Growth) 01284 757613 Simon Phelan Service Manager (Strategic Housing) 01638 719440	All Wards	Report to Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee, including Interim Policy Statement
24/07/18	Revenues Collection and Performance Write-Offs The Cabinet will be asked to consider writing-off outstanding debts detailed in the exempt Appendices.	Paragraphs 1 and 2	(KD)	Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee	Stephen Edwards Resources and Performance 07904 389982	Rachael Mann Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	All Wards	Report to Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee, with exempt Appendices

Expected Decision Date	Subject and Purpose of Decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio Holder Contact Details	Lead Officer Contact Details	Wards Affected	Documents to be submitted	
All expected decisions listed below are intended to be taken by the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee, unless specified otherwise									
Page 186	Housing Ten Unit Threshold This item has been removed from the Decisions Plan for the foreseeable future until a new approval timeline has been agreed, as required.				Sara Mildmay-White West Suffolk Lead for Housing 01359 270580	Julie Baird Assistant Director (Growth) 01284 747613 Simon Phelan Service Manager (Strategic Housing) 01638 719440			
	04/09/18 <i>(Deferred from 26/06/18)</i>	Mildenhall Hub Following procurement and further design, the Cabinet will be provided with an update and will be asked to sign-off the final capital and revenue budgets for the Mildenhall Hub project before delivery begins.	Not applicable	(R) - Council 26/09/18 (as appropriate)	Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee / Council	James Waters Leader of the Council 07771 621038	Alex Wilson Director 01284 757695	All Wards, but principally Mildenhall and the surrounding areas	Report to Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee, with recommendations to Council
	04/09/18 (NEW ITEM)	Annual Treasury Management Report 2018/2019 and Investment Activity 1 April to 30 June 2018 The Cabinet will be asked to consider the recommendations of the	Not applicable	(R) – Council 26/09/18	Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee / Council	Stephen Edwards Resources and Performance 07904 389982	Rachael Mann Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	All Wards	Recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to Joint Executive

Expected Decision Date	Subject and Purpose of Decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio Holder Contact Details	Lead Officer Contact Details	Wards Affected	Documents to be submitted
All expected decisions listed below are intended to be taken by the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee, unless specified otherwise								
Page 187	Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee regarding the seeking approval for the Annual Treasury Management Report for 2018/2019, which summarised the investment activities for the period 1 April to 30 June 2018.							(Cabinet) Committee and Council
06/11/18 <i>(Deferred from 02/10/18)</i>	<p>Review of the West Suffolk Housing Strategy</p> <p>The West Suffolk Housing Strategy is due to be reviewed in 2018.</p> <p>Through the review of the Housing Strategy, there will be the opportunity to reflect priorities, actions and projects set out in the recently adopted Strategic Plan 2018-2020.</p> <p>Furthermore, there are a number of additional changes to housing legislation that will be reflected in the Housing</p>	Not applicable	(R) - Council 21/11/18	Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee / Council	Sara Mildmay-White West Suffolk Lead for Housing 01359 270580	<p>Davina Howes Assistant Director (Families and Communities) 01284 757070</p> <p>David Collinson Assistant Director (Planning and Growth) 01284 757306</p> <p>Julie Baird Assistant Director (Growth) 01284 757613</p>	All Wards	Report to Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee with draft Strategy, overview of existing Housing Strategy review and results of consultation

Expected Decision Date	Subject and Purpose of Decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio Holder Contact Details	Lead Officer Contact Details	Wards Affected	Documents to be submitted
All expected decisions listed below are intended to be taken by the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee, unless specified otherwise								
Page 188	<p>Strategy.</p> <p>The draft Strategy will have previously been considered by the FHDC and SEBC Overview and Scrutiny Committees.</p>							
<p>06/11/18 <i>(Defered from 02/10/18)</i></p>	<p>West Suffolk Joint Tenancy Strategy The Localism Act (2011) introduced a duty for local authorities to produce a Tenancy Strategy. The Cabinet will be asked to consider a Strategy which outlines both the West Suffolk Councils' (Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury) and Registered Providers' approach to issues which affect tenants living in West Suffolk, including the management and allocation of affordable housing.</p>	Not applicable	(R) – Council 21/11/18	Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee / Council	Sara Mildmay-White West Suffolk Lead for Housing 01359 270580	<p>Julie Baird Assistant Director (Growth) 01284 757613</p> <p>Simon Phelan Service Manager (Strategic Housing) 01638 719440</p>	All Wards	Report to Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee, including Tenancy Strategy

