

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Title:	Agenda									
Date:	Thursday 8 November 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.	
Induction loop:	An Induction loop operates to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter.	
Recording of meetings:	<p>The Council may record this meeting and permits members of the public and media to record or broadcast it as well (when the media and public are not lawfully excluded).</p> <p>Any member of the public who attends a meeting and objects to being filmed should advise the Committee Administrator who will instruct that they are not included in the filming.</p>	
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.	

Agenda

Procedural Matters

Part 1 – Public

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

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2018 (copy attached).
- 4. Public Participation**

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

A person who wishes to speak must register at least 15 minutes before the time the meeting is scheduled to start. There is an overall limit of 15 minutes for public speaking, which may be extended at the Chairman's discretion.
- 5. Announcements from the Chairman regarding responses from the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee to reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and any other updates from the Chairman**
- 6. West Suffolk Housing Strategy and West Suffolk Tenancy Strategy** **5 - 80**

Report No: **OAS/FH/18/029**
- 7. Introduction of Universal Credit Full Service in the Forest Heath Area** **81 - 94**

Report No: **OAS/FH/18/030**
- 8. Review of Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre - Final Report** **95 - 190**

Report No: **OAS/FH/18/031**
- 9. Garden Waste Collection Service Review - Final Report** **191 - 216**

Report No: **OAS/FH/18/032**

	<i>Page No</i>
10. Annual Report by the Cabinet Member for Operations Report No: OAS/FH/18/033	217 - 224
11. Work Programme Update Report No: OAS/FH/18/034	225 - 228

Part 2 – Exempt

NONE

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Thursday 13 September 2018** at **6.00 pm** in the **Council Chamber, District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall IP28 7EY**

Present: **Councillors**

Chairman Simon Cole

Chris Barker
Brian Harvey
Christine Mason
Robert Nobbs

David Palmer
Nigel Roman
Reg Silvester

254. Substitutes

There were no substitutions declared.

255. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Bloodworth and Rona Burt.

256. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2018 were confirmed as an accurate record, and signed by the Chairman.

257. Public Participation

There were no questions/statements from the public.

258. Announcements from the Chairman regarding responses from the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee to reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and any other updates from the Chairman

The Chairman advised that he attended the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee on 24 July 2018, and presented the Overview and Scrutiny Report from 12 July meeting, which was noted.

259. Annual Presentation by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Growth

[Councillor Nigel Roman left the meeting at 6.40pm during the consideration of this item].

The Committee was reminded that on 14 September 2017, it had received a presentation from the Cabinet Member for Planning and Growth setting out responsibilities covered under his portfolio.

At this meeting the Cabinet Member had been invited back to provide his annual update, and Report No: OAS/FH/18/025 set out the focus of the update.

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

The Cabinet Member, Councillor Lance Stanbury firstly thanked the Committee for the questions submitted, as set out in the report.

The Committee then asked a number of follow-up questions relating to building control (enforcement/breaches); tourism (promoting what's on offer in West Suffolk); the A11 Tech corridor (work in progress); growth and regeneration (dual electric train line between Newmarket and Cambridge); and town centres (reinventing our high streets), to which comprehensive responses were provided.

In response to a question raised asking whether the council had statistics on the number of business units across West Suffolk, officers advised that the Council had commissioned consultants to develop a new Asset Management Strategy and associated Asset Management Plan, which would be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2018 for its consideration.

In response to a question raised regarding business units, members were advised that officers in Economic Growth Team were actively promoting what the council offered regarding business units and start-ups and sign posting businesses to the council's website. The Cabinet member further explained that the council wanted to offer small incubation units on short-term leases to help businesses grow. However, these needed to be in the right place for a commercial business. Incubation units worked, but there needed to be a critical mass of businesses for them to work.

In response to a question raised regarding the need for a dual electric train line and dualling the track between Ipswich and Cambridge, members were informed that all Suffolk councils were pushing through a prospectus for the east part of the rail line to Newmarket and on to Ipswich. The prospectus would include the growth ask from each of the local authorities. The council was working closely with colleagues and the Cambridge Combined Authority.

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee thanked the Cabinet Member and officers for their attendance.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the Cabinet Members annual report.

260. Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee Decisions Plan: October 2018 to March 2019

The Committee received Report No: OAS/FH/18/026, which asked Members to peruse the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Decisions Plan for the period 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019.

The Committee considered the Decisions Plan and asked a question relating to the "Annual Review of the Performance of the Council's Solar Farm", scheduled to be presented to Cabinet on 2 October 2018, to which the Assistant Director (Planning and Regulatory) provided a response.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the contents of the Shadow Executive (Cabinet) Decisions Plan.

261. Shadow Executive (Cabinet) Decisions Plan: September 2018 to 6 May 2019

The Committee received Report No: OAS/FH/18/027, which informed Members on the forthcoming decisions to be considered by the Shadow Executive (Cabinet) for the period 1 September 2018 to 6 May 2019.

The Committee considered the Shadow Executive (Cabinet) Decisions Plan and did not request any further information on items contained in the Plan.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the contents of the Shadow Executive (Cabinet) Decisions Plan.

262. Work Programme Update

The Committee received Report No: OAS/FH/18/028, 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 that Members identify questions they would like the Cabinet Member for Operations to cover in his annual report to the Committee on 8 November 2018.

The Committee considered Appendix 1 and in particular the items currently scheduled for its November meeting. At the time of the meeting Members had not identified any questions they wished to put to the Cabinet Member for Operations, but would submit questions following the meeting to the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) by Friday 28 September 2018.

Finally, the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) informed members that St Edmundsbury's Overview and Scrutiny Committee had arranged an Extraordinary Committee meeting for Wednesday 31 October 2018 at 4pm when the Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member for Highways and Transports would be attending to discuss progress made in relation to the recommendations made at the SEBC Extraordinary Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 25 October 2017. The Chairman of St Edmundsbury's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Diane Hind,

therefore wished to extend the invitation to members of Forest Heath's Overview and Scrutiny Committee to attend as observers.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the current status of its forward work programme for 2018-2019.

The Meeting concluded at 7.13pm

Signed by:

Chairman

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	West Suffolk Housing Strategy and West Suffolk Tenancy Strategy	
Report No:	OAS/FH/18/029	
Report to and dates:	SEBC Overview and Scrutiny	7 November 2018
	Overview and Scrutiny	8 November 2018
	Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee	11 December 2018
	SEBC Council (Housing Strategy only)	18 December 2018
	FHDC Council (Housing Strategy only)	19 December 2018
Portfolio holders:	<p>Councillor Sara Mildmay-White Portfolio Holder for Housing Tel: 01359 270580 Email: sara.mildmay-white@stedsbc.gov.uk</p> <p>Councillor Lance Stanbury Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth Tel: 07970 947704 Email: lance.stanbury@forest-heath.gov.uk</p>	

<p>Lead officers:</p>	<p>Julie Baird Assistant Director (Growth) Tel: 01284 757613 Email: julie.baird@westsuffolk.gov.uk</p> <p>David Collinson Assistant Director (Planning and Regulatory Services) Tel: 01284 757306 Email: david.collinson@westsuffolk.gov.uk</p> <p>Davina Howes Assistant Director (Families and Communities) Tel: 01284 757070 Email: davina.howes@westsuffolk.gov.uk</p> <p>Simon Phelan Service Manager (Strategic Housing) Tel: 01638 719440 Email: simon.phelan@westsuffolk.gov.uk</p>
<p>Purpose of report:</p>	<p>To present the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the draft West Suffolk Housing Strategy and the draft West Suffolk Tenancy Strategy, both of which are attached as appendices to the report.</p> <p>(1) West Suffolk Housing Strategy (Appendix 1)</p> <p>A review of West Suffolk’s Housing Strategy is due in 2018. By adopting this new strategy we are aligning our priorities for housing with the Strategic Framework 2018-2020 and responding to new legislation and additional duties such as the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the revised National Planning Policy Framework 2018.</p> <p>(2) West Suffolk Tenancy Strategy (Appendix 2)</p> <p>A review of West Suffolk’s Tenancy Strategy is due in 2018. The Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to produce a Tenancy Strategy that outlines how councils and registered providers approach issues which affect tenants living in their area.</p>

Recommendation:	<p>Overview and Scrutiny Committee:</p> <p>It is recommended that, the West Suffolk Housing Strategy and West Suffolk Tenancy Strategy are considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and, subject to any comments or feedback, be recommended for approval by Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee on 11 December 2018 and Council on 19 December 2018, where appropriate.</p>
	<p><i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i></p> <p>Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
Consultation:	<p>The Housing Strategy has been the subject of public and stakeholder consultation through a workshop and online survey.</p> <p>The Tenancy Strategy has been the subject of public and stakeholder consultation through an online survey.</p>
Alternative option(s):	<p>To continue with the current Housing Strategy and Tenancy Strategy. However, this means that our strategies would not be consistent with new legislation or duties, or with our Strategic Priorities.</p>
Implications:	
<p><i>Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None associated with either Strategy. However, an Implementation Plan accompanies the Housing Strategy which is being developed during the consultation period. Any resource implications associated with the delivery of the Housing Strategy will be set out in the Implementation Plan. External funding will be sought where appropriate and this will be indicated in the plan. In addition, where additional funding is required this will be subject to separate business cases for consideration by the democratic approval process as required.
<p><i>Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None associated with either Strategy. However, resource implications, including any additional staffing requirements, will be included in the Implementation Plan and would be subject to separate approval processes as required.

<i>Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
<i>Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> • The new Housing Strategy incorporates new legislation and duties in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the revised National Planning Policy Framework 2018. • The new Tenancy Strategy reviews our duties as set out in the Localism Act 2011.	
<i>Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> • Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) have been carried out and its findings are included in paragraphs 1.1.3 and 2.3.	
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)
Housing 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
Housing Strategy not compliant with the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018	Medium	Adopt new Housing Strategy to ensure compliance with the NPPF	Low
Housing Strategy not aligned with the Strategic Framework	Medium	Adopt a new Housing Strategy that sets out our aspirations for housing	Low
Tenancy Strategy not compliant with the Localism Act 2011	Medium	Adopt a new Tenancy Strategy to ensure compliance with the Act	Low
Ward(s) affected:		All wards	
Background papers:		None	
Documents attached:		Appendix 1: Draft West Suffolk Housing Strategy - Appendix A: Housing tenure - Appendix B: Evidence base - Appendix C: Implementation plan - Appendix D: Equality analysis Appendix 2: Draft West Suffolk Tenancy Strategy	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation

Background

1.1 (1) West Suffolk Housing Strategy

- 1.1.1 A review of West Suffolk's Housing Strategy is due in 2018. Through the review we have taken the opportunity to reflect priorities, actions and projects set out in the Strategic Framework 2018-2020. Furthermore, there are a number of additional duties and fundamental changes to housing legislation that will need to be reflected in the Housing Strategy.
- 1.1.2 It is no longer a legal requirement for a local authority to have a Housing Strategy in place. However, it is recognised that a strategic overview is necessary in order to set out how we plan to address the housing challenges we are facing and to provide a range of housing options for the growing need for a range of quality housing in West Suffolk.
- 1.1.3 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been carried out on the Housing Strategy. The EqIA is 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 increase and improve the range of quality housing in West Suffolk to support a wide range of housing needs.

1.2 Progress against our current Housing Strategy

- 1.2.1 West Suffolk councils produced the first combined Housing Strategy in 2015, which covered the period to 2018. Since the publication of our first strategy, we have made progress in the following ways:

Planning

- Achieved 30% affordable housing on the majority of approved planning applications and delivered 578 new homes.
- Rural housing - maximised the delivery of affordable housing on rural exception sites.
- Established a West Suffolk self-build register and currently have 114 applicants on the register.

Private sector housing

- Empty Homes Strategy implemented: 50% overall reduction in empty homes.
- Alignment of approach to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and enforcement policies.
- Homes being utilised through our West Suffolk Lettings Partnership are safe and up to standard.

- Between 2016 and 2018, 1873 homes have been adapted through Disabled Facilities Grants and minor works through the Orbit Home Improvement Agency contract.
- 374 properties have been brought up to standard, or made decent, through grants over the lifetime of the strategy (2015-2018).

Homelessness

- Additional temporary accommodation units provided across West Suffolk by directly purchasing properties, refurbishing council owned properties and via service level agreements with registered providers. Focused much of our work on prevention – in 2017 we actively assisted or prevented some 500 households across West Suffolk, from becoming homeless.
- Established a number of arrangements with housing providers to secure unused supported accommodation following a change of contract.
- Ensured that no family would have to spend more than six weeks in bed and breakfast accommodation.
- 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.
- 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. This post is now included within the councils' staffing structure.
- In 2017 we established a Winter Night Shelter to provide accommodation for rough sleepers over the winter months. With extra provision now in place all year round.
- In June 2018, secured £607,994 from the government's Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding for the next two years which has enabled five new outreach staff to be employed as well as providing additional accommodation specifically to support rough sleepers into housing.

1.3 Consultation

- 1.3.1 The review of the current Housing Strategy was started in March this year with Councillor workshops. Councillors had the opportunity to discuss some of the challenges we are facing across West Suffolk and how the strategy and approach can be shaped to respond to these challenges in the future.

- 1.3.2 A consultation exercise took place in July this year with a number of key partners. The aims of the workshop were to give partners the opportunity to discuss the challenges we are facing and how together we can work towards plans and actions in the future.
- 1.3.3 Outcomes from the Councillor and partner workshops have fed into the development of the strategy.
- 1.3.4 The formal consultation is taking place for a six week period between 9 October and 20 November 2018. It involves an online survey available on our webpages and has been sent directly to Councillors, parish councils and a number of our partners.
- 1.3.5 As at 18 October 2018, 15 responses have been received to the online survey from residents, partners 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.
- 1.3.6 Through the consultation, specific comments have been received that relate to affordable housing and the importance of infrastructure to support the needs of individuals and communities.
- 1.3.7 As this is at an early stage of the consultation, we will continue to monitor the responses received and determine whether any changes to the strategy will be required.

1.4 **Implementation Plan**

- 1.4.1 An Implementation Plan will accompany the Housing Strategy so that we can deliver against the priorities and actions set out in the strategy. The Implementation Plan is being developed during the consultation period and will be finalised once the consultation has concluded.

2. **(2) West Suffolk Tenancy Strategy**

- 2.1 A review of West Suffolk's Tenancy Strategy is due in 2018. The Localism Act 2011 requires all local authorities to produce a Tenancy Strategy that outlines how councils and Registered Providers (RPs) approach issues which affect tenants living in their area. This Tenancy Strategy updates the previous strategy that ran from 2012-2018 and incorporates all applicable changes from updated legislation.
- 2.2 Through the Tenancy Strategy we will seek to work with RPs to provide good quality housing where successful tenancies can be sustained. The strategy is intended to promote quality and fairness and to offer a guide to RPs who may manage stock within West Suffolk. While we no longer own our own housing stock, having transferred them to Flagship Housing Group and Havebury Housing Partnership, we still have an interest in how these properties and other properties owned by other RPs are managed for the residents of West Suffolk.

- 2.3 The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) carried out for the original Tenancy Strategy produced in 2012 has been reviewed and updated. 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 sets out our position on the provision of affordable housing including the use of Flexible Tenancies, Affordable Rents and the use of private sector tenancies for homeless households.
- 2.4 **Consultation**
- 2.5 Initial informal discussions have taken place with the key RPs operating in West Suffolk to highlight some of the key changes that it is proposed are included in the updated Tenancy Strategy.
- 2.6 The formal consultation is taking place for a six week period between 9 October and 20 November 2018. It involves an online survey available on our webpages and has been sent directly to a number of our partners.
- 2.7 We are at the early stages of the consultation and as at 18 October 2018, no responses have so far been received to the online survey.
- 2.8 We will monitor any responses that we receive and determine whether any changes to the strategy will be required.

DRAFT WEST SUFFOLK HOUSING STRATEGY 2018-2023

Strategy will be designed following consultation

18 October 2018
Draft for Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Contents

Foreword

		Page
1.	Introduction	
	• Executive summary	4
2.	Our vision	
	• Wider benefits of housing	5
3.	The West Suffolk context	
	• Links to strategies and plans	7
	• Wider links to health	7
	• Housing tenure	8
	• Housing market area	8
	• Key data	8-9
4.	Housing priorities 2018-2023	10
	• Housing priority one: 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	11
	• Housing priority two: Improve the quality of housing and the local environment for our residents	19
	• Housing priority three: Enable people to access suitable and sustainable housing	22
5.	Governance and implementation of the strategy	24

Appendix A – Housing tenure

Appendix B – evidence base

Appendix C – implementation plan

Appendix D – equality analysis

Foreword

When we talk about housing, what we are really talking about are people's homes. They should be a place of sanctuary, a place of comfort, a place of safety and stability where people can live as part of a wider supportive community.

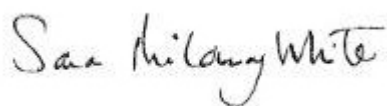
The place that people call home can have a huge impact of their lives not least in terms of their physical and mental health and wellbeing. Poor housing is estimated to cost the NHS £1.4 billion a year in terms of treating the resultant conditions and patients unable to return to unsuitable homes.

Housing also underpins the success and growth of our local economy – without the availability of homes that people can afford, businesses may struggle to attract new employees and to keep the staff that they have.

Put simply the importance of housing – of homes in all their many forms – cannot be understated.

Home is where the start is. It is important that new housing is built, that we make the best use of the homes we have and that empty homes are brought back into use. By doing this we can ensure that young people can afford to stay in the area if they wish, that companies can continue to compete by attracting and retaining their workforce, and that housing is available and adaptable to meet the requirements of our aging population.

This Housing Strategy sets out our vision for improvement in the quality and delivery of housing to meet local needs, not just now, but for decades to come. The Council is of course, just one partner in all of this but through this Strategy, which will be supported through a range of other plans, we will play a significant role in delivering new homes and making the best use of existing ones. It's a role that supports our residents, our local families and communities including our many businesses – and which will ensure that West Suffolk not only continues to be a place where people want to live, but also a place where they can.



Councillor Sara Mildmay-White
Cabinet Member for Housing



Councillor Lance Stanbury
Cabinet Member for Planning and Growth

1. Introduction

- **Executive summary**

At West Suffolk councils we know that good housing plays an important role in the health and wellbeing of people in our area. Our residents need access to suitable housing that is affordable in order to establish a settled home and achieve their ambitions for family life, career development, a fulfilling retirement and other goals. The right housing options are also vital to realising our ambitions for inclusive economic growth.

Providing appropriate housing for our residents can only be achieved by using a number of delivery routes, whether that be at a local level through our own plans and policies, with partners or through our use of legislation. We are committed to using all the powers and levers we have available to enable the delivery of housing and to achieve our housing priorities. This relies on providing new build housing but also making the most of our existing stock through improvement, adaption and bringing empty properties back into use.

We will continually seek to improve the quality and supply of new housing being built, to provide greater choice of the types, location and prices of new homes to meet residents' aspirations and needs. This will include ensuring that there is appropriate housing to meet the needs of older people, young people, vulnerable people and those who are disadvantaged are also delivered alongside our partners.

This supports the health and wellbeing of residents, families and communities, both in our towns and in our rural areas because a decent home can improve quality of life. Our work is aligned with the aims of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Suffolk and the Suffolk Growth Strategy. To respond to this challenge the [Homelessness Reduction Strategy 2018-2023](#) was adopted.

Through this Housing Strategy we are also responding to the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018 which seeks to boost the supply of land for housing development in the right places and ambitions to increase the rate of housing delivery.

2. Our vision

West Suffolk councils are committed to increasing the supply, range and quality of housing for our current and future residents.

This Housing Strategy sets out how we, along with our partners, will respond to the housing challenges we are facing in order to provide a range of housing options so that we can respond to and plan for the growing need for additional housing in West Suffolk. We are doing this through a period of change, brought about not only through new legislation but also the significant financial challenges and increased demands on public services. Furthermore, the government has an ambitious target to deliver more than 300,000 new homes each year by 2025.

Our Strategic Framework 2018-2020 sets out our vision for the local area and contains strategic priorities that we are committed to in order to deliver this vision. Our strategic priority which specifically focuses on housing is to:

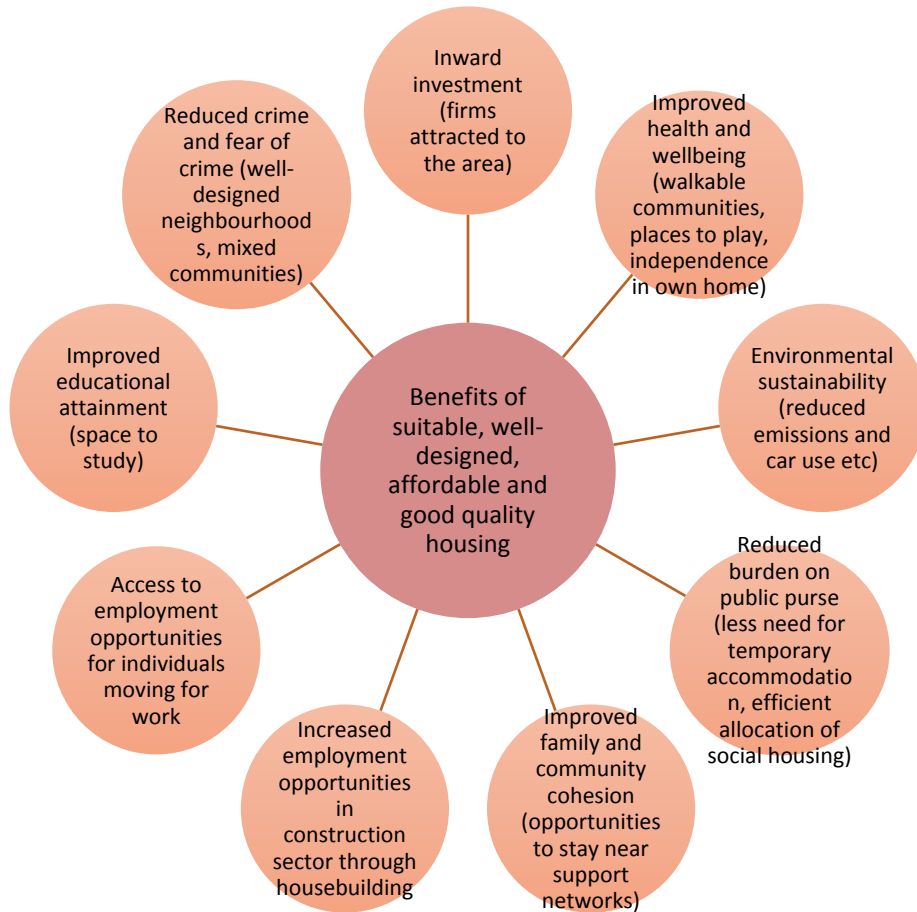
Increase and improve the provision of appropriate housing in west Suffolk in both our towns and rural areas.

To deliver this strategic priority, we will use our role as a local housing and planning authority, a regulatory, an investor and local influencer to:

- Housing priority one: 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.
- Housing priority two: Improve the quality of housing and the local environment for our residents.
- Housing priority three: Enable people to access suitable and sustainable housing.

Wider benefits of housing

The benefits of improved housing in West Suffolk are far reaching, as demonstrated in the diagram below. Our aspiration to address the challenges we face are therefore fundamental to the achievement of a range of other priorities both within West Suffolk and in partner organisations. We cannot deliver this strategy alone and it is dependent upon joint working with a number of other organisations and on the achievement of West Suffolk's Strategic Framework 2018-2020 and our Medium Term Financial Strategy.