Expected Decision Date	Subject and Purpose of Decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio Holder Contact Details	Lead Officer Contact Details	Wards Affected	Documents to be submitted
All expected decisions listed below are intended to be taken by the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee, unless specified otherwise								
06/11/18	Revenues Collection and Performance Write-Offs The Cabinet will be asked to consider writing-off outstanding debts detailed in the exempt Appendices.	Paragraphs 1 and 2	(KD)	Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee	Stephen Edwards Resources and Performance 07904 389982	Rachael Mann Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	All Wards	Report to Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee
11/12/18 <i>(Deferred from 04/09/18)</i>	West Suffolk Joint Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) The Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides additional guidance to Core Strategy Policies CS5 (St Edmundsbury Borough Council) and CS9 (Forest Heath District Council) 'Affordable Housing' to ensure that applicants and developers have a clear understanding of affordable housing requirements when considering the submission of a planning application.	Not applicable	(R) - Council 19/12/18	Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee / Council	Sara Mildmay-White West Suffolk Lead for Housing 01359 270580	Julie Baird Assistant Director (Growth) 01284 757613 Simon Phelan Service Manager (Strategic Housing) 01638 719440	All Wards	Report to Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee, including Supplementary Planning Document

Expected Decision Date	Subject and Purpose of Decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio Holder Contact Details	Lead Officer Contact Details	Wards Affected	Documents to be submitted
All expected decisions listed below are intended to be taken by the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee, unless specified otherwise								
	The Cabinet will be asked to recommend to Council approval of this SPD.							
11/12/18 (NEW ITEM) Page 190	Applications for Community Chest Grant Funding 2018/2019 The Cabinet will be asked to consider applications in respect of Community Chest funding for the 2019/2020 year.	Not applicable	(KD) – Applications for the 2020/2021 year and beyond are also subject to the budget setting process	Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee	Robin Millar Families and Communities 07545 423782	Davina Howes Assistant Director (Families and Communities) 01284 757070	All Wards	Report to Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee
11/12/18 (NEW ITEM)	Treasury Management Report 2018/2019 Investment Activity (1 April to 30 September 2018) The Cabinet will be asked to recommend to Council, the approval of the Treasury Management Report 2018-2019 which summarised the investment activity for the period 1 April to 30 September 2018.	Not applicable	(R) – Council 19/12/18	Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee / Council	Stephen Edwards Resources and Performance 07904 389982	Rachael Mann Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	All Wards	Recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee and Council

Expected Decision Date	Subject and Purpose of Decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio Holder Contact Details	Lead Officer Contact Details	Wards Affected	Documents to be submitted
All expected decisions listed below are intended to be taken by the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee, unless specified otherwise								
11/12/18 <i>(Deferred from 02/10/18)</i> Page 191	Asset Management Strategy and Asset Management Plan The Cabinet will be asked to consider the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the adoption of a new Asset Management Strategy and associated Asset Management Plan, which has been produced jointly with St Edmundsbury Borough Council.	Possible Exempt Appendices: Paragraph 3	(R) - Council 19/12/18	Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee / Council	Lance Stanbury Planning and Growth 07970 947704	Julie Baird Assistant Director (Growth) 01284 757613	All Wards	Recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee and Council with the possibility of Exempt Appendices.
11/12/18 <i>(Deferred from 22/05/18)</i>	Street Vending and Trading Policy The Cabinet will be asked to consider a revised street vending and trading policy. Consultation will take place with the Licensing and Regulatory Committee on the proposed content of the policy.	Not applicable	(D)	Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee	Lance Stanbury Planning and Growth 07970 947704	Peter Gudde Service Manager (Environment and Regulation) 01284 757042	All Wards	Report to Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee with revised policy