3. The West Suffolk context

- **Links to strategies and plans**

The diagram below identifies the key documents that inform and underpin this Housing Strategy in the context of West Suffolk.



- **Wider links to health**

Good quality housing is critical to health and wellbeing. A safe and settled home is the cornerstone on which individuals and families can thrive. In financial terms, a well-housed population helps to reduce and delay demand for NHS services. It is estimated that the cost of poor housing to the NHS is £1.4 billion per year¹.

NHS organisations and local government across Suffolk are working together to improve the health and care of our communities. Partnerships such as the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board have identified health and housing as a key focus and we are working with colleagues to tackle issues such as improving energy efficiency in homes and ensuring there is support for people to maintain tenancies. The Housing and Health Charter for Suffolk is part of the health and wellbeing agenda. The charter was developed to ensure a shared approach and understanding of the issues across Suffolk and to facilitate partnership working and sharing resources. The charter is focusing on areas such as specialist housing for older people, tackling homelessness, supply and access to affordable housing and increased access to decent homes.

¹ Kings Fund, 2018

- **Housing tenure**

When considering housing it is important to bear in mind that there are different types and tenure of housing available. Our role is to ensure that there is a wide a choice as possible so that people have options as to the housing best suited to their circumstances. Appendix A provides an illustrative summary of the types of housing as well as our role in supporting the delivery and availability of each of these options.

- **Housing market area**

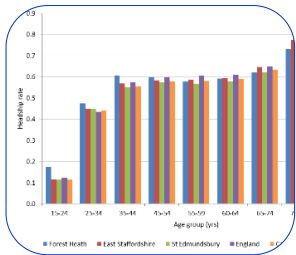
The Cambridge Sub-region Housing Market Area² comprises the local authority areas of Cambridge, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Forest Heath, Huntingdonshire, South Cambridgeshire and St Edmundsbury, as shown in the map below:



- **Key data**

Key facts relating to West Suffolk’s population and housing are provided on the following page. Further data which was used to support the development of this strategy is included in the evidence base attached as Appendix B.

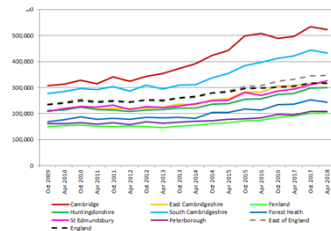
² In 2013, a Strategic Housing Market Assessment was undertaken for the Cambridge Sub-region and this analysed a range of economic and housing market indicators to define a Cambridge Sub-region Housing Market Area comprising all of Cambridgeshire and the Western part of Suffolk.



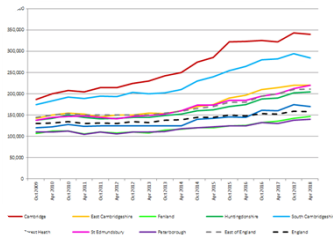
West Suffolk's population. 179,200 (Nomisweb 2017)



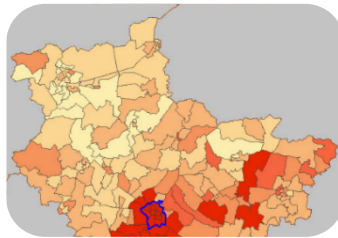
New homes needed by 2031: 18,280 in West Suffolk



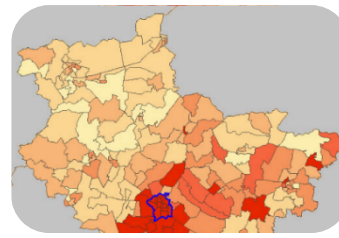
Average house price across West Suffolk: £284,363 (April 2018)



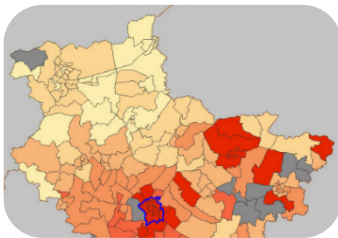
Lower quartile house price: £195,000 (April 2018)



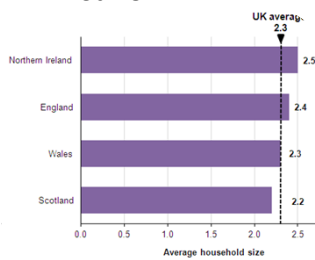
Ratio of median house prices to median incomes for West Suffolk : 7.7



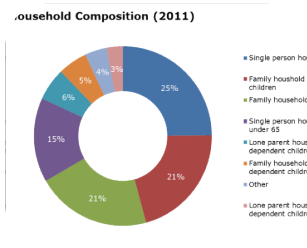
Ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile incomes for West Suffolk: 10.6



Weekly median private rents: 1 bed = £144 2 beds = £217 3 bed= £230 4 bed = £320



Average household size: 2.4 people



Proportion of West Suffolk households aged 75 and over: 8.5%

HomeLink
Approx. number of households on social housing register: 2,313



There are 4918 homes with planning permission which have not started or are currently under construction (March 2017)



Number of affordable housing completions in West Suffolk in the past five years: 842

Unless otherwise stated, all data was taken from the [Housing Market Bulletin](#), published in June 2018 and using data from April 2018.

5. Housing priorities 2018-2023

This five year strategy covers the period 2018-2023, and seeks to further strengthen the partnership working in place in West Suffolk and to increase the supply of, and access to, suitable housing. This will help to improve the health and wellbeing of local people, strengthen the resilience of families and communities, and realise our ambitions for inclusive economic growth. This will be achieved through the adoption of the following three priorities. Key actions across each of the three priorities are detailed in the implementation plan attached as Appendix C.

Housing priority one: 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.

We have a real opportunity to explore new ways of increasing the rate of housing delivery and be more creative in encouraging the development of new types of housing that meet the current and future needs and aspirations of our residents.

It is clear that the rate of housing delivery lags well behind the number of planning applications that are being approved. Nationally nine out of ten planning applications are passed and there are twice as many unfulfilled approved applications than those that are currently being built.

We know no-one can live in a planning permission. We need to find new innovative ways to help developers speed up the rate that they build new homes, through making the planning system as efficient as it can be, supporting the provision of required infrastructure and using all the powers we have to act where housebuilding has been significantly delayed or slow to come forward.

This section sets out our key actions in the following areas:

- 1.1 Understanding our local housing market – key challenges for investment and growth
- 1.2 Planning policies that support the delivery of new homes
- 1.3 Increasing the speed of housing delivery
- 1.4 Ensuring the provision of infrastructure needed to support new homes
- 1.5 Building sustainable communities

1.1 Understanding our local housing market - key challenges for investment and growth

- **Overall housing requirements**

The current [Objectively Assessed Housing Need](#) report provides evidence and an assessment for development needs for housing, both market and affordable. The adopted St Edmundsbury and emerging Forest Heath local plans together plan for 18,280 new homes over a twenty year plan period to 2031 to meet the projected demands for new homes. As at 31 March 2017 West Suffolk has delivered 3268 homes since 2012 when the local plans started.

Housing need will in the future be assessed using the standard method, the full details of this will be published in the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) alongside the NPPF 2018. The implications for West Suffolk will be considered when the details are available and this new method will inform the preparation of the West Suffolk Local Plan.

- **Land supply for housing**

We therefore know from this assessment that we need to build more homes each year in order to meet the needs and aspirations of people either currently living in West Suffolk or people who might want to move into the area. Data relating to the number of house completions is available in the evidence base at Appendix B.

West Suffolk has a number of environmental constraints with approximately 35% of the area having special designations, plus the presence of two large United States Air Force (USAF) airbases and horse racing restrictions around Newmarket. Further information relating to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is available in the evidence base at Appendix B.

Work is underway to prepare a Local Plan for West Suffolk. Through the new Local Plan we will ensure that the supply of housing meets the needs of the current and future population of West Suffolk.

Affordable housing requirements

Affordable housing includes social rent, affordable rent and intermediate accommodation, such as shared ownership (part rent/part buy). These terms, and affordable housing generally, are defined in [Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018](#).

In 2016 West Suffolk had an identified need for 6,407 (or 320 per year) new affordable homes up to 2031. This need was based on a previous definition of affordable homes which has since been broadened for example by including starter homes and affordable private rent. From March 2013 to March 2018, 842 new affordable homes have been delivered in West Suffolk. Data relating to the number of affordable homes delivered each year since 2013 can be found in the evidence base at Appendix B.

- **Rural housing**

Approximately 43% of West Suffolk's population live outside of the major towns. The provision of rural housing is therefore vital for the creation and maintenance of sustainable communities.

Outside the five main settlements in West Suffolk, house prices for all property types are well above the West Suffolk median at £284,363, compared to the median of £247,741 for the five main settlements³. In addition, the availability of affordable properties for rent in rural areas is much lower than in our towns. The NPPF 2018 also introduces entry-level exception sites to support development of sites suitable for first time buyers.

³ Land Registry update, September 2018

In order to address these issues we will:

1. Through the creation of a new West Suffolk local plan, identify sufficient land to meet our current and future housing needs to give certainty for residents and developers.
2. Through the commissioning of a Housing Delivery Plan identify potential barriers and develop ways to accelerate delivery on the sites which are currently allocated in our local plans, including what is achievable through modular and new house building technologies
3. Work with developers to increase the supply of high quality homes in a range of sizes, types and tenures to meet the diverse needs and aspirations of our communities.
4. Explore different opportunities such as utilising surplus industrial and brownfield land, considering development on open space that no longer performs its original function and, in exceptional circumstances, explore the potential use of a small amount of greenfield land.
5. Where our current assets can be better used for housing, which is better attuned to the needs of the people who live or wish to live in our area, we will look to redevelop them.
6. Through our Asset Management Plan and the One Public Sector Estate, work with all public sector partners to proactively look for opportunities to create additional housing land.
7. Identify solutions to respond to specific housing needs such as first time buyers, key workers, affordable housing, self-build, Co-Housing, Community Land Trusts and specialist housing.

1.2 Planning policies that support the delivery of new homes

Our [Local Plans](#) highlight our ambitions for the area which seek to deliver significant economic and housing growth.

West Suffolk councils rely significantly on the market to provide a mix of open market and affordable housing, both open market and affordable, through landowners' Section 106 obligations. All practical steps are taken to ensure there is a timely delivery of housing in accordance with the supply forecasts which will be detailed within West Suffolk's Housing Delivery Plan.

- **Demand for affordable housing**

There continues to be an increased demand for affordable housing from those whose housing needs cannot be met by the open market, particularly young people, families on low incomes, vulnerable and older people.

[West Suffolk's current policy requirement](#) is for 30% affordable housing to be provided on all residential developments of 10 units or more. There are two main ways of delivering affordable homes: (i) by private developers through Section 106 agreements; and (ii) registered providers (RPs) building their own schemes through their development programmes.

The housing sector continues to operate in a climate of uncertainty and heightened risk, leading to more challenges over the financial viability of schemes. As a consequence there is risk that reduced levels of affordable housing is being delivered through Section 106 agreements. These financial uncertainties have also led to a number of RPs reducing their own development programmes.

In order to address these issues we will:

1. Promote, develop and review planning policies to support affordable housing provision. Ensure that West Suffolk's emerging Local Plan contains robust planning policies and our Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document supports these.
2. Encourage innovation such as mixed use schemes in order to balance competing demands on well positioned sites. While much of the growth activity is focused around our major sites, we will encourage good quality, sustainable development on smaller sites where opportunities arise.
3. Work with developers to ensure that they are meeting the full affordable housing obligations through S106 agreements
4. Be creative and flexible in securing the levels of affordable housing needed and consider many forms and types of affordable housing within the context of new government policy, including affordable home ownership, affordable private rent, starter homes, discounted market sales housing, plus empty properties being refurbished and let at affordable rents.
5. Focus on 'stalled' sites with planning consent, and if necessary use Compulsory Purchase powers.
6. Support the development of neighbourhood plans to encourage local communities to identify solutions to address local housing needs.

1.3 Increasing the speed of housing delivery

- **Housing Delivery Plan**

We are playing a direct role in increasing the rate of housing delivery, which was demonstrated with the creation of the Councils' own housing development company, Barley Homes (Group) Limited in March 2016. Barley Homes is developing its first site.

We have commissioned an assessment of the past and current rates of housing delivery across West Suffolk. This information will be used to develop a Housing Delivery Plan. The plan will set out a wide range of interventions that West Suffolk can use in an enabling role to increase the rate of housing delivery on existing and emerging sites and local plan housing allocations. We recognise that we will need to do this in partnership with both the private sector and other public sector partners, in order to speed up the rate of housing delivery, in the short, medium and long-term.

- **Small to Medium Sized Enterprises and Self-Build**

With the government setting ambitious targets to accelerate the rate of housing delivery, there is a recognised lack of capacity within the larger and mainstream house builders. We will explore new ways of delivery, such as modern methods of construction and continue to work with Small to Medium Sized Enterprise (SME) builders.

The development of new homes using self-build in both the UK and West Suffolk has been very low compared to the rates in Europe. We will take positive action to support and advise SME builders and self-builders. There are a number of options we can pursue including bringing forward small sites and making them available to smaller builders, “de-risking” sites and making the planning process as straight forward as possible or offering sites with outline planning permission or planning in principle. This will be facilitated by using the Council’s self-build register and brownfield sites register. Where appropriate we may also offer financial assistance from West Suffolk’s Growth Innovation Fund.

Whilst the speed of delivery is important, this must not be at the expense of good design or quality and we will encourage developers to have due regard to the concepts set out in the emerging Suffolk Design Guide.

In order to address these issues we will:

1. Identify a range of options to increase the rate of housing delivery by using the findings from the Housing Delivery Plan to work with public sector partners, Homes England, private developers and RPs.
2. Work with developers to encourage the sub-division of large sites where this could help to speed up the delivery of homes.
3. Adopt an enabling role to support conversations with statutory consultees, including SMEs and self or custom builders.
4. Re-establish a developers and agents forum to improve dialogue.
5. Work with site owners and developers to identify ways to restart or bring forward development on sites where the rate of build has significantly slowed or stalled. This will include consideration of Homes England funding to accelerate delivery and the renegotiation of planning conditions where appropriate.
6. Seek to support housing delivery using a range of pro-active interventions, but while we recognise we cannot do this on our own and will require the support of a wide range of partners.
7. Use our housing company Barley Homes (Group) Limited to bring forward housing development, including working with other public sector partners.
8. Explore opportunities to encourage SME builders to work collaboratively to bring forward the development of housing sites.

1.4 Ensuring the provision of infrastructure needed to support new homes

Effective planning and funding for infrastructure can unlock land for development, enable growth and enhance our local area. Good planning for infrastructure increases certainty, creates efficiencies, reduces costs and helps to manage the phasing of development. Infrastructure delivery depends on many

different public and private sector partners and funding often comprises a mix of investment solutions.

For the private sector, the role of infrastructure costs in establishing development viability is critical. Sharing of information and being transparent about requirements and costs is essential. We take guidance from the NPPF and NPPG regarding viability. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

West Suffolk will have a proactive flexible approach to providing solutions to make development work and will explore further opportunities to assist on difficult sites. This may include using our [Growth Investment Strategy](#) directly investing to de-risk sites by addressing environmental and infrastructure issues or by securing outline planning permission.

In order to address these issues we will:

1. Provide leadership by identifying how development strategies can be future-proofed by anticipating and making provision for new and emerging technologies such as information technology provision.
2. Ensure the planning process enables the Councils to negotiate with developers to guarantee the supply of new homes, including affordable homes.
3. Work with developers and public sector partners to directly provide funding through our Growth Investment Fund or to help to secure financing or grants for vital infrastructure such as Infrastructure funding and Get Britain Building Funding from Homes England.

1.5 Building sustainable communities

West Suffolk is committed to supporting the development and maintenance of balanced sustainable communities that support our residents. We will work with developers and RPs to encourage high quality and sustainable developments, which incorporate the concepts of quality design. This work is linked to section 2.4 in this document (communities that provide a better place to live).

Some of our residents are unable to afford their own home and rely on homes provided by RPs or from private landlords. Others may find themselves living in a home that does not meet their changing needs as they grow older or where they have requirements for specialist housing. We can help to address this situation.

- **Affordability**

Affordable Rent was introduced by central Government in 2011 to replace Social Rents, to provide a way in which RPs could deliver new affordable homes without public subsidy. Affordable Rents are generally set at 80% of market rents, which is the upper limit, as opposed to social rents, which are generally nearer to 65% of market rents. For some individuals and families even the Affordable Rent is unaffordable. This is particularly the case for larger homes, such as four

bedroom houses. It is our intention that new, larger homes, and in particular four bedroom homes, are set below 80% of market rents and ideally at social rents.

We acknowledge this may affect the financial viability of schemes, so any decisions about rent levels will be taken with this consideration in mind. In any event, through our Tenancy Strategy [\(include link when finalised\)](#) and Section 106 agreements we will seek to ensure that all new Affordable Rented homes are capped at no more than the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels. We will also work with RPs to explore the possibility of developing new social rented homes, particularly in areas where private rents are very high and well above LHA levels, which may involve direct funding from the councils.

- **Ageing population and people with care and health needs**

Appropriate housing that meets the decent standards plays a fundamental role in the health and wellbeing of residents.

West Suffolk's total population is expected to increase by 10% by 2039, compared with 11% across England. The growth in population for those residents aged 75 and over is expected to be much larger. For residents in West Suffolk aged 75 and over we are expecting to see 84% growth with resident numbers rising from 16,600 to 30,600. The growth of this age group across England is expected to be 76%.

The number of residents in the groups between 20 and 59 years of age is expected to decrease by 2039. The 60 to 74 age group will increase by 1%. Further details relating to population forecasts can be found in the evidence base at Appendix B.

In West Suffolk we mirror the national picture in that there is a real shortage of the right type of housing such as extra care housing, bungalows or smaller accessible homes to assist with down-sizing to meet the changing needs of our ageing population. Working with partners, providers and older people we will seek to ensure more housing choices become available to support the increasing ageing population or those with specialist housing needs.

Private Renting

Private rental rates in West Suffolk have increased significantly in recent years, reflecting the fact that demand is greater than supply. We are seeing this situation because home ownership is now out of reach for many, in particular young people.

Furthermore there is a high demand for private rented accommodation, in 2015 37.2% of Forest Heath's and 25.54% of St Edmundsbury's total housing stock was privately rented⁴. This is partly fuelled by many residents being unable to

⁴ <https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/hmb-edition-37.pdf>

buy housing on the open market due to the inability to be able to access mortgage finance (including the need for large deposits) and because of the high house prices in the area, when compared to average earnings. The average house price in West Suffolk for December 2017 was £284,363⁵. The cost of private renting in certain parts of West Suffolk is also very high, largely influenced by the presence of two USAFE air bases that inflate rental levels.

Whilst we will seek to address this by taking concerted action to ensure there is a timely delivery of housing generally, and by focusing on the supply of more affordable homes, we are also exploring opportunities to encourage developers to provide affordable private rent homes.

In order to address these issues we will:

1. Work with partners including the Clinical Commissioning Group and Suffolk County Council to identify the future need for specialist housing, including housing for the elderly, people with disabilities, Gypsy and Travellers, keyworkers and so on.
2. Adopt an innovative approach to new affordable housing provision, including exploring the opportunities for shared ownership housing, modern methods of construction, community led housing, custom and self-building and housing types to meet specific markets, such as supported housing (including extra care and for those with a learning disability), students, downsizers, sharers and young newly forming households.
3. Review the impact of affordable rents on demand and develop an approach to rent setting for affordable homes to ensure properties are affordable to target markets. (Further details can be found in the Tenancy Strategy.
4. Explore opportunities to develop new social rented homes, involving providing direct funding to facilitate the development in areas where private rents are well above LHA levels.
5. Explore innovative ways for how we can work with private developers and RPs to help older people who may wish to downsize.
6. Explore opportunities for the creation of co-housing schemes which support inter-generational living.
7. Work with developers to build homes that can be adapted to meet the needs of people throughout their lifetime, including the use of smart technology within homes to enable home environments to respond better to specific needs, supporting more independent living
8. Encourage a wider range of housing in the privately rented sector, including affordable private rent and student rented accommodation.
9. Set an ambition that all new housing built, will meet either building regulations accessible and adaptable or wheelchair user standards.

⁵ <https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/hmb-edition-37.pdf>

Housing priority two: Improve the quality of housing and the local environment for our residents

We are committed to maximising the use of the existing housing stock and to improving its quality and suitability. This can be achieved through our own actions and by working with partners. We have an important role to play in the prevention of poor health and the impact of poor health on the wider health and care system. We know that living in a decent home can significantly improve quality of life.

This section outlines our key actions in the following areas:

- 2.1 Suitable homes for disabled, vulnerable and older residents
- 2.2 Bringing homes back into use
- 2.3 Making homes safe in the private sector
- 2.4 Safe and vibrant communities
- 2.5 Improving energy efficiency and addressing fuel poverty

2.1 Suitable homes for disabled, vulnerable and older residents

Residents will be supported to live independently in their own homes, whether in their existing property or a more suitable one. Living independently may mean that adaptations need to be made to peoples' homes, through a Disabled Facilities Grants or other schemes relating to minor works and equipment.

In order to address these issues we will:

1. Put the residents' needs first and work with health, social care and housing partners to help people maintain independence in their homes by providing the necessary equipment through works funded by Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG). We will utilise partnership working to pool funding to help residents' meet their housing needs. The wide ranging schemes, including adaptations, will also help to prevent hospital admissions and facilitate quicker discharge.
2. Review the way in which we deliver support for maintaining independence in the home through the Home Improvement Agency.

2.2 Bringing homes back into use

There are still too many long-term empty homes, therefore we will use all available tools to encourage and compel owners to bring their homes back into use.

In order to address these issues we will:

1. Provide support, encouragement and funding to help owners of empty homes bring them back into use. Use enforcement powers as an option if negotiations fail.
2. Prioritise for intervention homes we most need by working with partners including Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) and ensure that the maximum Council Tax charge is levied for long-term empty homes.
3. Support landlords who want to improve standards in the private rented sector and work with us through the West Suffolk Lettings Partnership.
4. Use enforcement powers to bring empty homes back into use.

2.3 Making homes safe in the private sector

Our [Civil Sanctions Policy](#) is key to driving up standards in the private rented sector. Whilst we recognise that the majority of private sector landlords provide decent, safe and warm homes, we will target the landlords who do not meet the required standards.

Extended licensing of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) will provide us with more opportunities to be proactive. Well managed HMOs provide much needed, affordable rented accommodation and we use these to relieve pressures from housing demand.

We have a Housing Assistance Policy designed to support vulnerable residents to live in a decent home.

In order to address these issues we will:

1. Improve standards in the private rented sector by working with landlords to deliver best practice and target 'rogue landlords' through our Civil Sanctions Policy.
2. Improve much needed accommodation provided through HMOs. Work in line with licensing laws that raise the management and standards of HMOs.
3. Deliver our programme to improve fire safety of flats above commercial premises.
4. Review the purpose and scope of our Housing Assistance Policy.
5. Explore innovative ways to utilise funding to drive up standards and increase the supply of decent housing.

2.4 Safe and vibrant communities

The quality of the environment is also important to our residents and it is a key driver to what makes people feel happy, safe and secure. We ensure that individuals and communities are properly protected from environmental impacts such as noise, odour or smoke. We also want to use planning to support sustainable communities and well-designed places through the emerging Suffolk Design Guide (referenced in Housing Priority One).

In order to address these issues we will:

1. Take a more targeted approach to investigating complaints of nuisance, which can have an adverse impact on quality of life.