Expected Decision Date	Subject and Purpose of Decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio Holder Contact Details	Lead Officer Contact Details	Wards Affected	Documents to be submitted
All expected decisions listed below are intended to be taken by the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee, unless specified otherwise								
05/02/19 (NEW ITEM) Page 192	Treasury Management Report 2018/2019 – Investment Activity (1April to 31 December 2018) The Cabinet will be asked to recommend to Council, the approval of the Treasury Management Report 2018-2019 which summarised the investment activity for the period 1 April to 31 December 2018.	Not applicable	(R) – Council 20/02/19	Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee / Council	Stephen Edwards Resources and Performance 07904 389982	Rachael Mann Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	All Wards	Recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee and Council
12/03/19	Revenues Collection and Performance Write-Offs The Cabinet will be asked to consider writing-off outstanding debts detailed in the exempt Appendices.	Paragraphs 1 and 2	(KD)	Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee	Stephen Edwards Resources and Performance 07904 389982	Rachael Mann Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	All Wards	Report to Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee

NOTE 1: DEFINITIONS OF EXEMPT INFORMATION: RELEVANT PARAGRAPHS

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

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

PART 1

DESCRIPTIONS OF EXEMPT INFORMATION: ENGLAND

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

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

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

NOTE 2: KEY DECISION DEFINITIONS

Key decisions are:

- (a) A key decision means an executive decision which, pending any further guidance from the Secretary of State, is likely to:
 - (i) Be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area in the Borough/District; or
 - (ii) Result in any new expenditure, income or savings of more than £100,000 in relation to the Council's revenue budget or capital programme.
 - (iii) Comprise or include the making, approval or publication of a draft or final scheme which may require, either directly or in the event of objections, the approval of a Minister of the Crown.
- (b) A decision taker may only make a key decision in accordance with the requirements of the Executive procedure rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.

NOTE 3: MEMBERSHIP OF BODIES MAKING KEY DECISIONS

(a) Membership of the Cabinet and their Portfolios:

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

(b) Membership of the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee:

Authority	Cabinet Member	Portfolio
St Edmundsbury Borough Council	Councillor John Griffiths Councillor Sara Mildmay-White Councillor Carol Bull Councillor Robert Everitt Councillor Ian Houlder Councillor Alaric Pugh Councillor Joanna Rayner Councillor Peter Stevens	Leader of the Council Deputy Leader of the Council/Housing Portfolio Holder for Future Governance Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture Portfolio Holder for Operations
Forest Heath District Council	Councillor James Waters Councillor Robin Millar Councillor David Bowman Councillor Ruth Bowman J.P. Councillor Andy Drummond Councillor Stephen Edwards Councillor Lance Stanbury	Leader of the Council Deputy Leader of the Council/ Families and Communities Portfolio Holder for Operations Portfolio Holder for Future Governance Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth

(c) **Membership of the Anglia Revenues Partnership Joint Committee (Breckland Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Fenland District Council, Forest Heath District Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council, St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Waveney District Council** (Membership: one Member/two Substitutes per Authority)

Full Breckland Cabinet Member	Full East Cambridgeshire District Council Cabinet Member	Full Fenland District Council Cabinet Member	Full Forest Heath District Council Cabinet Member	Full Suffolk Coastal District Council Cabinet Member	Full St Edmundsbury Borough Council Cabinet Member	Full Waveney District Council Cabinet Member
Cllr Paul Classen	Cllr David Ambrose-Smith	Cllr Chris Seaton	Cllr Stephen Edwards	Cllr Richard Kerry (Chairman)	Cllr Ian Houlder	Cllr Bruce Provan (Vice Chairman)
Substitute Breckland Cabinet Members	Substitute East Cambridgeshire District Council Cabinet Members	Substitute Fenland District Council Cabinet Members	Substitute Forest Heath District Council Cabinet Members	Substitute Suffolk Coastal District Council Cabinet Members	Substitute St Edmundsbury Borough Council Cabinet Members	Substitute Waveney District Council Cabinet Members
Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen	Cllr Lis Every	Cllr John Clark	Cllr James Waters	Cllr Stuart Lawson	Cllr Sara Mildmay-White	Cllr Mark Bee
Cllr William Nunn	Cllr Julia Huffer	Cllr Will Sutton	Cllr David Bowman	Cllr Ray Herring	Cllr Robert Everitt	Cllr Chris Punt

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Jennifer Eves
Assistant Director (HR, Legal and Democratic Services)
Date: 25 May 2018

Overview and Scrutiny of Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	Work Programme Update and Re-Appointment to the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee	
Report No:	OAS/FH/18/018	
Report to and dates:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	7 June 2018
	Council (Appointments to SCC Health Scrutiny)	18 July 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:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To update the Committee on the current status of its rolling work programme of annual items for scrutiny during 2018-2019. 2) To ask the Committee to identify questions for the Lead Cabinet Member for Housing, and the Cabinet Member for Families and Communities, in advance of their attendance on 12 July 2018. 3) To ask the Committee to nominate one Member, and one Substitute Member to serve on the County's Health Scrutiny Committee. 	