2. Work with partners to reduce anti-social behaviour and crime.
3. Use our [Families and Communities Strategy](#) to support and encourage resilient families and communities.
4. Protect the amenity of the local environment through our consultation work in the planning process.
5. Respond to the Suffolk Design Guide that aims to raise the quality of design being delivered in communities and neighbourhoods and ensure that good growth takes place across Suffolk.

2.5 Improving energy efficiency and addressing fuel poverty

Heating and powering homes in West Suffolk currently accounts for around 21% of total energy consumption and 23% of CO₂ emissions. Buildings and particularly homes are seen by many as the sector which councils and their partners are best able to influence in terms of improving energy efficiency and helping to deliver low and zero carbon energy. An estimated 8.6% of households in West Suffolk are in fuel poverty.

As set out in our Home Energy Conservation Report and Energy Framework, we wish to cut greenhouse gas emissions and secure affordable warmth for households and communities in West Suffolk.

In order to address these issues we will:

1. Target vulnerable households to help improve energy efficiency and the household's circumstances, maximising the use of local and national funding including Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding.
2. Work with RP partners and private landlords to secure energy improvement in their property.
3. Provide home energy advice and support to residents and community groups on the benefits of energy efficiency and renewable energy.
4. Support community energy schemes for the provision of local renewable and lower carbon energy generation for heating and power supply.

Priority three: Enable people to access suitable and sustainable housing

We want to help people access suitable and sustainable housing. This can mean providing advice and support to find suitable accommodation or to help them stay in their current home. We work with partners to assist as soon as problems arise and respond when people find themselves in crisis situations, for example homelessness.

This section outlines our key actions the following areas:

- 3.1 Homelessness prevention and reduction
- 3.2 Housing allocations

3.1 Homelessness prevention and reduction

West Suffolk is committed to preventing and reducing homelessness, tackling the main causes of homelessness and supporting those in need. [West Suffolk Homelessness Reduction Strategy 2018 – 2023](#) sets out in detail the actions we will take to prevent and reduce homelessness. All the detail is available in the strategy but in summary our vision 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.

- Homelessness priority one: Homelessness prevention
- Homelessness priority two: Tackling rough sleeping
- Homelessness priority three: Supporting vulnerable households
- Homelessness priority four: Increasing accommodation options
- Homelessness priority five: Supporting the implementation of welfare reforms

A [delivery plan](#) accompanies the Homelessness Reduction Strategy and sets out in detail the key actions that we will take to achieve our priorities.

3.2 Housing allocations

In West Suffolk, as in many parts of the country, social and affordable housing is scarce and demand far outstrips supply. We cannot house everyone that applies to, and is accepted on, our housing register (known as Home-Link). Our [Lettings Policy](#) sets out how we prioritise the allocation of social and affordable rented homes across West Suffolk and the Cambridge sub-region. The Lettings Policy ensures that applicants on the housing register, with the highest level of housing

need and/or urgent need to move are prioritised for housing/rehousing. As the supply of social and affordable housing remains scarce, it is a priority for the Council to allocate homes fairly, and in line with our Lettings Policy.

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 manage the expectations of customers and ensure that we maximise access and availability not only to social rented accommodation but to other housing options. We discuss the availability of private rented housing and opportunities for rent through our [West Suffolk Lettings Partnership](#). We support people to explore their housing options and help meet their aspirations.

In order to address these issues we will:

1. Operate an effective Home-Link service to provide access to affordable and social housing to those most in need.
2. Review the Lettings Policy, in conjunction with colleagues across the Cambridge sub-region, to ensure that it is fit for purpose.
3. Ensure that people are provided with effective advice, preventative and information services on a range of accessible housing options so they are supported to make the best choice for them and their families.
4. Increase access to the private rented sector, including through our West Suffolk Lettings Partnership.

7. Governance and implementation of the strategy








The Councils are committed to ensuring that together with partners, we have the skills, structures and infrastructure in place to be able to implement the actions to deliver on the strategy's priorities over the next five years.

The actions in this Housing Strategy will be achieved using the implementation plan (Appendix C) that identifies the main tasks needed to increase and improve the provision of appropriate housing over the next five years. Given the context of rapid change, the implementation 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 Housing Strategy implementation plan (Appendix C) will be monitored with feedback, if necessary, on the barriers to delivering the Housing Strategy.

The implementation plan is being developed during the consultation period and will be finalised once the consultation has concluded.








1. Types of accommodation in West Suffolk

<p>General housing (owner occupied)</p> 	<p>Private rental</p> 	<p>Social housing</p> 	<p>Supported housing</p> 	<p>Specialist housing</p>	<p>Temporary accommodation</p> 	<p>B&B and emergency</p> 	<p>Severe weather provision</p> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open market • Key worker and other specialist • Park homes • Modular homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private rental • Lodgings • Shared housing (inc HMOs) • Tied housing (e.g. agriculture, military, horseracing, hospital accommodation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable rents • Social rents • Shared ownership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided by registered providers and VCS via SCC contracts • Central referral system and allocation • Mixed level of support – low support needs to high risk • Specialist provision for e.g. young people, mental health, probation • Some private / charitable supported accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing for current and former serving armed forces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RP owned and managed • Council owned and externally leased / managed • Mixture of self-contained and shared accommodation • Mixed level of support provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private providers of B&B • RP and VCS provide emergency beds (SCC contract) • Use of hotels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency provision between October and March • Provided by registered provider with some support of VCS








2. Current position in West Suffolk

General housing (owner) 	Private rental 	Social housing 	Supported housing 	Specialist housing	Temporary accommodation 	B&B and emergency 	Severe weather provision 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibitive cost of buying • Lack of access for vulnerable and low income • Under occupation in some properties • Downsizing opportunities limited • Some empty properties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibitive cost of renting • Lack of access for vulnerable and low income • Loss of AST largest contributor to homelessness • Limited options for shared housing and lodging schemes in particular • 59 landlords using WSLP • 62 properties on WSLP list • 47% of properties to rent above LHA. Those under LHA harder to let 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,500 on housing register • Average re-let and new build per year 625 • Average homeless acceptances per year 250 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 157 supported housing bed spaces • 193 waiting list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals via Haig Housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70 beds / units (some temporary for one year only) • Average length of stay 15 weeks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 units B&B • £140479 cost of B&B • 30% approx cost not recovered via HB • 12 emergency beds (SSEA) 6 funded by SCC the remainder are funded through housing benefit claims made directly with providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 beds currently. Suggest 7-10 in future • 100% of costs incurred by council. No HB subsidy • Approx £50,000 per year to the councils








3. Councils' role

<p>General housing (owner</p> 	<p>Private rental</p> 	<p>Social housing</p> 	<p>Supported housing</p> 	<p>Specialist housing</p>	<p>Temporary accommodation</p> 	<p>B&B and emergency</p> 	<p>Severe weather provision</p> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable via planning • Effective s106 negotiation • Encourage / enforce housing standards • Accelerate housing delivery (subject to commissioned work) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage / enforce housing standards • Incentivise landlords – WSLP • Could use a third party lodging scheme (can be expensive) • Purchase housing, via Barley Homes, to rent on AST (subject to agreement) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective s106 negotiation • Analysis of need – type and number • Encourage registered providers to adopt different models – shared accommodation, 6 month tenancies etc • Protocols in place to refer tenants who are at risk of losing tenancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence commissioners (and building case for need / demand) • Enable providers (top up funding as an option) • Direct relationship with providers (not rely on commissioners) • Specialist provision via Barley Homes (long term) • Building capacity and skills in the support / VCS sector • Accessing additional funding to increase provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer and maintain positive relationship with Haig Housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage reduction in demand – including tighter approvals for TA decisions • Ensure effective move-on • Direct purchase of properties for use as TA – capital investment • Consider use of council-owned stock • Ensure quality and standard of accommodation • Actively manage arrangements in place (some on long term with RPs and peppercorn agreements) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise use of B&B and emergency accommodation • Ensure limited / no use of B&B for families • Ensure quality and standard of accommodation • Provide effective move on options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duty to provide SWEP arrangements • Establish a sustainable long-term provision for winter shelter • Consider options for a year round shelter • Secure funding, including best option for Housing Benefit subsidy • Increase capacity of voluntary sector • Identify ways of increasing skills base / availability of support workers

4. Gaps / priority actions

<p>General housing (owner provided)</p> 	<p>Private rental</p> 	<p>Social housing</p> 	<p>Supported housing</p> 	<p>Specialist housing</p>	<p>Temporary accommodation</p> 	<p>B&B and emergency</p> 	<p>Severe weather provision</p> 
<p>• Barley Homes to supply additional housing</p> <p>Page 40</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase incentives for private landlords – explore options and liability for councils (business case needed) • Encourage / invest in lodging schemes (business case needed) • Purchase / lease of private sector accommodation (subject to business cases) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence registered providers – rent levels / affordability • Encourage RPs to offer different tenancy options, including shared accommodation for under 35s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure access to external funding – bidding rounds • Monitor existing contracts • Provide support to establish evidence base for new HRS contracts (April 2020) change in govt funding 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refurbish existing council owned property (subject to business cases) • Assess properties on the market for investment (subject to business cases and Asset Management Strategy) • Effective monitoring of existing contracts • Monitor impact of use of TA following new Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective management of cases to reduce the need for emergency accommodation • Increase option of other accommodation to reduce use and effective move on (links to other types of housing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish arrangements for beyond winter 2018/19 • Implement the No Second Night Out partnership • Reduce level of rough sleepers • Increase support (and funding) from other agencies • Implement actions in the Homelessness Strategy

5. Opportunities and constraints

General housing (owner) 	Private rental 	Social housing 	Supported housing 	Specialist housing	Temporary accommodation 	B&B and emergency 	Severe weather provision 
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Low cost to the council

High cost to the council

Page 41

High stability for resident

Low stability for resident

Council has little influence

Council has great influence

This page is intentionally left blank

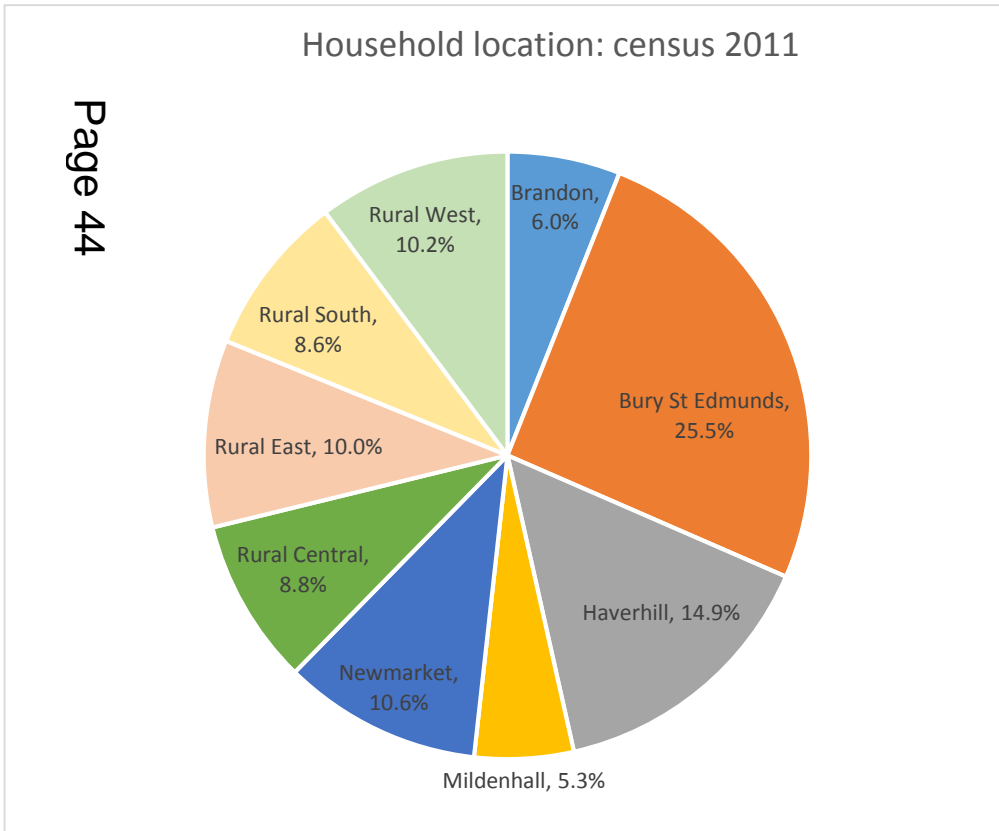
DRAFT Housing Strategy Evidence Base

**(To be further developed during the consultation
period)**

Household location

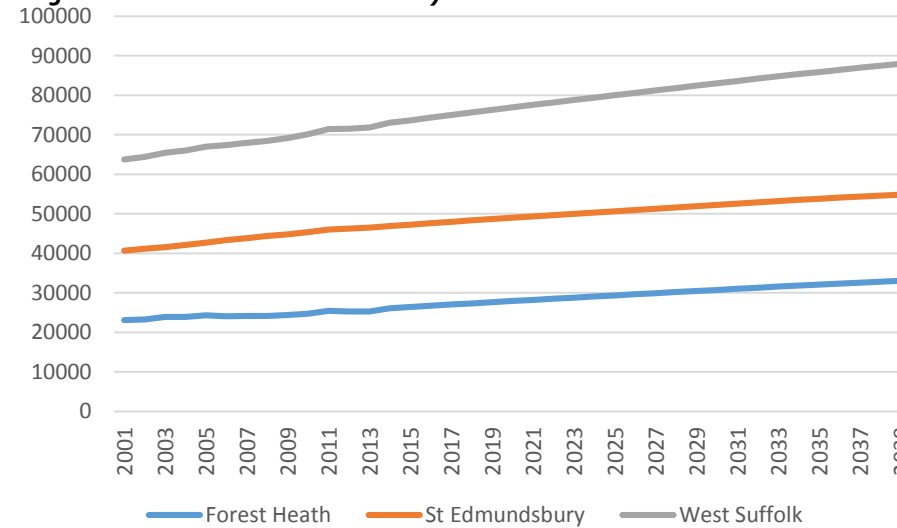
West Suffolk's households are spread across a large rural area, plus 5 main settlements (source: Census 2011)

The location of households are shown across West Suffolk's nine geographies (below).



Growth in number of households

Between 2011 and 2018, the number of households in West Suffolk increased by 6% (7% in Forest Heath and 5% in St Edmundsbury) compared to 7% in England. By 2039 the number of houses in West Suffolk is expected to increase further with a 16% increase from 2018 to 2039, compared to an 18% increase in England (21% increase in Forest Heath and 14% increase in St Edmundsbury) (Source: ONS Household projections 2014 based)

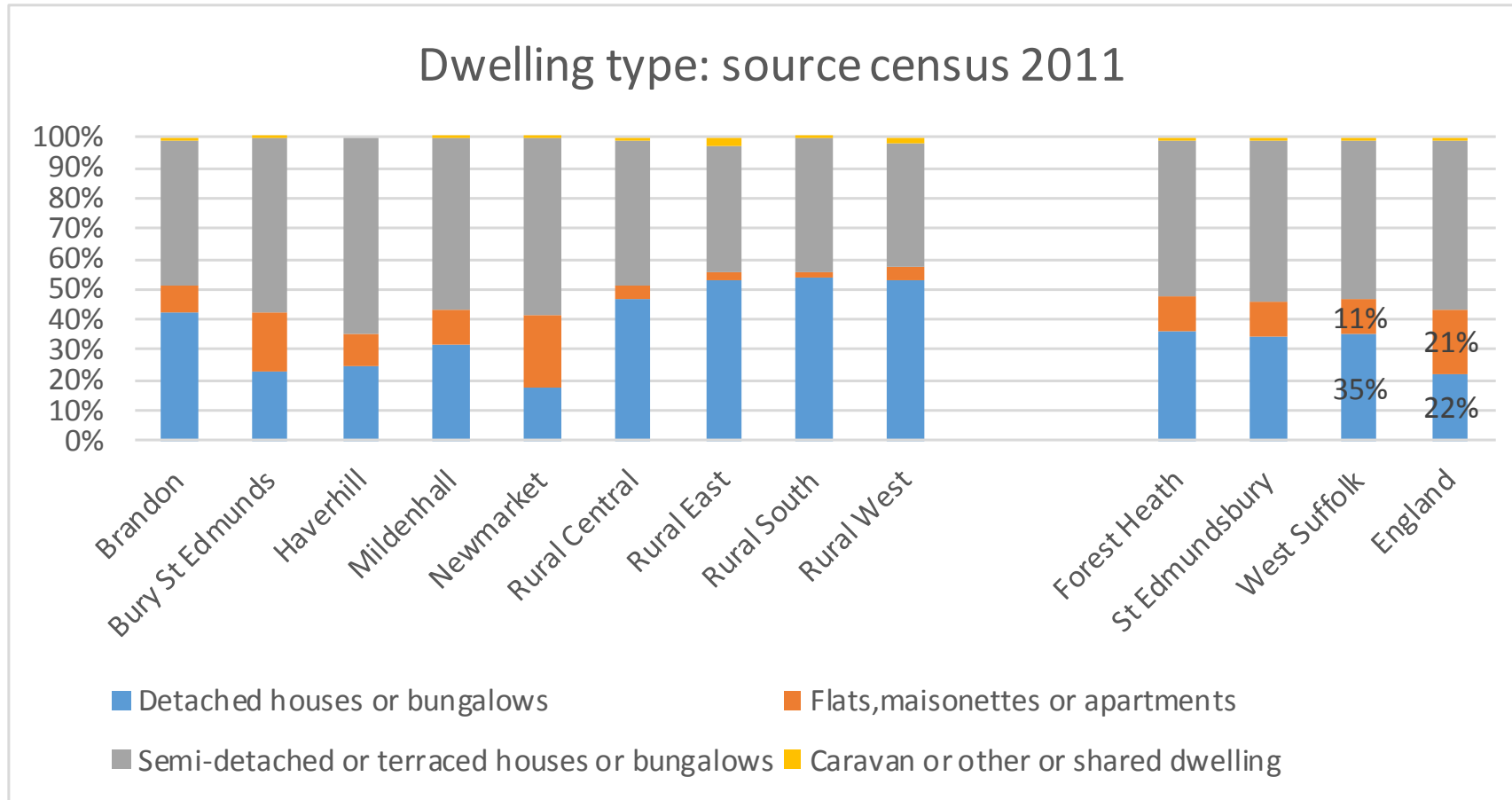


	Projected no of households			% increase		
	2011	2018	2039	2011-2018	2011-2039	2018-2039
English	22103878	23696830	28003598	7%	27%	18%
Suffolk	311669	327730	375245	5%	20%	14%
Forest Heath	25456	27330	33046	7%	30%	21%
St Edmundsbury	46014	48326	54870	5%	19%	14%
West Suffolk	71470	75656	87916	6%	23%	16%

Dwelling type

West Suffolk has a higher percentage of dwellings that are detached houses and bungalows and a lower proportion of flats, maisonettes and apartments than the England average (source: Census 2011)

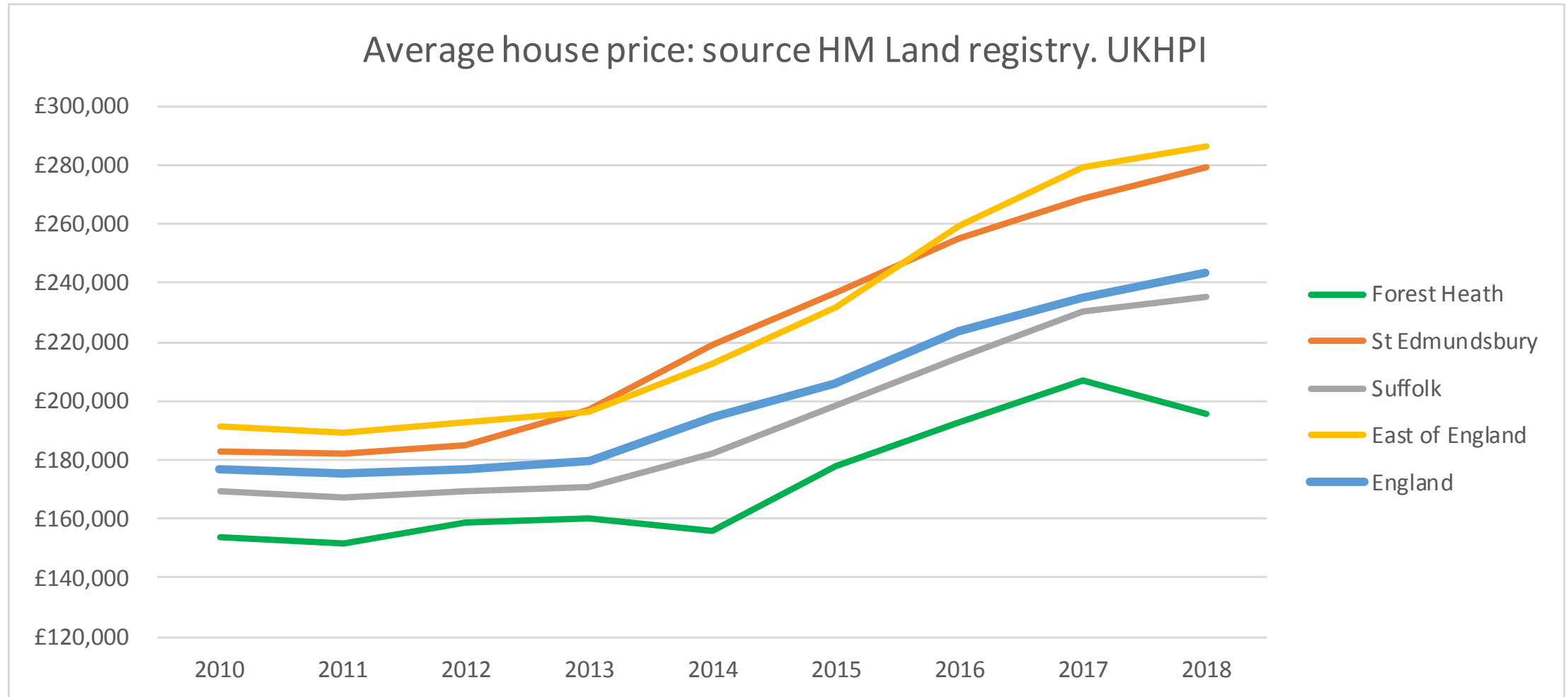
Page 45



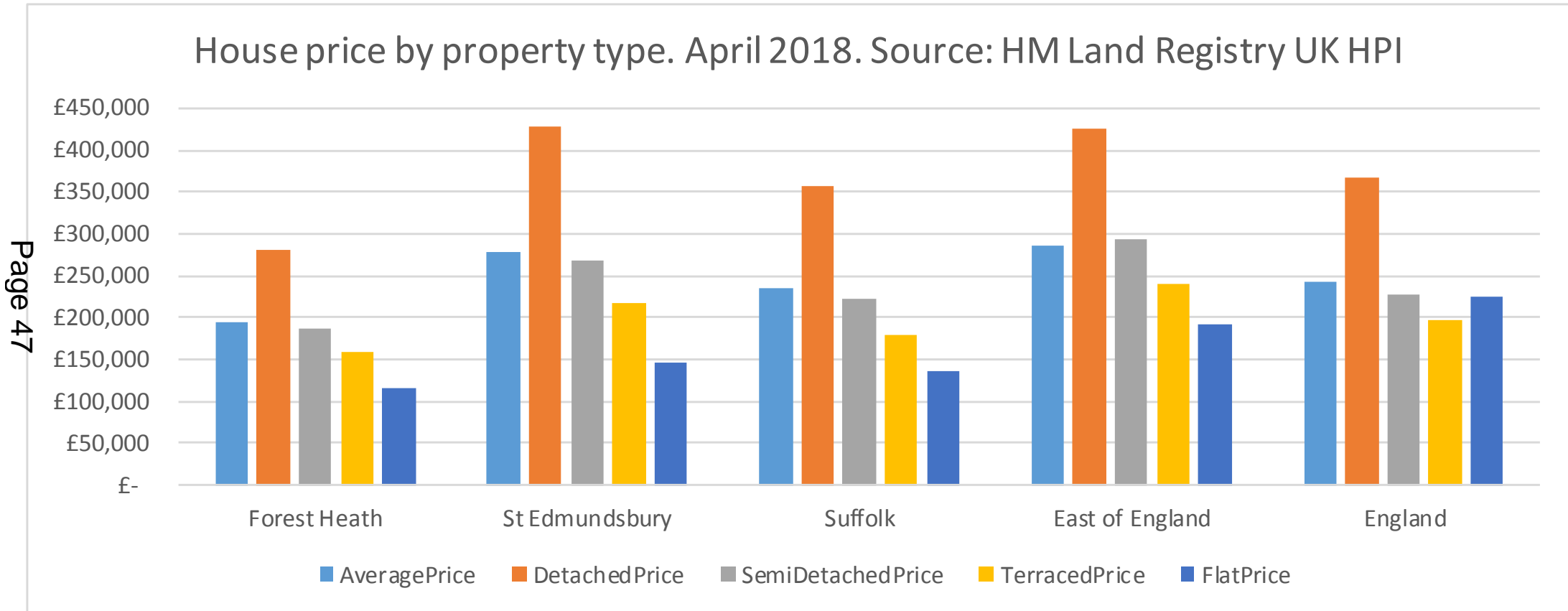
House price – average house price

Data from the Land Registry's House Price Index shows how average house prices in Suffolk fell dramatically in 2008, before a recovery in late 2009 and a further increase of 7.4 during 2013/14

Page 46



House price by property type



Affordability ratios: median quartile

This table shows the median house price to median income ratio between March 2016 and April 2018. The ratios show how many “times” income the local house prices represent. It is usually accepted that house prices of 3 to 3.5 times income are considered affordable.

	Mar-16	Jun-16	Sep-16	Dec-16	Mar-17	Jun-17	Sep-17	Dec-17	Apr-18
Forest Heath	6.6	6.7	6.9	7.2	7.1	6.9	7	7.1	7.4
St Edmundsbury	8	8.1	8.1	8.2	7.7	7.3	7.5	7.7	7.9
East of England	8	8	8.2	8.5	8.2	8	8.2	8.2	8.4

Affordability of buying and renting housing: lower quartile

Buying a property

Ratio of lower quartile house price to lower quartile gross annual workplace-based earnings

HM Land Registry's measure of affordability of housing is the ratio between an area's earnings and house prices. A person in Suffolk, on the lower quartile salary, would need to pay over 10 times their salary to afford a house with the lower quartile price.

Page 49

This may be due to Forest Heath's proximity to Cambridge and the use of the private rented sector by USAFE personnel.

	April 2018
Forest Heath	10.2
St Edmundsbury	11
East of England	11
England	TBC

Cost of renting a property (£)

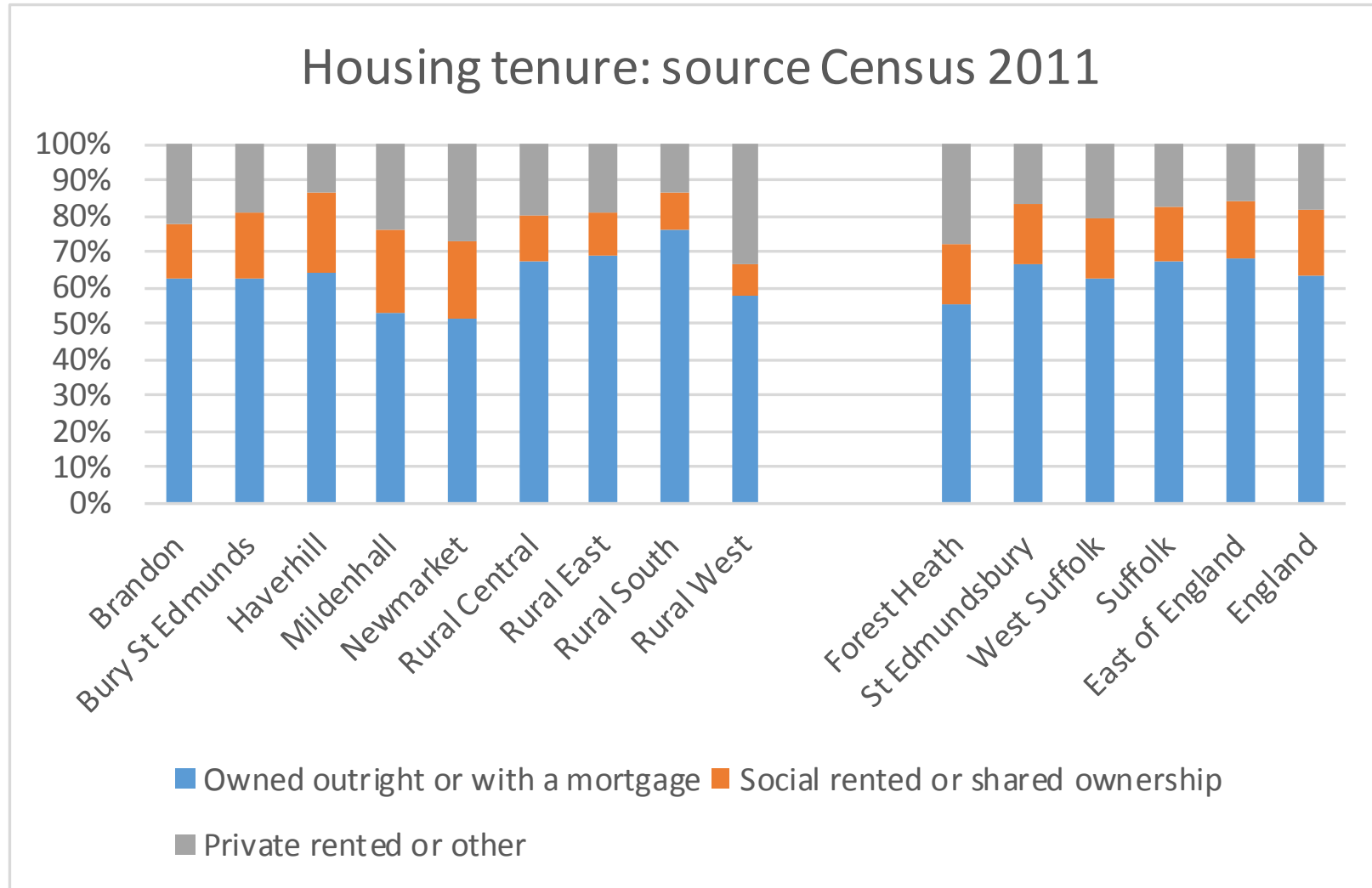
	FHDC	SEBC	East of England	England
1 bed	144	144	155	173
2 bed	173	173	196	178
3 bed	242	219	230	207
4 bed	317	323	323	346

Source: Housing Market Bulletin June 2018

Housing tenure

West Suffolk's tenure mix has a lower than average proportion of social housing than the national average. St Edmundsbury has a higher proportion of owner occupied, and Forest Heath has a higher proportion of private rented properties than average.

Page 50



Land supply for housing

Through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) we assess potential sites for future housing development and have identified land for 21,272 new homes on Greenfield and Brownfield sites over the next 15 years - 8,990 are in Bury St Edmunds, 5,947 in Haverhill, 606 in Newmarket, 1,470 in Mildenhall and 3,369 in rural West Suffolk. https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/Planning_Policies/upload/Main-body-of-report.pdf

Page 51

		2011 /12	2012/2 013	2013/ 2014	2014 / 2015	2015 / 2016	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	Total
Forest Heath	Completions	332	363	246	182	188	344		1655
	Target	340	340	340	340	340	340		2040
	Difference	-8	23	-94	-158	-152	4		-385
	Difference (%)	97.65 %	106.76 %	72.35 %	53.53 %	55.29 %	101.18 %		81.12%
St Edmundsbury	Completions	134	133	238	414	441	388		1698
	Target	481	481	481	481	481	481		2886
	Difference	-347	-348	-243	-67	-41	-93		-1188
	Difference (%)	27.86 %	27.65%	49.48 %	86.07 %	91.48 %	80.67%		60.53%

Affordable homes delivered

Across West Suffolk, 842 affordable homes have been delivered over the past five years.

	Forest Heath	St Edmundsbury
2013/14	51	68
2014/15	49	96
2015/16	15	185
2016/17	33	109
2017/18	61	175
	209	633

Empty homes

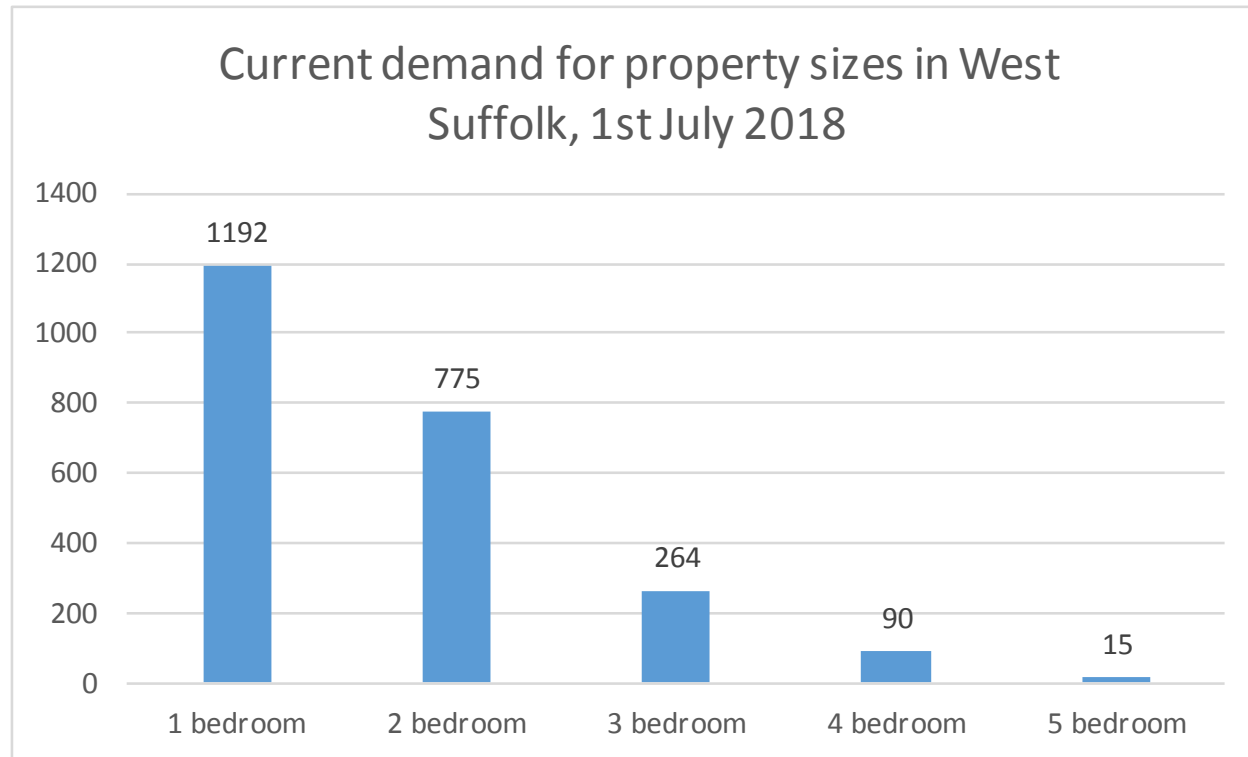
Data from the Empty Homes Agency show that the percentage of homes in Forest Heath that were empty and long term empty in 2011 was higher than the county, regional and national averages.

Empty homes 2017		
Source: gov.uk/live tables on dwelling stock		
	% of all homes that are empty	% of all homes that are long term empty
Forest Heath	2.90%	0.85%
St Edmundsbury	1.99%	0.57%
West Suffolk	2.33%	0.68%
Suffolk	2.26%	0.71%
East of England	2.23%	0.70%
England	2.53%	0.86%

Housing size – need and demand on housing

Source: Housing Register database

The majority of households currently on the Housing Register in West Suffolk are waiting for a 1 or 2 bed home.



Who is on the housing register - 1st July 2018?	
Single	41%
Couples	12%
Family with children	45%
Other HH types	2%
	100%

Household size

Data on average household size is calculated by looking at the number of projected households and Subnational Population Projections.

	Average household size 2011	Average household size 2018	Average household size 2039
Forest Heath	2.3	2.42	2.39
St Edmundsbury	2.4	2.35	2.25
West Suffolk		2.38	2.3
Suffolk	2.3	2.29	2.19
East of England	2.4	2.36	2.27
England	2.4	2.37	2.26

Age profile: population growth

The table below shows the expected population growth between 2016 and 2039. From 2016 to 2039 the population is expected to grow by 11% in England and 10% in West Suffolk. The growth in population for those residents aged 75+ is much larger. For residents in West Suffolk aged 75+ we can expect to see 84% growth with resident numbers rising from 16,600 to 30,600

The table below shows the percentage growth from 2016 to 2039

	England	West Suffolk
All ages	11%	10%
0-14	2%	3%
15-19	11%	13%
20-24	5%	4%
25-34	2%	-2%
35-44	-1%	-3%
45-59	2%	-6%
60-74	22%	16%
75+	76%	84%

Source: Subnational population projections 2016 (published May 2018)

Age profile: percentage population by age

The table below shows the percentage of population by age band for 2016 and 2039.

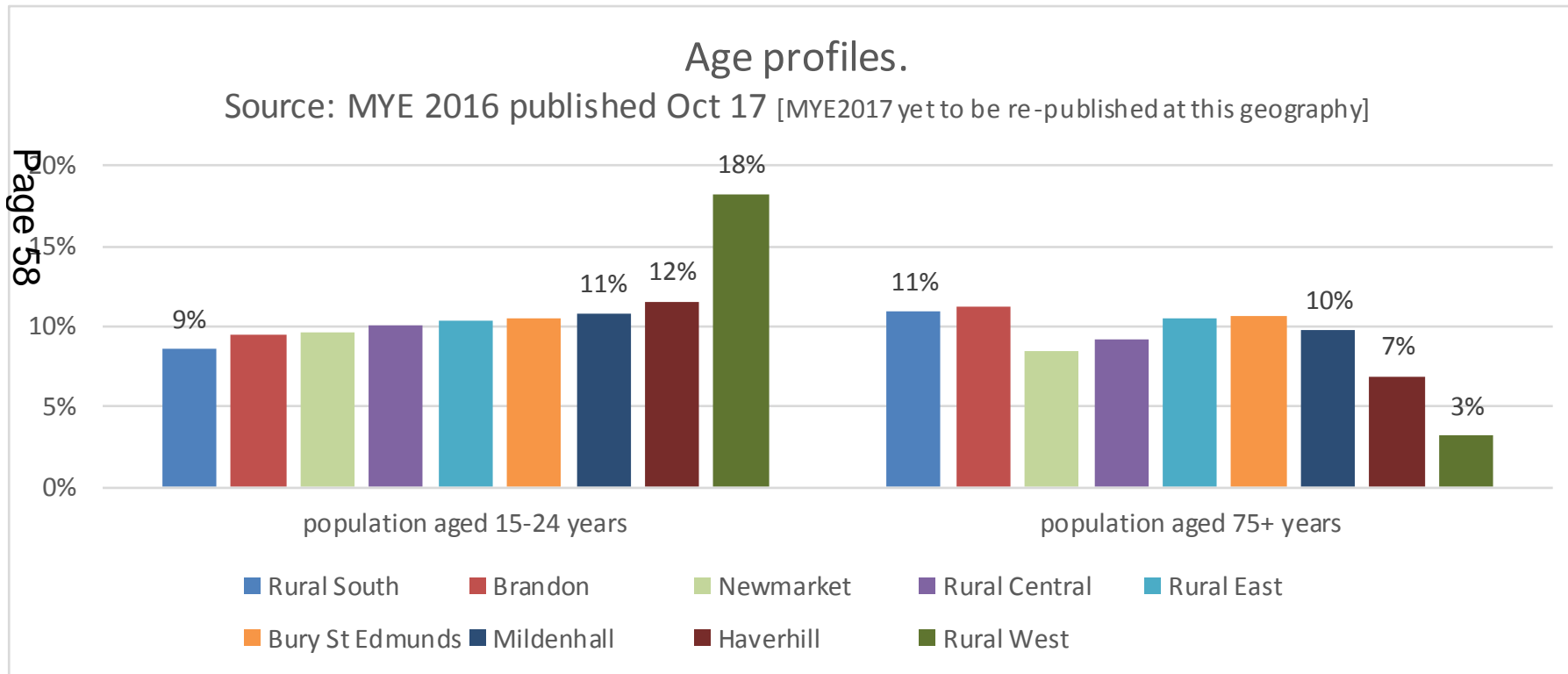
Currently in West Suffolk 1 in 11 residents are aged 75 and over. By 2039 it is predicted that 1 in 6 residents will be aged 75 and over.

	2016	2039	2016	2039
Age band	England		West Suffolk	
0-14	18%	16%	18%	17%
15-19	6%	6%	5%	5%
20-24	6%	6%	6%	5%
25-34	14%	13%	14%	13%
35-44	13%	11%	12%	10%
45-59	20%	18%	20%	17%
60-74	15%	17%	17%	18%
75+	8%	13%	9%	16%

Source: Subnational population projections 2016
(published May 2018)

Age profile – differences across the region

Some areas of West Suffolk, for example Mildenhall, Haverhill and Rural West have a more youthful population. 18% of the population in Rural West is aged between 15-24 years with only 3% of their population aged 75 and over. In comparison, Rural South has an older population with only 9% aged between 15-24 years and 11% aged 75 plus.



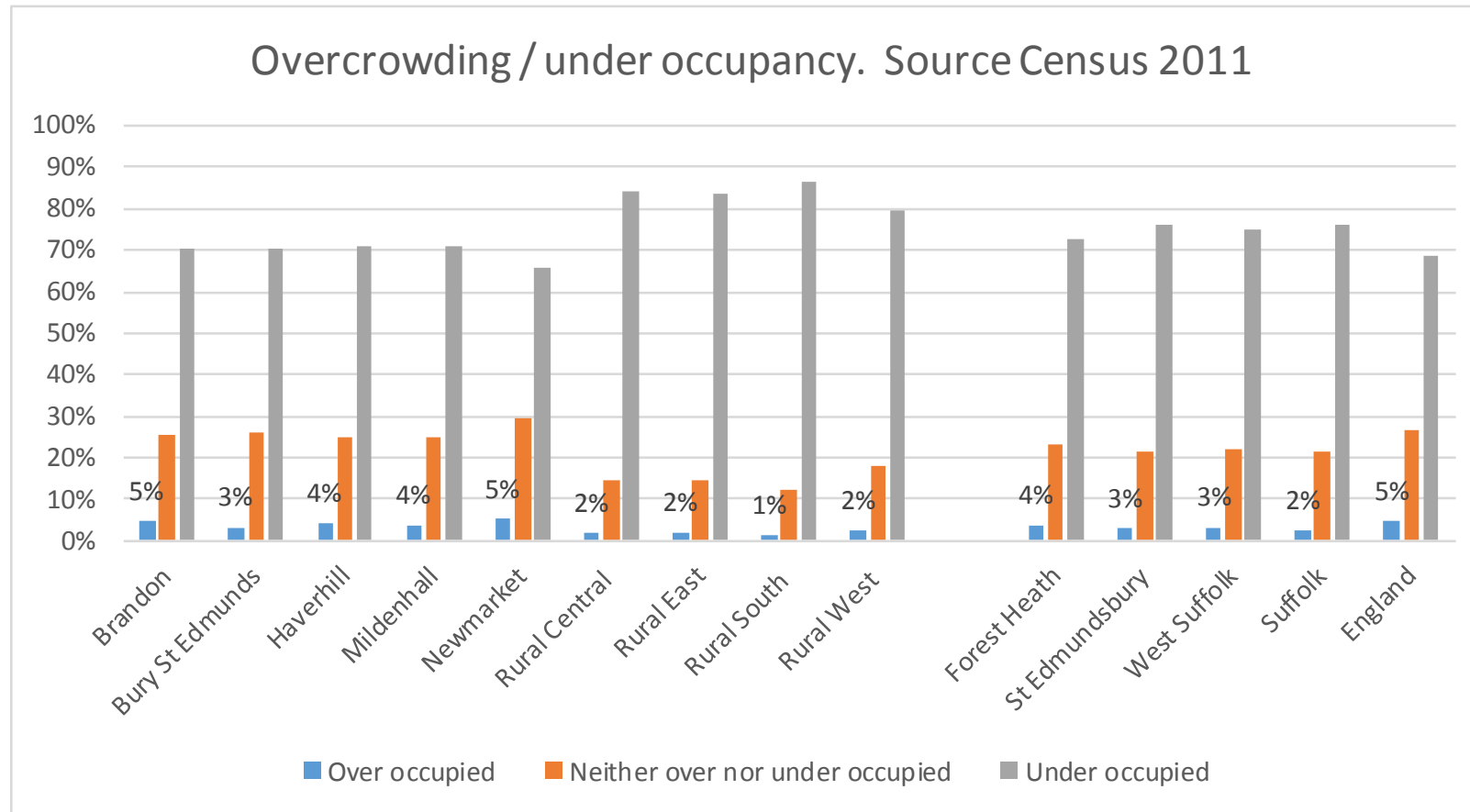
Rural West
Eriswell and the rows
Exning
Lakenheath
Manor
South

Rural South
Cavendish
Chedburgh
Clare
Hundon
Kedington
Wickhambrook
Withersfield

Overcrowding/under occupancy

A slightly higher proportion of homes in West Suffolk are under occupied when compared to the national average (i.e. they have 1 or 2 more bedrooms per household than needed). The percentage of under occupied homes increases in the rural areas. In West Suffolk 3% of homes are over occupied but this increases to 4% and 5% in Haverhill, Mildenhall, Brandon and Newmarket.

NB. These figures are from before the Spare Room Subsidy was introduced.



Housing register applicants

	West Suffolk				
	1st July 2018		%		
Band A	264		11%		
Band B	658		28%		
Band C	605		26%		
Band D	809		35%		
Total	2336				
Homeseeker	1640		70%		
Transfer	696		30%		
333 of the 2336 applicants on the housing register (14%) are aged over 65					
39% of applicants were placed in Bands A or B (high need)					

Source: Housing Register database

Homelessness (revised data)

	Homelessness per 1000 households (2017/18)		
Forest Heath	3.8		
St Edmundsbury	2.9		
West Suffolk	3.2		
Suffolk	2		
East of England	2.4		
England	2.4		
Source: MHCLG.gov.uk/live tables on homelessness			

Page 61

The chart below shows that the number of rough sleepers across West Suffolk has increased dramatically.



Useful links

[Strategic Housing Market Assessment](#)

[Housing Market Bulletin](#)

Appendix C: DRAFT Housing Strategy – implementation plan

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

Insert housing priority

1.1 Insert priority area

The Implementation Plan will include the priorities and actions that have been agreed in the Housing Strategy and it will be set out as shown below. The plan is being developed during the consultation period and will be finalised once the consultation has concluded.