Recommendation:	<p>1) That, Members <u>note</u> the current status of the work programme and the annual items expected during 2018-2019.</p> <p>2) <u>Identify questions</u> for the Lead Cabinet Member for Housing and the Cabinet Member for Families and Communities to cover in their annual report to the Committee in July 2018.</p> <p>3) To <u>nominate</u> one Member, and one Substitute Member to the Suffolk Health Scrutiny Committee for 2018-2019 for confirmation by full Council.</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"/>
Documents attached:	<p>Appendix 1 – Current Work Programme</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Summary of work carried out by the SCC Health Scrutiny Committee during 2017-2018</p>

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 and Task and Finish Groups for the 2018-2019 is attached at **Appendix 1** for information.

1.2 Portfolio Holder Annual Presentations

- 1.2.1 At every ordinary Overview and Scrutiny meeting at least one Cabinet Member attends to give an account of his or her portfolio and to answer questions from the Committee.
- 1.2.2 At the Committees meeting on 12 July 2018, the Lead Cabinet Member for Housing and the Cabinet Member for Families and Communities will be attending to give their annual updates to the Committee.
- 1.2.3 The Committee is therefore asked to identify questions for the Lead Cabinet Member for Housing and the Cabinet Member for Families and Communities to cover in their annual reports to the Committee.

1.3 Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee

- 1.3.1 The Committee is asked to nominate on an annual basis one Member, and one Substitute Member to serve on the County's Health Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.3.2 The Members should ideally be from the District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, although this is not essential as the necessary training will be given by County.
- 1.3.3 The current members on this joint body are:
 - Councillor John Bloodworth as the nominated representative; and
 - Councillor Christine Mason as the nominated substitute.
- 1.3.4 Councillor John Bloodworth has produced a short summary on the issues considered by the SCC Health Scrutiny during 2017-2018 (**Appendix 2**).
- 1.3.5 The above nominations will need to be confirmed by Full Council on 18 July 2018.

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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
12 July 2018		
Annual Portfolio Holder Presentation	Lead Cabinet Member for Housing	The Portfolio Holder has been invited to provide an update on their portfolio and to answer questions from the Committee.
Barley Homes Group Limited	Lead Cabinet Member for Housing	To consider a revised business plan for Barley Homes and full year-end set of accounts.
Annual Portfolio Holder Presentation	Cabinet Member for Families and Communities	The Portfolio Holder has been invited to provide an update on their portfolio and to answer questions from the Committee.
Families and Communities Evaluation Report	Cabinet Member for Families and Communities	To consider the Families and Communities Evaluation Report.
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	Cabinet Member for Planning and Growth	The Portfolio Holder has been invited to provide an update on their portfolio and to answer questions from the Committee.
West Suffolk Housing Strategy	Lead Cabinet Member for Housing	To provide input into the West Suffolk Housing Strategy.
West Suffolk Supplementary Planning Document on Affordable Housing	Lead Cabinet Member for Housing	To provide input into the West Suffolk Supplementary Planning Document on Affordable Housing.
West Suffolk Tenancy Strategy	Lead Cabinet Member for Housing	To provide input into the West Suffolk Tenancy Strategy.
Universal Credit (Role out in Forest Heath)	Cabinet Member for Families and Communities	To receive information on the role out of Universal Credit in Forest Heath in December 2018 & lessons learnt from SEBC.
Christmas Fayre Review – Final Report	Cabinet Member Planning and Growth	To receive the final report from the Joint Task and Finish Group on the review of the Christmas Fayre.

Description	Lead Member	Details
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	<i>To be confirmed</i>	The Portfolio Holder has been invited to provide an update on their portfolio and to answer questions from the Committee.
Annual Car Parking Update	Cabinet Member 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.
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	<i>To be confirmed</i>	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	<i>To be confirmed</i>	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 2019	Lead Cabinet Member 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.