No	Action	Key milestones	Outcomes and monitoring	Resource implications	Service area	Key partners

This page is intentionally left blank

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 provide a range of housing options so that we can respond to and plan for the growing need for additional housing in West Suffolk.

It is anticipated that all residents in West Suffolk could benefit from the proposals. The strategy intends to increase the supply of affordable housing and improve the quality of existing housing throughout West Suffolk, to help meet the needs of current and future populations.

In terms of how it will impact on those with a protected characteristic, the strategy sets out how West Suffolk intends to improve housing provision for the following groups:

- those with a disability;
- elderly people and younger people;
- those living in rural isolation;
- and those on a low income.

This page is intentionally left blank

DRAFT

WEST SUFFOLK

TENANCY STRATEGY

2018-2023

DRAFT

18 October 2018
Draft for Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Contents

	Page
1. Introduction	3
2. Vision and Objectives	3
3. Scope for West Suffolk's Housing Strategy	4
4. Housing in West Suffolk	4
5. Providing new affordable homes	
• Delivery	5
6. Tenancies provided by Registered Providers	
• Affordable Rent	6
• Social Rent	6
• Intermediate Housing	6
• Flexible tenancies	6
- Fixed term Tenancies	7
- Lifetime Tenancies	7
7. Challenges faced by Affordable Rents in West Suffolk	
• Affordability	7
8. Specialist Housing	
• Older People's Housing	9
• Supported Housing	9
• Properties with adaptations	9
9. Tenancy Review	10
10. Disposal of Affordable Homes by Registered Providers	11
11. Mobility	
• Moving for employment/social and welfare reasons	11
• Downsizing	11
12. Voluntary Right to Buy	12
13. Governance – monitoring and reviewing	12
14. Risk	12
15. Equalities	13

1. Introduction

The Tenancy Strategy provides guidance for Registered Providers (RPs) operating throughout West Suffolk, the area covered by Forest Heath District and St Edmundsbury Borough Councils. Registered Providers are the bodies that own and manage affordable housing, they tend to be non-commercial, not for profit organisations.

The Localism Act (2011) introduced a duty for Local Authorities to produce a Tenancy Strategy which outlines both the Councils and Registered Providers approach to issues which affect tenants living in their area. This Tenancy Strategy is an updated version of the previous strategy which ran from 2012 – 2018, and incorporates all applicable changes from updated legislation.

This Tenancy Strategy sets out our position on the provision of affordable housing including the use of Flexible Tenancies, Affordable Rents and the use of private sector tenancies for homeless households. It should be read in conjunction with the West Suffolk Housing Strategy 2018-2023, which sets out our wider ambitions for housing.

2. Vision and Objectives

Our Strategic Framework 2018-2020 sets out the vision for the local area and contains strategic priorities that we are committed to in order to deliver this vision. Our strategic priority that specifically focuses on housing is to:

Increase and improve the provision of appropriate housing in west Suffolk in both our towns and rural areas.

To deliver this strategic priority, we will use our roles as a local housing and planning authority, a regulatory, an investor and local influencer to:

- Housing priority one: 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.
- Housing priority two: Improve the quality of housing and the local environment for our residents.
- Housing priority three: Enable people to access suitable and sustainable housing.

Through this vision we will seek to work with RPs to provide good quality housing where successful tenancies can be sustained. This vision is at the heart of our aims to support vibrant, mixed communities and to encourage and manage ambitious growth to deliver prosperity and quality of life for all.

This Strategy is intended to promote clarity and fairness, and to offer a guide to RPs who may manage stock within West Suffolk. While we no longer own our own housing stock, having transferred them to two RPs, Flagship Housing Group (Forest Heath in 2004) and Havebury Housing Partnership (St Edmundsbury in

2002), we still have an interest in how these properties are managed for the residents of West Suffolk.

The objectives of this Tenancy Strategy are to:

- provide access to decent accommodation that people can afford
- stimulate a diverse and resilient economy
- provide opportunities for all the community

These objectives reflect priorities within West Suffolk's Housing Strategy 2018 as well as reflecting the Council's approach in its Allocation Policy and its Homeless Action Plan.

(https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/housing/Housing_options/upload/West-Suffolk-Homelessness-Strategy-2015-2018-FINAL.pdf)

3. Scope of West Suffolk's Tenancy Strategy

This strategy mainly covers the following areas, as required by Section 150 of the Localism Act (2011):

- Flexible Tenancies
- Affordable Rents
- The Housing Register
- Using the private sector to house homeless people
- Disposals of social and affordable housing stock

Although the Voluntary Right to Buy does not fall into the category of prescribed policies set out in the Localism Act, it is included in this strategy update as it relates closely to the other subjects covered.

4. Housing in West Suffolk

West Suffolk covers a large geographic area within Suffolk and is one of five district council areas in Suffolk. As of March 2017, there were 12,812 social and affordable properties across West Suffolk including General Needs, Support Housing and Low Cost Home Ownership **Update to 2018 if possible and include reference** . This represents approximately 16.5% of West Suffolk's total housing stock. These dwellings are split between the twenty nine RPs currently operating throughout our area, many of whom are also actively developing new affordable housing. **List in appendix**

Population

There are approximately 176,700 people living in West Suffolk, according to Nomisweb 2016 estimates. (www.nomisweb.co.uk) West Suffolk's main urban settlements are Brandon, Bury St Edmunds, Clare, Haverhill, Mildenhall and Newmarket which together account for 60% of the population. The rest of the population is spread across the rural area, living in various sized villages.

Housing Need

West Suffolk has high levels of housing need and demand for affordable housing. The combined Housing Register had over 2,280 applicants as of June 2018. The annual number of new lets and relets via the Housing Register over the past two years was:-

Year	Number of Lets
2016/2017	737
2017/2018	829

There is also a high demand for private rented accommodation, in 2015 37.2% of Forest Heath's and 25.54% of St Edmundsbury's total housing stock was privately rented ([include source link](#)) which compares to % for Suffolk. This is partly fuelled by many residents being unable to buy housing on the open market due to the inability to be able to access mortgage finance (including the need for large deposits) and because of the high house prices in the district, when compared to average earnings in the district. The average house price in West Suffolk in December 2017 was £284,363. (Source: <https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/hmb-edition-37.pdf>) The cost of private renting in certain parts of West Suffolk is also very high, largely influenced by the presence of two USAFE air bases, that inflate rental levels.

5. Providing new affordable homes

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment ([include link](#)) identifies an annual need for 320 new affordable homes to be built across West Suffolk until 2031 in order to meet our current and future demand. However, over the last five years a total of only 842 new affordable homes have been delivered, which means the need for additional affordable homes continues to increase.

Year	Forest Heath	St Edmundsbury
2012/2013	51	68
2013/2014	49	96
2015/2016	15	185
2016/2017	33	109
2017/2018	61	175

Delivery

There are two main routes for the delivery of new affordable housing, these are:

- Registered Provider led sites

The Homes and Communities Agency (now Homes England) signed agreements with Registered Providers to provide homes under the 2015 – 2018 Affordable Homes Programme and now the Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme 2016 – 2021, and made it clear that new affordable homes should be provided with a minimum of public subsidy. Registered Providers are expected by Homes England to use their income generation facilities through the

use of the affordable rent model, together with their own resources to fund the building of new homes.

- s106 planning gain

Homes provided on open market developments as part of s106 planning agreements, these are normally provided without any public subsidy. The West Suffolk Economic Viability Report 2012 (include link) identified that should be financially viable to deliver 30% affordable housing on sites within West Suffolk, provided they do not have additional factors affecting viability.

The rate of delivery through both these routes has slowed over recent years due to both financial uncertainty in the housing development sector and delays in some large strategic sites coming forward, coupled with changes in rent levels RPs have been able to charge leading to the reductions in their development programmes.

6. Tenancies Provided by Registered Providers

Affordable Rented housing:

Rented housing let by RPs to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is not subject to the national rent regime but is subject to other rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80 per cent of the local market rent.

Social rented housing:

Usually owned by local authorities and RPs, for which guideline target rents are determined through a national rent regime, rents are normally around 50-60% of local market rents.

Intermediate housing:

Refers to homes where the purchaser buys a proportion of the property, usually up to XX% and pays rent on the remainder at a cost above social rent but below market levels subject to the affordable housing definition as defined by the NPPF. This type of housing can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.

Tenancies available to new social tenants in West Suffolk:

Flexible Tenancies

The Localism Act gave RPs the ability to offer flexible tenancies with the aim of making better use of existing homes in a diminishing market and encouraging tenants to use affordable housing opportunities as a springboard to other more aspirational tenures. These tenancies included:

- Fixed term tenancies at Social Rent (circa 50% of open market level rent)
- Fixed term tenancies at Affordable Rent (80% of open market level rent)
- Starter tenancies (which has the option to convert to a fixed term tenancy after 1 year)

- Introductory tenancies (which has the option to convert to a fixed term tenancy after 1 year)

Fixed Term Tenancies

The minimum recommended term for fixed term tenancies is two years, with five years as the norm, although the Housing and Planning Act (2016) gave an additional option of offering ten year fixed term tenancies, if the household has a child under the age of 9 years.

We want to continue to see a balance of available tenancies which shows an effective use of stock; creating sustainable communities where affordable housing tenancies can provide an opportunity for households to build a stable future.

The previous Tenancy Strategy recommended that fixed term tenancies should be for a **minimum of five year tenancies** and we still support this statement.

Lifetime tenancies

We believe that for some tenants the offer should still be a lifetime tenancy and we would expect this to apply to long term supported housing for people in long term accommodation requiring support. (But in most cases, not in adapted properties). This is because for these groups of people, social housing is likely to fill the need for a secure home; rather than act as a springboard to other tenures. A lifetime tenancy gives security to these tenants as well as to their carers and families. (Insert how many lifetime tenancies have been granted in past five years)

7. Challenges faced by Affordable Rents in West Suffolk

Affordability

Affordable Rent was introduced as a means to assist RPs to raise funds to build additional Affordable Homes. RPs can charge up to 80% of the local open market rent levels – higher than the social rents previously charged, which were nearer to 50-60% of open market rents. Affordable rents can be charged on all new properties and on a proportion of re-let homes.

- Ability to afford

The government has an aim of promoting work to reduce levels of benefit dependency, so it is important that rent levels do not deter tenants from entering employment.

The introduction of the Benefits Cap in April 2019 is likely to impact on those tenants who are dependent on benefit payments to meet their rental responsibilities. The aim of Benefits Cap is to set a maximum level of benefit that will be paid to an individual or family and will therefore set a limit on the amount they have available to meet their rental costs.

Nationally it is also considered a reasonable benchmark that an **individual or family should spend no more than 35% of their total household income**

on their housing costs, including any benefit awarded towards paying their rent, [\(add link to source\)](#) We strongly supports this statement.

- Capping the level of Affordable Rent to match the Local Housing Allowance

We continue to support the use of Affordable Rents because we want to see new developments meet the housing needs of our residents.

However, in order that the affordable homes provided still meets local need, the we believe that Affordable Rents should be **capped at a level to match Local Housing Allowance (LHA)**, the maximum level of housing benefit that can be paid to a private tenant toward their housing costs.

We expect RPs to consider the local market context when setting rents, including the relevant LHA. We want to avoid a situation where high rents prove a disincentive for people to take up employment or create tenancies which are unaffordable and unsustainable.

For the calculation of LHA West Suffolk falls into two Broad Market Rental Areas for housing benefit, Bury St Edmunds and Cambridge. However, due to the influence of two large USAFE bases in Mildenhall and Lakenheath private rents are considerably higher than the rest of Suffolk and in fact are the second highest within the Cambridgeshire Housing Sub Region [\(add link to Housing Market Bulletins\)](#). Currently in certain parts of West Suffolk the LHA cap does not meet 80% of market rents meaning that if Affordable Rent's exceed the LHA cap they can become unaffordable.

We believe that RPs should take into account the availability of property and the demographics of West Suffolk when setting rents. For example, market rents around the two USAF bases and rural areas can be extremely high, while wages can be lower than average. We would encourage RPs who are building in these specific areas **to set rents lower than 80% of the market rent** and we will work jointly with RPs to assess information on local incomes. We will also encourage the RPs to access Homes England funding to support this approach.

Where rents appear to be unduly high we will reserve the right to see and challenge the RPs rental valuations and if necessary refer rents to the Rent Officer service for adjudication.

We will also look to limit rents to LHA levels on all new affordable homes secured through S106 agreements.

- Conversions of re-let properties to Affordable Rent

We understand that RPs may need to convert a level of re-let properties to Affordable Rent in order to support new development. We will support **RPs converting up to one third of their re-let vacancies (excluding supported housing) to Affordable Rents**, although affordability should still be monitored and rents should not exceed the LHA. [\(add in details to confirm that RPs have not converted more than a third of properties following consultation\)](#)

We would encourage RPs to:

- Spread the number of conversions as evenly as possible throughout the year, so that a variety of rental levels are available
- Select properties for conversion with an even distribution over West Suffolk (as far as possible)
- Select properties for conversion predominantly from two and three bedroomed stock, allowing smaller properties to be let to single persons and larger properties to be re-let at proportionately lower rent levels

We will monitor the number and proportion of conversions to ensure that:

- no more than one third of rents are converted on re-let from Social Rent to Affordable Rent
- a reasonable distribution of social rented opportunities exists across West Suffolk
- rents and service charges do not exceed the Local Housing Allowance
- Monitoring the effect of Affordable Rents

We will work with RPs to monitor the effect of lettings at Affordable Rents, through the use of bi-annual one-to-one meetings. We will monitor the bidding levels through Choice Based Lettings to compare the bids of all properties let, and will ask RPs to supply information on the sustainability of Affordable Rent tenancies on an annual basis.

This information will enable us to contact those applicants who have not bid on an adequate property. If this is due to the properties being unaffordable we will monitor the rent level set, property type, size and the RP to determine if there is a pattern and then use this information to review this Strategy where appropriate.

8. Specialist housing

- Older peoples' housing

We would usually expect that lifetime tenancies are offered to people moving into specialist older people's housing, especially for downsizers who are giving up a larger home and a lifetime tenancy, and who might be put off from moving if a less secure tenancy is offered.

- Supported housing

We expect lifetime tenancies will usually be issued to tenants in specialist supported housing as homes for life, where health conditions mean that they require long term support or who have permanent disabilities. Where support is being delivered in these circumstances it may be more appropriate for support providers to assess whether residents have an improved level of independence which would enable them to move on as circumstances change rather than at a fixed point of tenancy review.

The levels of rent and service charges for those households in specialist housing should not act as a deterrent to those people who are in a position to seek or continue with employment while receiving housing related support.

To achieve this we will require that the total sum of rent and service charge is still within the Local Housing Allowance rates.

- Properties with adaptations

We will expect that homes which have been purpose built or adapted to accommodate people with physical disabilities will be let on flexible tenancies. Adaptations are made to make it easier for people with physical disabilities to occupy their homes. Such adaptations can be expensive and it is important that these homes are let to people who need them.

We believe that where there is a change of circumstances and the adaptations are no longer needed, the household should be re-housed.

We also believe that the use of fixed term tenancies can help ensure that properties adapted for use by occupants with a disability should continue to be made available for those who need adapted properties. In the past five years we have seen xxxx of new households move into adapted properties. (detail to be added following consultation)

9. Tenancy review

At the end of a tenancy

The government guidance requires that the end of the tenancy period should be accompanied by a tenancy review, conducted in good time. **We believe that this should take place between 6 – 9 months before the date the tenancy is due to end.** RPs need robust arrangements in order to be aware of when tenancies are due for review.

We do not anticipate that homelessness will be an outcome for RP tenants at the end of a tenancy, but that a variety of options will be considered. Where the decision is made to not extend a tenancy, we would expect to see that RPs are confident that tenants have received all the advice and support necessary to provide a new housing solution which better meets their needs and prevents homelessness. Where tenants who are over working age do not have their tenancy renewed we expect that the RP will make an offer of alternative accommodation that meets their needs, using existing stock available to them.

10. Disposal of Homes by Registered Providers

We recognise that there may be good operational or financial reasons why an RP may wish to dispose of a particular property. However, when making these decisions there are two key issues that we would request are considered:

- Which specific properties and location are being identified for disposal,
- Where the income from property disposals is being reinvested.

We would request that RPs talk to us at the earliest stage about which properties they are proposing to dispose of prior to any decision being made as we may wish to:

- Seek to influence the choice of individual properties;
- Discuss alternative options;
- Acquire or enable others to acquire those properties to meet housing need.

In relation to disposals RPs should focus on the settlement policies in the Local Plans published by Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Council (*prior to the completion of the West Suffolk Local Plan*) in conjunction with this Tenancy Strategy, to ensure that we are able to maintain balanced communities, this is especially important where the number of affordable properties in a particular community is limited. The Councils would wish to work together with RPs to explore opportunities to maximise alternatives to disposal or potential joint redevelopments to meet both housing needs and RP development programmes.

We would request that RPs share details of monies gained from disposals that have taken place in West Suffolk. We understand the need for strategic decisions relating to affordable stock but consider transparency essential so that we can aid the RPs to recycle and retain monies within West Suffolk. **(Insert number of properties disposed and their value post consultation)**

10. Mobility

Moving for employment/social and welfare reasons

We support the government's aim to make it easier for tenants who wish to move for employment or social and welfare reasons and we would expect that RPs will offer assistance to their residents in these circumstances from the stock available to them.

Downsizing

We expect all RPs to be open to their tenants wishing to downsize. Whilst the Spare Room Subsidy financially penalises working age Housing Benefit claimants who under-occupy social properties, downsizing also offers advantages of smaller, more accessible properties being easier and cheaper to run and also frees up much needed family accommodation for those that require it.

RPs should continue to see whether tenants who are in properties of a size they don't require would consider moving to smaller properties within their own stock, especially vulnerable tenants and older people, and offer a support service where necessary to facilitate a move. We will continue to work with RPs to aid in this activity. **(Insert number of households who have downsized as a result of bedroom tax)**

12. Voluntary Right to Buy

We are supportive of creating new opportunities for those who wish to get onto the property ladder and own their own home. However we are also acutely aware that the need to maintain the availability of affordable rented accommodation in West Suffolk is also paramount, with needs only increasing.

We support RPs offering the opportunity for tenants to purchase their homes where eligibility and availability avail themselves, however we ask that the following criteria be considered for creating an exemption for specific properties;

- Properties in rural locations, where there is a population of less than 3000 individuals
- Designated elderly persons accommodation
- Specialist or supported forms of housing
- Disabled adapted properties – secured through planning obligations
- Shared accommodation

We request that RPs keep us informed of any proposed Right to Buy purchases, similar to how we are currently informed of any disposals. This is to ensure that we can maintain a robust and up to date understanding of the affordable housing stock which is available within West Suffolk. **Insert number of RTB sales in past five year following consultation**

13. Governance – Monitoring and Reviewing

We will monitor and review the Tenancy Strategy in co-operation with individual RPs. This includes reviewing RPs records of tenancy sustainment. The Registered Providers Management Forum will support us in assessing the effectiveness of this strategy, by analysing trends in housing need and homelessness. The outcomes of this monitoring have influenced the updating and revision of this Strategy.

14. Risk

We has a strong, preventative approach to homelessness, which is covered by West Suffolk Homelessness Prevention Action **Plan (insert link)**. Through the West Suffolk Housing Strategy (insert link) we want to create an environment which enables people to be part of their own housing solutions and we see the support offered during a social housing tenancy and at the end of the tenancy as a contributory factor.

We will aim to mitigate risk through careful discussion with RPs about rent levels, tenancies and affordability on both new properties and conversions; through partnership working to improve tenants' financial circumstances and by continuing our successful prevention work offered through the Housing Options team's early intervention protocol.

15. Equalities

The original Tenancy Strategy produced in 2012 was subject to an Equality Impact Assessment which has been reviewed and updated in light of this revised strategy.

We will also expect Registered Providers to carry out Equality Impact Assessments when devising their own tenancy policies.

DRAFT

This page is intentionally left blank

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	Introduction of Universal Credit Full Service in the Forest Heath Area	
Report No:	OAS/FH/18/030	
Report to and date:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	8 November 2018
Portfolio holder:	Councillor Robin Millar Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities Tel: 07545 423782 Email: robin.millar@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:	To update and inform members of the council's preparation for the implementation of Universal Credit Full Service in the Forest Heath area.	
Recommendation:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee: It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that: (1) Members <u>note</u> the contents of the report, in particular the learning from the St Edmundsbury roll out; and (2) <u>Notes</u> the support and advice available to residents and councillors.	
Key Decision: <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i>	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National consultation conducted previously on welfare system reform carried out by the Department of Work and Pensions. Locally the council has liaised with voluntary and statutory partners in West Suffolk to ensure a co-ordinated approach.
Alternative option(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universal Credit is a national government programme and will be the replacement for a number of existing legacy benefit systems.
Implications:	
<p>Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are resource implications for the partners responsible for the support and provision of this service. The council has been awarded funding from Government based on predicted demand for the area. This financial arrangement is in place until March 2019. After this date the council will need to monitor the impact of Universal Credit and identify any additional cost it incurs. This will be particularly important when all claimants are migrated to Universal Credit.
<p>Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer Service and Housing staff for the council have been required to undertake training in order to support potential claimants. Currently there are no additional staff required to support this initiative, any demand will be absorbed within the current staffing provision. However, this situation will be monitored and representations made to the Department for Work and Pensions if migration to Universal Credit places additional demands on the council.

Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a requirement to provide public access PC's for claimants to use in the reception areas of all council offices. This provision is already in place across the four office sites in West Suffolk and there is a plan to trial the use of a static tablet device in West Suffolk House which, if successful, will be replicated at the Mildenhall office. The cost of the tablet is met from funding made available by Government for this purpose. 	
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal – GDPR rules and regulations apply to the way in which partners share information about the UC customer group 	
Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nationally there has been a concern about the online-only application process and the effect this might have on the digitally disadvantaged. Experience in the St Edmundsbury area has not shown this to be an issue to date, with support from Job Centre Plus Work Coaches and the CAB proving sufficient for the very few customers who might have additional needs under this heading. 	
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)
Funding agreement for councils are further changed	Medium	Established partnership sand working practices mitigate the impact for the customer group by continuing to seek ways to work together. Customer demand data to be collated and monitored.	Low for initial roll out Medium for managed migration in future years

Key members of the partnership are unavailable to support the roll out	Medium	The partnership has over 35 named individuals from across the representing organisations, alongside consistency through the same chair (governance arrangements which are led by the council).	Low
Customers are disadvantaged by the changes being made in their areas	Medium	The partnership will oversee a replica of the project implementation plan that was put in place for the St Edmundsbury area roll out.	Low
Ward(s) affected:		All Forest Heath wards	
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>			
Documents attached:		Appendix A – About Universal Credit	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 The Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) initiated the roll out of Universal Credit (UC) full service in St Edmundsbury on **18 October 2017** with plans in place to do the same in Forest Heath on **12 December 2018**.
- 1.1.2 UC full service rollout brings an end to working age customers claiming legacy benefits (housing benefits, child tax credit, Working Tax Credit, Job Seekers Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance (income related) and Income Support) unless they fall into an exempt category which would prompt a review. Currently customers with three or more children are unable to claim UC and will need to claim legacy benefits. Customers living in temporary and supported accommodation are unable to claim UC for help with housing costs and will need to claim Housing benefit but claim UC for help with personal costs. The eventual aim is to migrate all claimants away from their legacy benefits and onto UC in a planned approach, although some exemptions such as those listed above may remain. The government will implement a programme of 'managed migration' over the next few years but no timetable has been published.
- 1.1.3 UC applications are an online-only process, which means that there is now a very different expectation of the customer. The DWP have worked hard to change their support model in order to help claimants navigate their way through the process, and there is a reliance on the Local Authority to provide satellite support (known as Universal Support) to the customer group. The recommendations in this report are based on ensuring the smoothest possible introduction of full service UC for customers, partners and staff.

1.2 Forest Heath Overview

- 1.2.1 Forest Heath will go live with UC Full Service on 12 December 2018. With the learning from the St Edmundsbury roll out, the plan is to replicate the arrangements in place with the wider partners (through the existing monthly forum) and to accept the support on offer via the DWP's own 26-week pre-launch programme (through liaison with the DWP Relationship Manager).
- 1.2.2 Government has very recently announced that funding arrangements for the provision of support for customers is changing from April 2019. The St Edmundsbury area implementation saw a collaboration with Suffolk West Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) who have provided the Personal Budgeting Support (PBS) element of the application process since Full Service was introduced in October 2018. Currently the Council pays a proportion of the funding award received from Government to the CAB in order to resource and facilitate this provision. From April 2019, the CAB will be awarded these funds directly, which potentially has an impact on the existing partnership arrangements. All funding is awarded based on predictions of demand for these support services from customers. It is

not clear how much the local CAB's will be allocated as part of the government's new arrangements.

2. Learning from St Edmundsbury Implementation

- 2.1 From a partnership perspective, the introduction of UC in St Edmundsbury has been very successful, recognised nationally as such at recent DWP conferences for local authority partners.
- 2.2 Prior to the roll out in October, the DWP, Council, registered provider landlords, Anglia Revenues Partnership and the CAB met as an operational board to discuss arrangements and practicalities associated with the introduction of UC. This forum has continued to meet on a monthly basis since and excellent professional relationships have been established as a direct result, which often benefits the customer group.
- 2.3 The partners are able to cover a wide range of operational and process issues associated with individual cases (which are discussed in terms of how to support and resolve queries), through to information cascades from central government and improvements to customer access.
- 2.4 In addition to this forum, the partners meet quarterly with additional stakeholders from the Registered Providers, including Havebury Housing, Flagship and Suffolk Housing. The meeting provides an opportunity to focus on strategic issues and any nationally significant changes to policy or process of which partners need to be aware.
- 2.5 With regard to the impact of UC on benefits claimants, there is a clear trend emerging which is being seen by all partner organisations, whereby the number of actual claimants is far less than the support provided to those customers wishing for advice but who don't, for whatever reason, go on to make a full claim. The scheme began in St Edmundsbury in October 2017, and during the period to the end of September 2018, the council has reported to the DWP that a total of 148 individuals have received either Personal Budgeting Support (PBS) or Assisted Digital Support (ADS) which has resulted in a full UC claim being made by the customer. There are, however, a considerable number of potential claimants who have received advice and support, but who do not make a full claim with either the Council or Citizens Advice. As an indication, records kept by both organisations show that Citizens Advice have provided UC support and advice to 949 individuals during the same reporting period and the Council has offered general housing benefit advice to just over 2,000 customers.
- 2.6 Clearly, there is an important role in assisting customers to navigate their way through the benefits system that the Council and partner organisations fulfil, even if it doesn't necessarily result in a claim being made. Interestingly local DWP colleagues have themselves reported that they are now seeing fewer claims being made at their office, claimants seemingly preferring to apply online at a location and time of their convenience.

2.7 Observations from The Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP):

- ARP have managed the processing of customers naturally migrating from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit and subsequent communication with the DWP. Using the UC Data share (UCDS) system the team cancel Housing Benefit on receipt of a UC stop notice, and, if appropriate award a two week transitional payment to the appropriate recipient. ARP has extensive knowledge and experience of UC systems and processes where UC has been implemented for other partner Councils, including St Edmundsbury.
- Customers in St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath are able to contact ARP via telephone with Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction queries and staff have received training to ensure that they are able to advise customers about when they have hit a 'trigger' which will naturally migrate them from legacy benefits to UC.
- The ARP website and claim form are regularly updated to ensure that the most up to date UC rollout information is included and customers are provided with the correct signposting.
- In April 2018 enhancements were made to the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) whereby we access customer supplied UC claim data on the DWP secure system to treat as an application for CTRS, therefore removing the requirement for a separate claim form and simplifying the claiming process for the customer. The customer indicates as part of the UC claim process that they would like to claim and the new claim file is automatically issued via UCDS. This change eliminates the risk of a delayed claim and potential arrears of Council Tax.
- ARP have responsibility for managing the Discretionary Housing Payment budget for St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath, this applies to customers in receipt of Housing Benefit and customers who are in receipt of the Housing Element of Universal Credit. ARP is working closely with the Housing Options team to provide assistance to customers to prevent or avoid homelessness. A poster/leaflet has been developed for use in all customer service areas which advertises the availability of this assistance, as well as ongoing promotion via liaison opportunities and 'take up' campaigns.
- ARP have been at the forefront of preparation for the UC rollout as well as the ongoing partnership meetings between key stakeholder organisations involved in UC. UC champions have been identified across the Partnership and are the in house UC experts, complex cases are triaged by these individuals and, if necessary are escalated to the applicable DWP specialist via the complex needs email address or via the DWP Partnership Manager. This approach has yielded excellent results for particularly vulnerable customers and/or cases which require intervention to ensure that a quick resolution is reached in order to avoid distress.

- ARP communication with social landlords and stakeholder organisations via the quarterly liaison meetings has continued, these meetings have allowed a wider audience of social landlords and support organisations to network, learn from the experiences of others and have direct contact with a DWP Partnership Manager. UC is a standing agenda item at the meetings and provides a valuable opportunity for understanding and learning about specific topics for those in close contact with potentially vulnerable customer groups. Private landlord engagement in the West Suffolk area has commenced in collaboration with the Housing Options team and forums are held quarterly.
- ARP attends the DWP LA engagement events to ensure that we are up to date with the latest Universal Credit information and have the opportunity to learn from, share our own experiences (and that of partner organisations) to other Local Authorities as well as raise any concerns directly with the DWP, and the ARP Strategic Manager (Benefits) represents Councils on the LGA Welfare Steering Group where improvements to UC are discussed.

2.8 Observations from the Housing Options Team:

- **Rent in advance**
As the housing element of UC is usually paid direct to the customer, Registered Providers have become noticeably more commercial in the way they collect rent and have started requiring advance payments when signing customers up for new tenancies. This is to mitigate the increased risk of a reduction in their income should the tenant not pay. For example, if rent is charged monthly, some registered providers will ask for a month in advance before signing up. Finding lump sums of money can be a problem for customers who are receiving benefits or on a low income.
- **Legal action/arrears**
When a customer applies for UC for the first time and is eligible for the housing element, rent arrears can accrue. Most claims are processed within six weeks. Hopefully any potential legal action being taken by the landlord can be avoided so long as the tenant maintains regular contact with their landlord and keeps them updated regarding the progression of their claim.

If the landlord makes an application to the court for possession due to arrears, Judges will often adjourn the case if a UC claim is being processed or the date for first UC payment is known, but unfortunately the tenant will be liable for the court costs.

- **Online applications**
When applying for UC claimants must have an email address and bank account before submitting a claim. A few vulnerable customers have experienced delays in receiving their first UC payment. Usually this is because they do not have access to a computer and do not have an email address or bank account.

- **Advanced Payments**

Customers can now apply online for an advanced payment, the DWP has stated that there will be personal budgeting support available during the initial assessment period, but there is some concern that customers may ask for an advance that they cannot repay over 12 months.

2.9 Observations from Havebury Housing are as follows:

- Headline figures are that 671 tenants are receiving UC at the time of writing. The average arrears for UC tenancies is £370. There are 108 tenancies being paid directly via an Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA). Their average arrear amount is £817. By way of a comparison, the average arrears for a non UC tenancy is £100.
- Liaison within the UC partnership has worked well, with direct access to the Job Centre Plus for individual cases.
- The arrangements for the vulnerable persons Single Point of Contact (SPOC) within the JCP has worked particularly well in terms of reducing stress for customers and securing speedy resolution as and when issues arise.
- There are some difficulties still being experienced in terms of the Direct Payment system for landlords and how that arrangement works.

2.10 Observations from Citizens Advice are as follows:

- Between 1 October 2017 and 31 July 2018 Citizens Advice helped 949 clients with Universal Credit issues across Suffolk West. Since October there have been 107 referrals from Job Centre Plus in Bury St Edmunds and 70 from Job Centre Plus in Haverhill (these are mostly for Personal Budgeting Support). Citizens Advice has worked closely with the Job Centre Plus Work Coaches to ensure they are able to encourage take up of help with money matters, promoting it as useful for any household. Through being located within the Job Centre Plus, Citizens Advice has provided initial advice from our public information site and referred clients back to the bureau for other areas of advice.

The challenges CAB clients face includes:

- Help with the initial claim (34%) – the CAB has adapted its services to ensure that in Bury St Edmunds when a client presents needing to put in a claim same day support is provided (to avoid delays in the start of the claim); in Haverhill Job Centre Plus have had a work experience volunteer providing this support, supplemented by assistance from the JCP work coaches.
- Universal support (23%) – as UC is 'digital by default' the CAB deal predominantly with vulnerable clients who struggle with this requirement and will help them to look at their journal and see the progress of the claim. Sometimes this is straightforward, other times

the CAB is equally perplexed and use the monthly operational meetings to raise issues and gain clarity. Processes have been developed to allow the CAB to place temporary authorisation on client journals to enable our Money Mentor in the Job Centre Plus to follow up on cases.

- Poverty through UC claiming process – as there is a five week delay before the first payment clients are now able to apply for an Advanced Payment. However this has to cover all their living expenses, including rent and has to be paid back over 12 months, which means they are on a reduced income for the first 12 months. The essential need for early intervention to discuss how they will use their advanced payment, includes an understanding of their liability for their rent (as some perceive they have “never paid rent” through legacy Housing Benefit claim); how they will budget through the initial period on that fixed amount of money to cover food, utilities, transport etc. (often with clients who have never worked out a budget); an understanding of what their UC claim may be and how this will be less for 12 months; addressing any opportunity to reduce their essential expenditure (like switching to cheaper utilities); as well as looking at any debts, priority and non-priority. The CAB routinely hand out food vouchers to support clients when they have insufficient money to manage.
- There are occasions when clients have accidentally claimed UC, as a result of a change of circumstances, and they would have been better off staying on legacy benefits. However, once claimed there is a very small window for work coaches to revert the customer back to their legacy benefit, and often the CAB finds out when it is too late. CAB is being given a copy of the UC script so that advisors can check for ‘danger’ areas, since it is providing digital support to claim without first checking that UC is the correct benefit for the individual concerned.

As far as the council is aware, no information is published by the DWP as to the claimants’ experience of UC.

3. Considerations and Plans for Forest Heath Roll Out

- 3.1 West Suffolk Council has a particular responsibility in terms of Universal Support to put in place a system to provide Assisted Digital Support (ADS). ADS is the help provided to customers wishing to make an online application, or maintain their claim once approved. The council also manages the arrangements for Personal Budgeting Support (PBS) and have chosen to do this via a paid partnership with Suffolk West CAB. The way this has been managed to date it to appoint two part-time, dedicated advisors who work out of the Job Centres in Haverhill and Bury St Edmunds. This arrangement has worked very well in St Edmundsbury and the Forest Heath Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities has indicated that he would like to fund similar arrangements in Forest Heath. The Council is in discussion with the CAB as to the detailed arrangements for the Mildenhall and Newmarket Jobcentres. It is worth noting that the Mildenhall office is already co-located with the Jobcentre,

CAB and council which provides a 'one-stop shop' approach for customers. Any arrangements will be made until the end of March 2019 only. The recent government announcement whereby funding is going to be given direct to the CAB from April 2019 means that the council will no longer have money to provide or commission the support services.

From April 2019 the council will continue to monitor the support it provides to UC claimants and potential claimants. If demand for these services increase, the council will make representation to the DWP to request funding be reinstated to local authorities. Our priority is to ensure that residents are supported, however, this needs to be balanced by the fact that the council will receive no funding to provide UC advice services.

3.2 Forest Heath will go live with UC Full Service on 12 December 2018. With the learning from the St Edmundsbury roll out, the plan is to replicate the arrangements in place with the wider partners (through the existing monthly forum) and to accept the support on offer via the DWP's own 26-week pre-launch programme (through liaison with the DWP Relationship Manager).

3.3 What we've done so far to prepare:

- The councils have approached Suffolk West CAB and Citizens Advice Newmarket to seek confirmation that they would both be willing to participate in an arrangement to increase staff they have available to provide personal budgeting support to claimants. Funding has been sourced to date from a DWP grant given to the councils and will be subject to the Portfolio Holder's approval. The expectation is that these additional resources would be based within the Job Centre in Newmarket and the Council Office at Mildenhall. The numbers of potential customers for the service are anticipated as less than in the St Edmundsbury area and the funding award will reflect this.
- With the new funding announcements, the practicalities of how to continue these working practices will now need to be reviewed, but there is a strong sense from the partnership that local connections ought to be protected as far as possible, within the terms and conditions of any new funding agreement.
- The council already benefits from sharing our Mildenhall reception with the CAB and DWP. There are already public access PCs in our receptions to support people to be able to claim online.
- We will arrange job shadowing between staff of different organisations so that there is an understanding of how the UC system operates. This worked really well for St Edmundsbury area teams.
- Access to the digital map of West Suffolk to highlight where customers can access computers to check their UC journal.

- Invited colleagues from Forest Heath partner agencies to join to the existing operations meetings from July onwards (Manager from the Newmarket Job Centre Plus, Team Leader for West Suffolk's Customer Services and a representative from Flagship Housing). This ensures that there is clear communication between all agencies and operational issues can be addressed.
- We will publish flyers and leaflets with local information and sources of support.
- We will arrange two member development sessions to provide an overview of UC. More can be arranged in the future.

3.4 From our experience of the St Edmundsbury roll out, we do not anticipate any significant issues, either for the staff delivering the new service, or for those customers accessing support for the service. It is in this knowledge that the plan is to replicate as much as we can from the St Edmundsbury roll out in the planning and management of the Forest Heath implementation.

About Universal Credit

About UC: useful information

- UC is entirely online and a national scheme, so the primary source of information will always be the government website:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/universal-credit-toolkit-for-partner-organisations>
- However, our website has a UC page which provides useful links:
<http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/benefits/universal-credit.cfm>
- Not everyone is eligible to claim UC immediately and will be advised to remain on their legacy benefit (there is a planned migration to move all claimants to UC in the future). You can check eligibility here:
<https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/eligibility>
- UC is paid monthly to a claimant so some people may need money advice, links are provided on our UC webpage.
- UC is not paid directly to a landlord unless special arrangements are in place. Information about how the council can support landlords:
<http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/housing/privatehousing/index.cfm?aud=resident>
- Landlords are encouraged to attend the regular Landlord's Forums organised at West Suffolk House. Details can be found using the link above.

Signposting for support

- UC is an online service and all transactions are made via an online journal. We have developed a digital map for the area which shows where people can access computers if they don't have their own:
<https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/benefits/universal-credit.cfm>
- Work Coaches based in local Jobcentres provide support to UC claimants with employment-related issues.
- Suffolk West CAB provides personal budgeting advice to UC claimants and are based in the Jobcentres or in their local office.
- The Housing Options team can provide advice to those who may be struggling to make rent payments – we encourage residents to have early conversations with housing staff. Contact: reducing.homelessness@westsuffolk.gov.uk
- Local Council Tax Reduction is not included in UC and will continue to be paid by ARP.

This page is intentionally left blank

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	Review of Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre – Final Report	
Report No:	OAS/FH/18/031	
Report to and date:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	8 November 2018
	Shadow Executive (Cabinet)	27 November 2018
Portfolio holders:	<p>Councillor Lance Stanbury Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth (FHDC) Tel: 07970 947704 Email: lance.stanbury@forest-heath.gov.uk</p> <p>Councillor Susan Glossop Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth (SEBC) Tel: 01284 728377 Email: susan.glossop@stedsb.gov.uk</p>	
Lead officers:	<p>Julie Baird Assistant Director, Growth Tel: 01284 757613 Email: julie.baird@westsuffolk.gov.uk</p> <p>Andrea Mayley Service Manager (Economic Development and Business Growth) Tel: 01284 757343 Email: andrea.mayley@westsuffolk.gov.uk</p>	
Purpose of report:	This report summarises the review of the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre and presents a draft action plan for taking forward the recommendations from the Christmas Fayre Joint Task and Finish Group.	

Recommendation:	<p>Overview and Scrutiny Committee:</p> <p>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to <u>recommend</u> the Christmas Fayre Review Report and the supporting Three Year Action Plan (Appendix F) to the Shadow Executive (Cabinet) for approval.</p>
<p>Key Decision:</p> <p><i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i></p>	<p><i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i></p> <p>Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No, it is not a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>(a) A key decision means an executive decision which, pending any further guidance from the Secretary of State, is likely to:</p> <p>(i) Be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area in the Borough/District.</p>
Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 3 explains the full engagement programme undertaken to support the review. This included a wide consultation programme including interested stakeholders; visitors to the 2017 fayre; residents groups; town and parish councils; stallholders; and Council support services.
Alternative option(s):	<p>Paragraph 5.4 of the report sets out the six possible options considered by the review and explains the determining consideration in each case. The five alternative options were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue with the Christmas Fayre in the current format; 2. Decide not to hold a Christmas Fayre; 3. Decide to run the fayre as a commercial event either in-house or by a commercial partner; 4. Reduce the scale of the event significantly; and 5. Extend the duration of the fayre over a longer number of days. 6.
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"> • Commitment to provide the Christmas Fayre for the next three years. • The Christmas Fayre should be managed as a cost-neutral event by the Council. • Request for a one-off allocation of £20,000 to be used to support the proposed changes recommended in the report. 	
<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"> • The proposed changes have implications for the operating staff who will need to change the way the fayre is planned; set up; and managed. In addition, the proposed changes will increase the workload of staff who make the detailed arrangements for bookings and infrastructure and ensure the fayre is safe. 	
<i>Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
<i>Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
<i>Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
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 security costs/requirements increase beyond the budgeted amount	Medium	Early dialogue with the Police and security agencies to ensure security costs are factored in at an early stage and proposed changes to funding requests are flagged prior to expenditure commitments.	Low
The proposed changes to the Fayre result in less income than budgeted	Medium	Careful planning of the new stalls and new costs to ensure that income comes in on target	Low
he proposed changes prove unpopular with visitors, stakeholders and stallholders	Medium	A focus group be established to test the proposals with the interested parties and suggested amendments are considered/delivered	Low

The proposed changes cause operational issues with added time and costs	Medium	Test proposed changes thoroughly with operational staff and make necessary amendments ahead of the fayre.	Low
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>		<p>18 April 2018 Overview and Scrutiny Committee report Review of Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre – Scoping Report OAS/SE/18/013</p> <p>19 April 2018 Overview and Scrutiny Committee report Review of Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre – Scoping Report OAS/FH/18/012</p> <p>2015 review of the Christmas Fayre: Cabinet report OAS/SE/15/016</p> <p>Recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee CAB/SE/15/077</p>	
Documents attached:		<p>Appendix A – Christmas Fayre key details document</p> <p>Appendix B – 2015 Christmas Fayre Review Action Plan and progress table</p> <p>Appendix C - Christmas Fayre Engagement/surveys summary document</p> <p>Appendix D – Information from Christmas Fayres held in other places and schedule of Christmas events in West Suffolk</p> <p>Appendix E – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats document</p> <p>Appendix F – Proposed Three Year Action Plan</p>	

Key issues and reasons for recommendation

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report details the process and consideration taken by the Joint Task and Finish Group set up to review the Christmas Fayre event held annually in Bury St Edmunds. The second section of the report sets out the background to both the event itself and the origins/make up/scope of the Joint Task and Finish Group and the review it undertook.
- 1.2 The third section of the report details the engagement process and refers to **Appendix C** that contains the responses received. From the feedback received a list of common issues and challenges was created and detailed in this section.
- 1.3 The Evidence Base considered by the Joint Task and Finish Group is set out in Section 4 that also refers to more detail contained within **Appendix D**. This information was used to challenge current practices and identify opportunities for our fayre.
- 1.4 The fifth section of the report sets out the options considered by the Joint Task and Finish Group. It then takes each of the areas included in the scope of the review in turn and details the finding and recommendations to be taken forward. This section also refers to the action plan (**Appendix F**) which provides a succinct list of each of the proposed actions with an explanation of who is responsible for each action and by when.
- 1.5 The final section of the report is the conclusion that aims to draw together the main elements of the review and also to provide some reflection from the Joint Task and Finish Group on the process.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre has been running since 2003. St Edmundsbury Borough Council organises the event and commits staff and resources to running it. It is currently run as a not-for-profit community event and attracts over 130,000 visitors to Bury St Edmunds over a four-day period. As such, it was reported by the National Association of British Markets Authorities in 2015 to be in the top dozen Christmas Markets in the UK in terms of its size and economic contribution. **Appendix A** 'Key Details' provides more information about the fayre and how it is run.
- 2.2 A formal review of the Fayre was last carried out in 2015 by a Task and Finish Group consisting of 6 members of St Edmundsbury Overview and Scrutiny Committee, who met in August and October 2015 and then reported to Cabinet in December 2015. The review concluded, "St Edmundsbury Council should commit to the Christmas Fayre for the remainder of the current administration" (i.e. May 2019) and made a number of recommendations that have been, or are being implemented. **Appendix B** includes the 2015 – 2019 Operational Plan and shows progress against the recommendations.

2.3 On 18 and 19 of April 2018 both the St Edmundsbury and the Forest Heath Overview and Scrutiny Committees resolved to establish a Joint West Suffolk Task and Finish Group to complete a review of the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre for the following reasons:

- i) The current commitment to continue with the Fayre only runs until April 2019, so decisions are needed as to what should take place in winter 2019;
- ii) Planning for the Christmas Fayre starts in the preceding year. As such, a decision will need to be made in 2018 for the 2019 Fayre;
- iii) If the event goes as planned, the 2019 Christmas Fayre will be the 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 need to be involved in the decisions about the future of the Fayre; and
- iv) The new anti-terrorist requirements for large-scale events were not in place in 2015 when the previous review was carried out. These requirements have financial and other implications and it would be helpful to consider these alongside a wider review of the Fayre.

2.4 The Joint Task and Finish Group included ten Members from both Overview and Scrutiny Committees along with support from officers, including the Service Manager for Economic Development, Markets Development Officer, Service Manager (Health and Safety) and a Policy Business Partner. The following Members were appointed to contribute to the Christmas Fayre Task and Finish Group:

- Cllr Bloodworth, Market Ward
- Cllr Patrick Chung, Southgate Ward, Bury St Edmunds
- Cllr Paula Fox, Haverhill South
- Cllr Susan Glossop, Risby Ward (became Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth on 17 September 2018)
- Cllr Diane Hind, Northgate Ward, Bury St Edmunds
- Cllr Paul Hopfensperger*, St Olaves Ward, Bury St Edmunds
- Cllr Christine Mason, Brandon East
- Cllr Robert Nobbs, St Marys Ward
- Cllr David Palmer, Brandon West
- Cllr Frank Warby, Moreton Hall

* Cllr Hopfensperger resigned from the Task and Finish Group at its second meeting on the 1 August 2018 and Cllr Chung became a permanent member of the group.