Future Items to be Programmed During 2018-2019

1. National Horseracing Museum – Capital Project [*Session to see if there is any learning which can be applied to future council projects*]

Current position of Overview and Scrutiny (Joint) Task and Finish Groups

	Title	Purpose	Start Date (Established)	Members Appointed	Estimated End date
1.	West Suffolk Christmas Fayre Review (Joint Task and Finish Group)	<p>A West Suffolk Joint Task and Finish Group be established to carry out a review of the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre to make recommendations to the West Suffolk Shadow Executive in Autumn 2018.</p> <p>The review work will be carried out between May and August 2018, in order to feed into final reports for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings in September, and a report to the Shadow Executive in October 2018. This will allow time for the recommendations to be taken account of before the arrangements for 2019 would need to be set (as things currently stand, dates for Christmas Fayres are set around one year in advance).</p>	April 2018	<p><u>Forest Heath OAS</u> Cllr John Bloodworth Cllr Christine Mason Cllr Robert Nobbs Cllr David Palmer</p> <p><u>St Edmundsbury OAS</u> Cllr Susan Glossop Cllr Diane Hind Cllr Paul Hopfensperger Cllr Margaret Marks Cllr Richard Rout Cllr Frank Warby</p> <p><u>SEBC Substitutes:</u> Cllr Patrick Chung Cllr Paula Fox</p>	September 2018

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Summary Provided by Councillor John Bloodworth on the Work Carried out by the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee During 2017-2018

The SCC Health Scrutiny Committee has met four times during 2017-2018 (12 July 2017, 17 October 2017, 24 January 2018 and 18 April 2018), of which I attended two meetings. Below is a summary of what was considered:

17 October 2017, Endeavour House, Ipswich

A member of the public spoke in the public participation session, who expressed concerns about the implication of the merger of Colchester and Ipswich Hospitals on transport arrangements of patients, particularly in light of the high proportion of elderly people in the catchments of the two hospitals.

Homecare arrangements in Suffolk

The Committee considered the arrangements for the delivery of homecare in Suffolk.

The Committee received written evidence from Adult and Community Services and from Suffolk Association of Independent Care providers, and was provided with verbal evidence by the witnesses. Members then had the opportunity to ask questions and comment on what they had heard.

The Committee heard that Healthwatch England had recently identified domestic care provision as a major concern because it was so hard to monitor.

Members heard of delays within the County Council in making payments to providers and requested that these, and the reasons for them should be investigated as a matter of priority. The Committee also heard on concerns about the potential financial risk to providers posed by the Direct Payments system and was informed that there were plans to reduce this by introducing a card payment system, which Members agreed should be expedited.

Update on NHS Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships/Plans (STPs)

The Committee received an overview of the arrangements for scrutiny of the STPs that covered Suffolk and an update on progress with the Suffolk and North East (NE) Essex STP, including the development of partnership arrangements between Colchester and Ipswich Hospitals.

The Committee also received a copy of the minutes of the Essex and Suffolk Joint Scrutiny of the STP for NE Essex, Ipswich and East and West Suffolk held on 10 March 2017 and also briefing documents prepared by the STP Programme Director and STP Communications and Engagement Lead, Suffolk and North East Essex STP.

The witnesses provided a verbal update on progress with the STP and Members had the opportunity to ask questions and comment on what they had heard.

18 April 2018

Effective Discharge of Patients from Hospital

The Committee received an update on the numbers of patients subject to delayed transfers of care from hospital in Suffolk, the reasons for the delays and the measures being put in place to reduce them. Following consideration of the information received.

The Committee was pleased to hear that since it last considered this matter progress had been made in developing an integrated whole system approach to manage the transfer of consequent reduction in the numbers of delayed transfers of care. Members expressed a desire to see even fewer patients delayed in hospital over the coming months.

Information Requested for Future Meetings

- Information on readmission rates for patients discharged from Suffolk hospitals.
- Further information on "Best Interest Assessments".
- Information requested for the meeting currently scheduled on 28 April 2019, an update on progress with the reduction of delayed transfers of care through the integration of health and care services, and information on the performance of the system over the winter of 2018-2019.
- Agreed that at its meeting on 18 July 2018, when the Committee was scheduled to consider the proposed new model for procurement of homecare services, it should include a consideration of the issues associated with retention of health and care staff during school holiday periods.