2.5 The following table sets out the scope of the Joint Task and Finish Group's approach.

Principle and ownership	Consider whether West Suffolk Council should continue to support a four day Christmas Fayre in Bury St Edmunds from 2019 that is run on a not-
--------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

	for-profit basis and organised directly by the Council.
Vision	Review current vision (“The Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre is a fun, festive and inclusive event for all ages. The event is designed to attract visitors and have a positive effect on local people and businesses. The Fayre is provided by St Edmundsbury Borough Council”.)
Timing and length	Review dates (currently last weekend in November) and timings and length of event and consider alternative options.
Format and venues	Review current elements of the Fayre (stalls and entertainment and funfair) and the 10 venues used
Type of stalls	Review current split of stalls (i.e. approx. one third of each of household goods; foods; and personal goods)
Links to wider economy (retail and tourism)	Review the impact on local businesses, both positive and negative.
Transport and accessibility	Review the current transport and accessibility arrangements, including parking; coaches; park and ride; disabled access.
Finance	Review the current financial position of the Fayre (including security costs) and other potential options. Consider the overall cost of the Fayre, including opportunity costs and the indirect benefits.
Staffing and volunteers	Review current casual staffing arrangements (employed by SEBC) and volunteers
Safety and security	Review the anti-terror measures put in place for the 2017 Fayre and note the separate review of health and safety of the 2017 Fayre.
Examples from other places	Consider examples of best practice from other places around the UK and overseas
Communications and marketing	Review the current arrangements for communication and marketing about the Fayre, and consider alternatives.
Management and Resources	Review the management arrangements in previous years and outline the benefits and costs of alternatives

2.6 The Task and Finish Group met four times over the summer of 2018:

- 14 June
- 1 August
- 11 September
- 5 October.

2.7 The Task and Finish Group also agreed to consider the progress made with regard to implementing the actions agreed in 2015 in the form of a 3-year operational plan for the Christmas Fayre. As mentioned above, **Appendix B** includes the 2015-2019 Operation Plan and the progress made to date.

3.0 Engagement

3.1 A wide range of engagement opportunities have been undertaken to enable the Task and Finish Group to become as informed as possible with regard to the varying stakeholders for the fayre. The following groups have provided information in response to a number of questions.

- OurBuryStEdmunds (Business Improvement District)
- Town centre businesses
- Businesses that provide services to the Fayre
- Bury St Edmunds and Beyond (Destination Management Organisation)
- Arc management
- Town centre residents associations (collective meeting)
- Town Centre Masterplan Advisory Group
- Emergency services
- Town and parish councils in West Suffolk
- Stallholders
- Local schools

3.2 In addition to the groups above, the Task and Finish Group took account of the feedback from residents and visitors given through the online Christmas Fayre Visitors Survey in 2017 and 2016. In recognition of the fact that a number of Council services are involved to a greater or lesser degree in the delivery of the Christmas Fayre – an officer group was convened to provide feedback into the review. **Appendix C** includes summary details of the feedback received by the various groups.

3.3 A series of standard questions were crafted in order to ensure continuity in the response and to make sure all of the elements of the review were covered. These questions were:

1. Should the fayre be a showcase for West Suffolk, encouraging people to return after the event?
2. Can the town continue to accommodate the increasing visitor numbers?
3. Should the stalls have a local bias?
4. Is the quality of product being sold on the stalls important?
5. Should the Christmas Fayre be more festive, perhaps through a theme?
6. Should the format of the fayre be the same every year?
7. When should the fayre be held, and does a four day event give the right balance between enjoyment of the fayre and the impact on local residents/infrastructure?
8. How important is the size of the fayre?

3.4 The Task and Finish Group considered the wide range of information fed back from the consultation process and concluded that the following issues and challenges exist:

- The Fayre is too big.
- There is not enough Christmas Spirit

- Same every year
- Resource intensive
- Expensive for small stallholders
- Not enough seating/dwelling opportunities
- Not all local businesses benefit
- No robust data to prove benefit during and after the Fayre
- Food safety standards
- Quality of some stalls

3.5 Many of the concerns raised have led to the recommendations that are contained in the action plan at **Appendix F**.

4.0 Evidence Base

4.1 In addition to the feedback from stakeholders, members of the Task and Finish Group considered information gathered from other towns who also run similar Christmas fayres or markets and published reports from the National Association of British market Authorities (NABMA). This exercise enabled members to look at the opportunity to learn lessons from other towns and to look for best practice. The organisers of these events in Bath, Lincoln, Salisbury, Stratford Upon Avon and Winchester were contacted help us verify and build on the research. These conversations resulted in the following headlines:

1. Consider developing a long-term plan with the BIDs or other partners for Christmas events delivery as a whole.
2. Incorporate the Cathedral more into the event so it can be showcased to visitors.
3. Ensure there are stalls or events attracting visitors to all major parts of the town/city.
4. Investing in and setting up wooden chalet stalls are costly but make a big difference to the appearance of the fayre.
5. Consider running the fayre over an extended period of time if at all possible initial set-up costs are high but daily costs are low so more cost-efficient to run over a longer period of time (more income from stall-holders for the same set-up costs).

It should be noted that the option to extend the length of the fayre is only viable if it is located on already pedestrianised streets or off street areas such as shopping centres, parks and cathedral grounds.

6. Work closely with local producers and traders and businesses located within the vicinity of the fayre and develop supportive initiatives to encourage them to be more involved.
7. Whilst one-way systems for foot traffic seems like a good solution to reducing overcrowding it can be unpopular with shoppers. Simpler techniques can be used such as clearer signage and maps and extending the fayre to allow stalls to be more spaced out.

- 4.2 In addition to the evidence gathered from other towns across the country, the Task and Finish Group considered information about the other festive events that are organised across West Suffolk during the Christmas period.
- 4.3 **Appendix D** sets out in more detail the information gathered from the other towns explained in paragraph 4.1 above and also includes the research gathered from other Christmas events held across West Suffolk.

5. Christmas Fayre Review – findings and recommendations

- 5.1 The Christmas Fayre review covered a wide range of considerations that were grouped under the thirteen themes included in the review scope. The group was provided with a substantial amount of information to enable it to carry out its review.
- 5.2 The Joint Task and Finish Group consisted of members with varying degrees of understanding about the fayre and to this end a 'Key Details' document was produced to help provide all members of the group with a similar level of understanding. The key details document is included at **Appendix A** and includes facts about how many people attend the fayre; how many stallholders there are; duration of the fayre; organisation responsibility; details of the entertainment; types of stalls; safety and security; finances; staffing and resources; communications and marketing; and a summary of the examples of fayres from other towns. This information provided a good understanding of how the 2017 fayre was organised.
- 5.3 In order to assist with the task ahead of the review group, a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) document was produced. This document is available at **Appendix E**. A number of the key points, in particular the opportunities, set out in the SWOT were also raised as points of interest by stakeholders and members of the Task and Finish Group themselves. For example, more festive decoration; changes to the layout of the fayre; incentivising artisan stalls or stalls providing healthy eating options.
- 5.4 At the early meetings of the Task and Finish Group, a number of key options were considered. There was no assumption that they would be recommending the Christmas Fayre should continue and the group was entirely open to any outcome from the consultation feedback and evidence base. The options considered by the group were:
- (a) Continue with the Christmas Fayre in the current format;
 - (b) Decide not to hold a Christmas Fayre after the 2018 event;
 - (c) Decide to run the Fayre as a commercial event, either in-house or by a commercial partner;
 - (d) Reduce the scale of the event significantly;
 - (e) Extend the duration of the fayre over a longer number of days; and
 - (f) Make changes to the procedures, stalls and layouts within the boundaries of the existing fayre.
- 5.5 The Task and Finish Group concluded that the options to not make changes or not to hold the Fayre again were two extremes that were not palatable. The costs of reducing the scale of the fayre dramatically went against the

aspiration for the fayre to be contained within budget (because the set-up costs remain the same and the income from stallholders' is the main source of revenue). Option (c) was also discounted as a community based event was preferred and there is a lack of alternative delivery bodies available to deliver this not for profit event (more detailed discussion on this point is available at para's 5.38 and 5.39). The disruption from extending the number of days the fayre is held over was also seen to be a concern (and explained in more detail at paragraphs 5.14 and 5.15). Therefore, option (f) "Make changes to the procedures, stalls and layouts within the boundaries of the existing fayre" was the preferred outcome. The following paragraphs detail the proposed changes.

5.6 The recommendations in this report are based on findings from the online visitor's survey; discussions with the stakeholders (as described in **Appendix C**); background evidence (set out in **Appendix D**) and discussions with operational officers. All of the recommendations agreed by the Task and Finish Group are brought together into a 3-year action plan that is attached at **Appendix F**.

5.7 The following paragraphs take each area of the review in turn and explain the considerations and recommendations from the Task and Finish Group.

Principle and ownership

5.8 The Task and Finish Group considered all of the evidence and questioned whether the fayre should be held at all. Whilst it was recognised that it remains to be difficult to evidence the precise economic impact of the fayre, the group were overwhelmed by the community support for the event.

5.9 An appreciation of the level of community support and in-kind activity resulted in the view that the fayre should continue to be run on a not for profit basis.

5.10 The group considered whether the fayre could be delivered by a third party or indeed a commercial company. Whilst this option should continue to be explored, the group felt that the Council should commit to running the fayre for at least the next three years. It was recognised that the commitment to three years gave rise to savings from the procurement of goods and services over a longer period.

Vision

5.11 The current vision for the fayre is specific about the fact that the fayre is run by St Edmundsbury Borough Council. As of next April, West Suffolk Council will deliver the fayre and therefore the wording of the vision is recommended to remain the same with the omission of the Council. The wording proposed is as follows:

"The Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre is a fun, festive and inclusive event for all ages. The event is designed to attract visitors and have a positive effect on local people and businesses"

Timing and Length

- 5.12 The Task and Finish Group agreed that the date of the fayre should remain fixed as the final weekend in November. The rationale behind this timing is influenced by a number of factors. Lincoln holds its fayre the weekend after ours and a number of stallholders attend both fayres. The weekend after this is one of the busiest for our town centre retailers and the disruption of the fayre may affect trade in the town. The fact that "Black Friday" often clashes with the weekend of our fayre is regrettable however holding the fayre the weekend before attracts criticism about holding the fayre too soon.
- 5.13 The best practice information gleaned from other towns that hold a similar event (**Appendix D**) led the Task and Finish Group to consider whether to extend the number of days of the event. Of the five towns considered (Bath, Lincoln, Salisbury, Stratford Upon Avon and Winchester), three hold extended fayres of 18 to 34 days. Only Lincoln and Stratford Upon Avon run fayres on a similar duration to ours (3 to 4 days). The benefits to running events over a longer duration include the ability to spread set-up/down costs across a longer period; higher stall income; and the provision of more attractive stalls (for example wooden chalet style).
- 5.14 The physical layout of each town centre varies from town to town and when compared to Bury St Edmunds. Each of the three towns that hold longer fayres do so with minimal disruption to the function of the town (in terms of accessibility). In Bury St Edmunds, the closure of Angel Hill is an inevitable safety measure that is required for almost all large events in this part of town. The group considered whether the fayre could be held in another part of the town or on the outskirts; however, it was agreed that it was ostensibly Angel Hill, the Cathedral and the Abbey Gardens that needed to be the focus of the showcase. Consideration was also then given to whether the Abbey Gardens could host the fayre on its own; however, it was understood that the gardens are a Scheduled Ancient Monument and are already utilised to the maximum possible without causing harm. It would also be likely that the numbers of people visiting would result in Angel Hill having to be closed for safety reasons. The group was also aware that extending the Fayre over a longer period would extend the impact upon the local businesses.
- 5.15 The group raised the question as to whether the hours of the fayre could be extended each day to help spread the visitors. A number of factors influenced the decision to keep to the same hours including that the current hours are designed to encourage visits to the local pubs and restaurants that exist in town; changing the hours wouldn't affect the coach groups who tend to have left by 5pm each day; and the extension of hours would require a second shift of stewards and staff which would adversely affect costs.
- 5.16 It was agreed that the duration of the fayre should continue to be four days.

Format and Venues

- 5.17 The blend of indoor and outdoor stall locations enables a wide range of goods to be sold. Any products particularly affected by the weather can be protected by available stall positions in the Apex and the Athenaeum.

- 5.18 One of the criticisms of the current fayre was the fact it was the same every year and for some people was feeling stale. The Task and Finish Group considered the idea that stalls should change positions every year and that themed areas could be created for certain types of offer. Ultimately, due to considerations relating to the health and safety of people (the need to spread elements out) and the administrative challenges with running a fayre of this size it was considered that a manageable level of change could make a big difference. The main opportunity considered by the Task and Finish Group was to create a food, drink and entertainment space with some new stalls and the relocation of other stalls in key locations. Creating this space would also offer the opportunity for some covered seating to help enhance the customer experience.

Type of stalls

- 5.19 The Task and Finish Group were keen to ensure the quality offer of the stalls and the festive appearance of the Fayre as a whole. At the 2018 Fayre (in a few weeks), a stall audit will be carried out to increase the knowledge of the quality and appearance of the stalls at present. This information will be used to drive changes for the 2019 fayre. In addition, the stallholders are being asked to adhere to the requirement to make their stalls and themselves appear festive.
- 5.20 The fayre attracts some criticism relating to the offer and pricing of gifts. The group felt that the pricing structure for stalls could be used to incentivise local artisan groups who may wish to take part in the fayre. This would lead to greater variety of stalls and offer (things for people to buy). In addition, the same incentives could be used to encourage healthier food options alongside the traditional choices.

Links to wider economy (retail and tourism)

- 5.21 The understanding of the impact of the Christmas Fayre upon the wider economy is based upon statistics that capture the number of visitors, the likely spend and anecdotal evidence that is hard to verify. Although it is difficult to quantify the impact, the Task and Finish Group thought it was essential that we continue to spread the benefits of the fayre locally and into West Suffolk. The group identified the best opportunity for this was incentivising visitors to return to the area at a time in the future. The group therefore advocates more work with partners to create opportunities for visitors to return at other times of the year and help track measure the impact of these repeat visits.

5.22 Transport and Accessibility

The last review of the fayre in 2015 identified the need for us to work in partnership with local travel providers to promote sustainable methods of accessing the town during the fayre weekend. In addition, it was identified in 2015 that access for disabled people needed to be provided. The Task and Finish Group endorsed both of these actions.

- 5.23 One of the main criticisms raised about transport and accessibility is the provision of car parking. All of the town centre car parks fill up during the

event and other privately owned car parks are added to supply more spaces. The Council runs the park and ride site from Claas at Saxham and both car parks at Olding Road and West Suffolk College are available for park and walk. It is the case that more people want to come to the fayre than the car parks can cater for. Any decision to increase the supply of car parking needs to be taken in the context of the impact upon the number of people in the town centre. For health and safety reasons it is considered that, the event is at its maximum capacity. It is still a safe event and the Task and Finish Group recognised that this was of paramount importance.

5.24 The Task and Finish Group did however explore opportunities to improve the customer experience around the park and ride in particular and at the same time help to make the service more cost effective. For these reasons, the opportunity to provide 'Premier Parking' is being explored with the option of pre-booking, and thus guaranteeing, a space. In addition, the opportunity to pay by card is being explored.

5.25 **Finance**

The Task and Finish Group were clear that the Christmas Fayre should be run, as far as possible, within budget with costs not exceeding income. There was an acceptance that the impact of unforeseen anti-terrorist measures have to be provided if the event is to be allowed to be held. There had clearly been an impact on the finances of the 2017 fayre as a result of the unforeseen cost of the new standard anti-terrorist measures. It is considered important for several reasons, including financial considerations that any proposed changes/requirements relating to anti-terrorist or policing activities are flagged sooner rather than later. The receipt of early intelligence enables the financial impact of such changes to be mitigated.

5.26 One of the factors that had contributed to an overspend in 2017 was the loss made by Park and Ride. In an attempt to reduce this cost, the prices for Park and Ride are being increased this year to £10 per car (from £8). In addition, as detailed at paragraph 5.24 above there are plans to create Premier Parking that will also help to increase the revenue from Park and Ride.

5.27 Members of the Task and Finish Group saw that the biggest income source for the Christmas Fayre came from the fees paid by the stallholders. The information also showed that the fees for the stalls are automatically increased by 4% year on year. The feedback from stallholders (as set out in **Appendix C**) showed that for some businesses, the increases are reaching a level where it is becoming unviable for them to attend. Normally, the increases affect the smaller businesses who are often the type of stall we would want to attract. Therefore as mentioned at paragraph 5.20 above, the Task and Finish Group suggested that there should be more of a differentiation in the fees paid by certain types of stallholders. This would enable the type of stalls most desired to be incentivised to attend by providing them with a pricing structure more suited to their business.

5.28 It was felt that more could be made of sponsorship for the fayre. Members recognised that selling sponsorship packages was a specialist task and also that care should be taken to make sure that the sponsorship amount is more

than the time/money spent on signing sponsors up. It was therefore suggested that a piece of work should be commissioned to find out how much the fayre could potentially generate in sponsorship terms and also what the best method of achieving this potential would be.

- 5.29 The Task and Finish Group felt that a number of other town centre organisations should be asked whether they would like to make a contribution towards the Christmas Fayre.

Staffing and Volunteers

- 5.30 Following the 2015 review, a number of changes have been made to the way the fayre stewards are recruited and organised. The need for experienced and well-trained stewards is a constant requirement every year. The role of stewards is different to the role of guides and volunteers and there is some scope for the guides and volunteers to be more easily identified as people who are there to support visitors and make sure that their visit to the fayre is an enjoyable one.

Safety and Security

- 5.31 The safety and security considerations are of paramount importance in the delivery of the Christmas Fayre. The congregation of 130,000 people in total over the four days of the fayre requires a higher level of planning and resourcing than other Council-run events. The Service Manager for Health and Safety prepares an Event Safety Plan every year that incorporates the results from a wide number of agencies and consultees. The safety plan goes to the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) which is an advisory group made up of Event Professionals from the Police, Police event team, Fire, Ambulance, Building Control, Environmental Health, Licensing and Health and Safety. The purpose and scope of SAG is to provide a forum for discussing and advising on public safety at an event. They aim to help organisers with the planning, and management of an event and to encourage cooperation and coordination between all relevant agencies. They are non-statutory bodies and so do not have legal powers or responsibilities, and are not empowered to approve or prohibit events from taking place. Event organisers and others involved in the running of an event, retain the principal legal duties for ensuring public safety.
- 5.32 The safety plan also goes to West Suffolk Joint Health and Safety Panel. The safety plan as per last year will be tested at a Police led Table Top Exercise involving players from all emergency services, Security Company officers and other observers. Following this, final tweaks will be made to the plan.
- 5.33 The safety of visitors to the fayre includes ensuring that food standards are high. The current requirement for all food stalls is that they meet Food Hygiene rating 3 or above. All food stalls are supplied with the Food Safety leaflet that provides advice and guidance to enable food stalls to meet West Suffolk market inspection standards. In addition, there is a requirement for all stalls with animals for petting to have an appropriate risk assessment and procedures in place to ensure risk of infection is low.

Examples from other places

- 5.34 As identified in **Appendix D** and at paragraph 4.1 above, five other towns were surveyed to find best practice and lessons that we may be able to translate the learning to in the delivery of our fayre. These were considered at the first meeting of the Task and Finish group.

Communications and marketing

- 5.35 A communication plan is prepared for each Christmas Fayre to make sure the key messages are sent out via all available channels. The Christmas Fayre is in a slightly unusual position in that it does not need to promote the event to potential visitors, as there is no shortage of people attending. Our challenge is more about providing visitors, local residents, stakeholders and businesses with the most relevant and up to date information about the event. One of the initiatives the Task and Finish Group felt would help enhance the visitor experience was a directory and map of stalls. At the moment, there are some visitors who do not appreciate that there are more stalls on Angel Hill (when visiting Apex) and vice versa. The map/directory would help to show the scale of the fayre and would help to spread the visitors throughout the town. The map/directory also gives the opportunity for visitors to be made aware of the local businesses/retailers and their offer. The proposal is that a map and directory (also to be made available electronically) be prepared for the 2019 fayre and the possibility of charging for the map is to be considered to help with the costs.
- 5.36 It was clear to the Task and Finish Group that there are a number of other events held in the run up to Christmas around West Suffolk. It was felt that there would be a huge advantage to jointly promoting these other events at the same time as the Christmas Fayre. This would reduce duplication and improve penetration of the marketing materials. The opportunity here is to work with other partners who hold similar events and co-ordinate the marketing activity for the benefit of all.

Management and resources

- 5.37 The imperative to keep the delivery of the Christmas Fayre within budget constrains the opportunities to make major changes to the fayre – because there are inevitable costs of the proposed changes. The proposal is that a separate one-off budget be set up to enable the proposed initiatives to be funded outside of the existing operational Christmas Fayre budget. In addition, the opportunity for staff to become involved with the delivery of the Christmas Fayre each year can be mutually beneficial; therefore, the wider officer team are encouraged to support the delivery of the fayre going forward.
- 5.38 The 2015 review considered in detail the alternative options for the delivery of the fayre. These included running the fayre as a commercial event; establish an arm's length vehicle to run the fayre and other events across West Suffolk; and end the Councils involvement with the fayre and explore future options for running the fayre with existing town centre organisations. The last of these three options was discounted for the reason that neither existing town centre organisations were in a position to "take on" the

enormity of running the fayre along with its inherent risks. In addition, both organisations are looking at Bury St Edmunds being the focus of activity and therefore neither are in a position to truly represent West Suffolk in its entirety, which we have committed to as part of the overall vision.

- 5.39 The option of delivering the Christmas Fayre as a commercial event implies that there is an option of generating income that the current arrangement does not tap into. Whilst there may be scope for additional sponsorship (see para 5.28 above), there is not the opportunity to raise income dramatically. A ticketed event could be considered, however the impact of cordoning part of the town off and restricting access to local residents seems to go against the re-stated vision for the fayre. Members of the Task and Finish Group were also keen to keep the level of community involvement and good will. These things would be eroded by a profit driven approach.
- 5.40 The key opportunity is to continue to investigate whether a separate company could be set up providing the opportunity for several bodies (who are already delivering events across West Suffolk) to come together. Whilst it is accepted that this would take a while to bring together it would have the advantage of creating a specialist team that could be supported by the right infrastructure and skills.
- 5.41 At the end of each year, following the Christmas fayre a session is held at which lessons are learnt for the future. At the moment, this is mainly officers and is specific to the fayre just held. There is an opportunity for the Task and Finish Group to reconvene to look at recommendations for the next years' fayre. This does not need to be a full review to the extent that the 2015 review and this year's review have been; however, it could pick up opportunities and provide the officer group with a clear steer on the detail of these recommendations for the next year.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 The Christmas Fayre Review Joint Task and Finish Group met four times over the summer of 2018 to review the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre event. The group were supplied with information of different types designed to support this review. **Appendix A** included key details about the fayre arranged in the order of each of the review areas. In addition, the group spent time looking at the recommendations of the 2015 review and assessed progress against this review to date. The details of this progress are attached at **Appendix B**. It became clear that the review in 2015 had been a more process related review.
- 6.2 The Task and Finish Group sought a significant amount of consultation from a variety of different groups, some closer to the event and others indirectly affected. The breadth of consultation undertaken did not result in as broad a range of views as one may have expected. The majority of people were very positive about the fayre and were willing to contribute to the review in the spirit of making the event even better.
- 6.3 The Task and Finish Group have distilled a number of recommendations, set out in the action plan at **Appendix F**, which are to be presented to both Overview and Scrutiny meetings. In addition, in order to deliver the

proposals set out in the action plan it was suggested that a one-off fund be established to cover the costs of change only.

The request of the Task and Finish Group is that both Overview and Scrutiny Committees will then make these same recommendations to Shadow Executive (Cabinet) for their approval. The view of the Task and Finish Group is that the proposed changes will result in the continued improvement of the fayre for at least the next three years.

- 6.4 At the end of the review period, the Task and Finish Group were asked to reflect on the process of the review. The group considered whether they had held sufficient meetings to go through the necessary business; whether the frequency of the meetings had been appropriate; and whether they had received all of the information necessary to undertake the review. Members of the group commented on the amount of information that had to be considered and as a result were pleased with the number of meetings and that they had been given sufficient time to prepare between meetings. The group expressed their collective support for the process and the part they had been able to play in improving the Christmas Fayre.

Christmas Fayre Review 2018

Key details of current arrangement for the Christmas Fayre

PRINCIPLE OWNERSHIP	<p>Objective: consider whether West Suffolk Council should continue to support a 4 day Christmas Fayre in Bury St Edmunds from 2019 that is run on a not-for-profit basis and organised directly by the Council.</p>
	<p>Key Details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council-run event • Run on a not-for-profit basis • Event localised to Bury St Edmunds • Some support by the BID e.g. measuring footfall
VISION	<p>Objective: review current vision (“The Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre is a fun, festive and inclusive event for all ages. The event is designed to attract visitors and have a positive effect on local people and businesses. The Fayre is provided by St Edmundsbury Borough Council”.)</p>
	<p>Key Details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims to have something for everyone, with varied goods and entertainment to cater for all ages • Includes locals, such as the dedicated locals evening • Attracts visitors from across Suffolk and beyond who travel for one of the country’s biggest Christmas Fayres
TIMING AND LENGTH	<p>Objective: review dates (currently last weekend in November), timings and length of event, and consider alternative options.</p>
	<p>Key Details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 days run-up • 4 day event - Thursday 12pm (Noon) to 8pm, Friday 9am to 8pm, Saturday 9am to 8pm and Sunday 10am to 5pm • Normally the last week in November
FORMAT AND VENUES	<p>Objective: review current elements of the Fayre (stalls, entertainment and funfair) and the 10 venues used.</p>
	<p>Key Details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stalls – 322 in total: foods, personal goods, household goods and information, and about 80% are local (based in East Anglia) • Entertainment – Animal attractions, carol concert, fireworks and parade (opening night), local performers and Santa’s grotto • Funfair - Various rides including big wheel, trampolines, galloper, vehicle seated rides and traditional stalls

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Venues – 10 in total: Abbey Gardens (105 stalls), Angel Hill (54 stalls), Apex (55 stalls), Athenaeum (40 stalls), Buttermarket (normal provisions market stalls), Cathedral and Cathedral Courtyard (21 stalls), Charter Square (26 stalls), Hatter Street (21 stalls) and Moyse's Hall (stall within the museum) • Infrastructure – including marquees, flooring in the Abbey Gardens, generators/associated power equipment and stages
TYPE OF STALLS	<p>Objective: review current split of stalls (i.e. approx. one third of each of household goods; foods; and personal goods).</p>
	<p>Key Details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household goods (e.g. linens, lamps, rugs, vases, photo frames, Christmas decorations) • Foods (ranging from snacks to larger meals, e.g. nuts, doughnuts, crepes, chilli, noodles, burgers, hot dogs, duck wraps, fish and chips and hog roasts) • Personal goods (e.g. bath products, fragrances, skin creams, make up, jewellery, gift sets.) • Information (e.g. RSPB, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, business promotional stands such as those selling experiences or photographers)
LINKS TO WIDER ECONOMY	<p>Objective: the impact on local businesses, both positive and negative.</p>
	<p>Key Details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitors spend money elsewhere in the town and some town-centre businesses benefit • Greatly increased footfall compared to surrounding weekends • Anecdotal evidence suggests it increases repeat visits, therefore a direct benefit for the tourism industry • Accommodation in Bury St Edmunds always fully booked for the duration of the fayre • Showcases the town to visitors although some residents don't think the best of Bury St Edmunds is exhibited
TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY	<p>Objective: review the current transport and accessibility arrangements, including parking; coaches; park and ride; disabled access.</p>
	<p>Key Details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public car parks – All apart from Angel Hill (which is used for stalls) • Christmas Fayre car parks - Greene King, Rugby Club and Priory School (when available) • Excursion coaches – On arrival coaches are directed to the drop off/pickup point by the side of St Marys Church on Honey Hill. The empty coaches are then directed to the lorry park at Rougham Hill. Nowton Park has been designated as a parking overflow if required and the Bus Station is overflow for coaches to drop off visitors. • Park and ride – Located at Claas, Saxham Business Park (3 miles west of Bury St Edmunds). A fleet of buses operate between the site and St Mary's Church on Crown Street. The service is in operation from 0830 hrs to 2030 hrs on the Friday and Saturday and 0900 hrs to 1730 hrs on the Sunday with a frequency of approximately 15 to 20 minutes. • Park and walk – West Suffolk College and Olding Road car parks <p>Disabled access – Dedicated spaces within car parks as normal and a limited number for the Doctor's surgery in Chequer Square</p>

SAFETY AND SECURITY	<p>Objective: review the anti-terror measures put in place for the 2017 Fayre and note the separate review of health and safety of the 2017 Fayre.</p> <p>Key Details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counter Terrorism Strategy written and implemented • 22 health and safety zones • Health and Safety officers x 2 • Fire service attend site to ensure appropriate access • First aid provision – St John’s on site • Police officers x 24 and Anti-terrorism officers x 2 • Additional CCTV <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security equipment – IT kit, Hostile Vehicle Mitigation Systems (HVMS) • Security stewards (FIA registered and trained, from a security contractor) x 20 • Formal security (NVQ trained from a security contractor) x 50 • New Anti-terrorism measures required security operations to increase dramatically in 2017 • Christmas Fayre Health and Safety Review 2017
FINANCE	<p>Objective: review the current financial position of the Fayre (including security costs) and other potential options. Consider the overall cost of the Fayre, including opportunity costs and the indirect benefits.</p> <p>Key Details: *CONFIDENTIAL*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total income in 2017 was £232,566.08 Consisted of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Income from stallholders - £198,216.05 (approx. £600 per stall) ○ Income from coach bookings - £5,845.80 ○ Income from Greene King Car Park - £5,557.56 ○ Income from Park and Ride - £20,196.67 • Total expenditure in 2017 was £239,954.22 which includes (list not exhaustive): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staffing costs - estimated at approximately £24,023.08 (including staffing during the event itself and the organisation of the event in the year-preceding) ○ Contractors - £92,680.93 (e.g. infrastructure costs; Nb. security stewards and formal security are included in this figure, specific details below) ○ Security costs – approximately £43,181 (consisted of £7590 for additional CCTV, £8898.75 for security stewards, £16,040.25 for formal security (please note: this figure will increase in 2018 due to additional resource requirements) and £10,652 for the hire of the Hostile Vehicle Mitigation Systems (please note: this figure is due to increase by approximately £2,500 for an additional HVMS); Police gave their services for free; these would have cost £49,688) ○ Room/hall hire and internal room/hall hire recharge - £9,960.00 ○ First Aid provision - £7,062.10 ○ Support costs - £10,290.13 ○ Advertising - £7,654.95 ○ Park and Ride expenditure – £25,182.16 <p>Total income minus total expenditure gives a loss of £7,388.14 for 2017</p>

Objective: review current staffing arrangements (employed by SEBC) and volunteers.

Key Details:

- This section covers staffing during lead-up to event, event itself and wash-up (management/resources and organisation of event is covered elsewhere)
- Unpaid Volunteers (approximately 150) – including Bury Tour Guides, people via the Suffolk Volunteer Society, and West Suffolk College students
- Council – internal (apart from some additional hours/working days from Economic Development, Health and Safety, Parks and Waste, other services provide support within normal working days):
 - Car parks
 - Communications
 - Economic Development
 - Finance
 - Health and Safety
 - Highways
 - Human resources
 - ICT
 - Markets
 - Parks and Landscape
 - Public halls
 - Waste
 - Casual workers – internal staff (x32) and external (x18)
 - Contractors – for work including putting up marquees, laying down flooring, erecting staging, security, first aiders

Objective: review the management arrangements in previous years and outline the benefits and costs of alternatives.

Key Details:

- Organised and delivered by St Edmundsbury Borough Council
- Internal Christmas Fayre Operational group:
 - Event Manager (Market Development Officer, Economic Development)
 - Growth Officer
 - Health and Safety Officers
 - Highways Officer
 - Environmental Health Officer
 - Finance Officer
 - ICT Officer
 - Markets Officer
 - Car Parking Officer
 - Parks and Landscapes Officer
 - Communications Officer
 - Public Halls Officer
- Internal and External Christmas Fayre Working Group:
 - Officers above
 - Arc Management
 - Bury and Beyond (Destination Management Organisation)
 - Businesses (invited through Our Bury St Edmunds)
 - Cathedral
 - Charities (e.g. EACH)
 - Fairground representative
 - Our Bury St Edmunds (Business Improvement District)
 - Police – Safer Neighbourhood Team
 - Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities
 - Representatives from St John’s Street
 - Representatives from The Traverse
 - Town Councillors
- Event managed from the Economic Development team within Growth
- Further office support (e.g. within the Economic Development team)

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING	<p>Objective: review the current arrangements for communication and marketing about the Fayre, and consider alternatives.</p> <p>Key Details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Marketing plan • Christmas Fayre website • Social media – ourselves and stall holders • Press releases throughout the year, starting in July • Press-briefing: Counter-terrorism measures • Joined up marketing with Our Bury St Edmunds, Visit Suffolk, Arc website, Bury St Edmunds and Beyond • Programme with a basic map – launched in October and also handed out on day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing with Abellio through their website and at stations – promoting coming by train and buses • Greene King promote on website • Paid for and in-kind advertising with EADT and Bury Free Press • RWSFM local radio and Radio Suffolk • Look East and Anglia TV (because of new security measures) • Promotional 'save the date' postcards which we print and stallholders give out • What's On West Suffolk website • Marketing at Cambridge Park and Ride
EXAMPLES FROM ELSEWHERE	<p>Objective: consider examples of best practice from other places.</p> <p>Key Details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salisbury: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organised by Business Improvement District, delivered by external events company ○ 23 Nov to 22 Dec ○ 200,000 visitors ○ 75 chalets ○ Held within historic Guildhall Square ○ Mix of local and international delicacies, festive foods, and sweet treats; range of artisan gifts, beautifully crafted homewares, unique fashion items and a collection of toys and gifts; and festive events • Winchester: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organised and delivered by Winchester Cathedral ○ 17 Nov to 20 Dec ○ 400,000 visitors ○ 110 chalets ○ Held within and around grounds of the Cathedral ○ Inspired by traditional German Christmas markets • Bath: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organised and delivered by Visit Bath (Destination Management Organisation) ○ 22 Nov to 9 Dec ○ 409,000 visitors ○ 200 stalls ○ Held along the streets of Bath, a world heritage site ○ Selling handmade and local Christmas gifts, plus a packed calendar of family friendly events • Lincoln: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organised and delivered by City of Lincoln Council ○ 6 to 9 December ○ 260,000 visitors ○ 200 stalls ○ Held within the Lincoln Castle grounds, around Lincoln Cathedral and through the rest of the Cathedral Quarter ○ Stalls, entertainers and seasonal themes • Stratford-upon-Avon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jointly organised and funded by district and town councils ○ Procured operator manages all except security and funfair ○ 8 December to 10 December ○ Over 100,000 visitors ○ 300 stalls ○ Victorian theme

BURY ST EDMUNDS CHRISTMAS FAYRE - OPERATIONAL PLAN (2015-2020)						
Document author		Ben Smith, Policy Business Partner (2015 Review)		<h1>Progress review (May 2018)</h1>		
Document owner		Sharon Fairweather, Markets Development Officer				
No.	Theme	Process	Action	Person or group responsible	Timings	Progress made as at May 2018
1	Council statements for the Christmas Fayre	Vision	Revise vision to "The Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre is a fun, festive and inclusive event for all ages. The event is designed to attract visitors and have a positive effect on local people and businesses. The Fayre is provided by St Edmundsbury Borough Council."	Cabinet	December 2015 - December 2019	Action completed. Statements have been utilised when needed.
2	Council statements for the Christmas Fayre	Commitment	The Council should commit to the Christmas Fayre for the remainder of the current administration. This will allow the Markets Development Officer to procure contracts for the Fayre which should generate budget savings.	Cabinet	December 2015 - December 2019	Action completed. Statements have been utilised when needed.
3	Council statements for the Christmas Fayre	Cost neutral	As a minimum, the Christmas Fayre should be run as a cost-neutral event by the Council. Additional budget spend should be approved by the Section151 Officer.	Finance Business Partner	December 2015 - December 2019	Action completed. Statements have been utilised when needed. However, since the event has progressed, it is no longer cost-neutral. It is estimated that the cost to the council for the 2017 Christmas Fayre was in the region of £20,000.
4	Council statements for the Christmas Fayre	Future management and marketing of the Fayre	The Council should continue to provide the Christmas Fayre for the benefit of its communities and businesses and should work in partnership with other organisations to maximise the potential of all major events that are delivered across the Bury St Edmunds town centre.	Growth Officer	December 2015 - December 2019	Action completed. Statements have been utilised when needed.
5	Council statements for the Christmas Fayre	Delivery of the Operational Plan	The Markets Development Officer and Christmas Fayre Project Group shall be responsible for the delivery of this operational plan. Internal support has been identified where relevant.	Christmas Fayre Project Group	December 2015 - December 2019	Action completed. Statements have been utilised when needed.
No.	Theme	Process	Action	Any additional internal staff involved	Timings	Progress made
6	Christmas Fayre review	Democratic Process	Overview and Scrutiny to consider the report and recommendations on 11 November	Service Manager - Economic Development	Nov-15	Action completed.
7	Christmas Fayre review	Democratic Process	Cabinet to consider the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 8 December	Service Manager - Economic Development	Dec-15	Action completed.

No.	Theme	Process	Action	Any additional internal staff involved	Timings	Progress made
8	Christmas Fayre review	Communications	A link to the Cabinet decision and associated documents to be published and communicated via email, press release and social media.	Service Manager - Communications	Dec-15	Action completed.
9	Economic Impact	Incentives for return visits	Work in partnership with 'Our Bury St Edmunds' and the Tourism Group to explore incentives for Christmas Fayre visitors to return to Bury St Edmunds. A mechanism for recording the success of the scheme should be implemented.	Marketing Manager	2016/17 Fayre	Action in progress. Now that the Destination Management Organisation (Bury St Edmunds and Beyond) is up and running, officers have been working with the DMO manager to produce incentives. For example, vouchers to encourage return visits (at other times of the year) will be given out at the 2018 fayre; these return visits can then be analysed and monitored
10	Economic Impact	Visitor survey	Create and target a more sophisticated visitor survey that produces results that can be used for economic impact modelling.	Policy Business Partner	2016 Fayre	Action completed. An online survey was produced by the Policy team. The data has been used to find out the percentage of local residents. The survey results told us that there was a high percentage of visitors from 25+ miles away, so local people were targeted for the 2016 fayre which resulted in the 'locals night'.
11	Finance	Cost recovery	The Markets Development Officer should work with the Commercial Manager to explore additional income generation that can be reinvested in providing a well-organised and professional event.	Commercial Manager	December 2015 - April 2019	Action in progress. The Commercial Manager post was disestablished. However the Markets Development Officer has worked with the Cathedral and Abbey Gardens Park Manager to identify additional space. This has resulted in extra income from additional stalls.
12	Finance	Cost recovery	Areas to be initially explored for income generation by the Commercial Manager are business advertising and event sponsorship.	Commercial Manager/ Marketing Manager	2016 Fayre	Action completed. There has been additional in-kind sponsorship. For example, the programme is now produced by Haarts Estate Agent (saving £2,000) and Greene King provide their car park and continue to provide financial support (saving £6,000).

No.	Theme	Process	Action	Any additional internal staff involved	Timings	Progress made
13	Finance	Cost recovery	Assess the potential of using Moyses Hall as a café and 'break out' area at a future Christmas Fayre.	Commercial Manager/ Heritage Manager	2016 Fayre	<p>Action completed. In 2016/17 a mini café was trialled, however it made a loss two years in a row due to the large food and drinks offer in the town already. It was also trialled as a 'break out'/drop-in for parents, however the museum was swamped with prams and shopping bags meaning those that were visiting the galleries were restricted (and the museum only has one accessible toilet).</p> <p>We will not be looking at this option again, since we have extended the successful Sci-fi and Action Exhibition so that it is open during the Christmas Fayre to maximise potential revenue. This has increased the footfall and income to the museum service as we have costumed characters and themed stalls like comic shop, art and film memorabilia.</p>
14	Finance	Internal recharges	Review the internal recharge costs for the Christmas Fayre to include accurate budget recharges for the Event Manager, Health and Safety Manager	Finance Business Partner	2017/2018 budget	Action completed.
15	Finance	Budget	Review the expenditure and income cost codes for the Christmas Fayre to ensure they are transparent and structured appropriately to support the financial management of the Christmas Fayre.	Finance Business Partner	2017/2018 budget	Action completed.
16	Finance	Highways recharge	Review the pricing structure for all events that require road closures and traffic management. Implement a pricing structure that, where appropriate, ensures full cost recovery.	Highways Officer/ Finance Business Partner	2016/2017	Action completed. The pricing structure was reviewed. Other event organisers are now encouraged to complete their own paperwork and operational costs are recharged. For civic events (e.g. St George's Day), SCC provide traffic management free of charge.
17	Finance	Fees/ donations for entertainment	Create a scheme of fees for the provision of entertainment at the Christmas Fayre. Engage with regular Christmas Fayre entertainers that are affected by the new scheme.	Commercial Manager/ Policy Business Partner	2016 Fayre	Action completed. Officers now work on a 'donation' scheme rather than 'fees', based on the size of the group and expenditure.

No.	Theme	Process	Action	Any additional internal staff involved	Timings	Progress made
18	Finance	Procurement of Christmas Fayre contracts	Explore the procurement of Christmas Fayre contracts (staging, first aid, traffic management etc.) and tender for the duration of the Christmas Fayre operational plan.	Procurement Manager/ Legal Service Manager	2016 Fayre	Action completed. There is a 3 year contract which will end after 2018 fayre.
19	Finance	Coach drop off	Review the current charging for coach 'drop-off' charges. Implement a scheme that ensures full cost recovery for administration and management of the bookings.	Commercial Manager/ Policy Business Partner	2016 Fayre	Action completed. Charges were reviewed which resulted in an increase in charges. The processes were reviewed, and where possible everything was made electronic. For 2018, coaches will be charged for Thursday as well as the other three days.
20	Governance	Reporting	Engage Leadership Team and Portfolio Holders in the review of past Christmas Fayres and planning for future Christmas Fayres.	Policy Business Partner	1st report in Q1 2016/17	First report completed. Future engagement in progress.
21	Governance	Project group	An internal officer led Christmas Fayre Project Group should be formed with a terms of reference and clearly defined roles and responsibilities for key officers.	Policy Business Partner	2016 Fayre	Action completed. An officer led operational group is now in place.
22	Governance	Information forum	Transform the Christmas Fayre Working Group into an information sharing and discussion forum. The forum should be used as an opportunity to discuss learning from the previous Christmas Fayre and update on progress and changes for the next Fayre.	The Working Group	2016 Fayre	Action completed. The group has been transformed, with new members (businesses in particular were invited to join the group).
23	Operational	Communications	Produce a communications and marketing plan for the Christmas Fayre that maximises the potential of the new website and social media.	Service Manager - Communications	2016 Fayre	Action completed. A communications plan is in place every year (the messaging was slightly different in 2017 due to highlighting security measures). Social media has also been key to getting the messages out. The Markets Development Officer has been/is working with the Destination Management Organisation to develop a joint marketing plan.
24	Operational	Communications	Produce briefing packs to include a 'programme of events' for local businesses and venues. Distribute in advance of the Christmas Fayre.	Marketing Manager	2016 Fayre	Action completed. A letter/programme is now distributed to local businesses. In addition to this, regular briefing meetings take place (e.g. with St John's Street Traders). An update is provided regularly to OurBuryStEdmunds for inclusion in their newsletters.

No.	Theme	Process	Action	Any additional internal staff involved	Timings	Progress made
25	Operational	Marketing	Work with Our Bury St Edmunds and other partners to ensure consistent and targeted marketing for all major events in Bury St Edmunds. Maximise the opportunity to encourage visitors to return for other events on the Bury St Edmunds calendar.	Marketing Manager	December 2015 - April 2019	Action completed. We continue to jointly market the town and events during the Christmas period.
26	Operational	Administrative support	Identify the administrative tasks and responsibilities (and equivalent FTE time) required to support the Christmas Fayre.	HR Business Partner	2016 Fayre	Action completed. An event plan is in place which identifies milestones. Plus a task list has been produced which has been updated as tasks have been modified since the last review.
27	Operational	Professional stewards	Implement a new staffing and operational structure for stewards that ensures stewards with suitable experience or qualifications are recruited at the Fayre. Where appropriate, offer training to key staff that manage volunteer/ less experienced stewards	HR Business Partner	December 2015 - April 2019	Action completed. This was reviewed during preparation for the 2017 Fayre, with a view to implementing a new structure during the 2018 Fayre.
28	Operational	Visitor figures	Use visitor numbers from the 2015 Fayre to review, and if necessary update, the mechanism for recording visitor numbers to the Christmas Fayre.	Policy Business Partner/ Health and Safety Manager	2016 Fayre	Action completed. Visitor numbers are recorded via CCTV, car parking and venue visitor numbers.
29	Operational	Accessibility	Ensure all areas of the fayre are disabled accessible. Where required implement alternative routes and communicate this on the website in advance of the Fayre and to stewards as part of their briefing.	Health and Safety Manager	2016 Fayre	Action completed. As far as reasonably practicable, all areas are accessible.
30	Operational	Food safety	Assess the capability of the online NCASS website (free) for the management of food stall bookings. If appropriate, manage the food stall bookings at future Fayre's using this solution.	Business Regulation and Licensing Manager	2016 Fayre	Action completed. This was investigated and not deemed appropriate for the fayre. It was agreed that any operators should have a food hygiene rating of 3 or above (previously this has not been required).
31	Operational	Car parking	Continue to explore the availability of additional car parking with businesses, schools and outside of the town for park and ride.	Service Manager - Car Parks	December 2015 - April 2019	Action completed. This has been explored further, resulting in additional public car parking at the Priory School and additional parking at the Park and Ride site. Trader car parking is now currently located on unused land.
32	Operational	Travel	Work in partnership with local travel providers to advertise the availability and frequency of bus and train services to the Fayre.	Marketing Manager	2016 Fayre	Action completed. Officers have regular contact with Abellio, who are aware of the event and now provide extra train services and carriages on the Sunday. Local bus providers are aware and provide double decker buses rather than the standard size buses.

No.	Theme	Process	Action	Any additional internal staff involved	Timings	Progress made
33	Operational	Disruption - resident and business engagement	Where possible, use email to communicate with town centre residents and businesses in advance of the Christmas Fayre, particularly regarding arrangements for road closure.	Highways Officer	2016 Fayre	Action completed. Communication is routinely done via local media. Businesses are emailed through OurBuryStEdmunds.
34	Operational	Pedestrian congestion and management of litter	Identify a suitable area outdoors to be used as a break-out area for the consumption of food bought at the Christmas Fayre.	Health and Safety Manager/ Operations Manager (Waste)	2016 Fayre	Action completed. Additional seating is now provided in the Cathedral Courtyard, which complements the existing Cathedral offer. Several churches throughout the town open for people to drop in and rest.

Appendix C

1. Summary of Engagement

Overview and Scrutiny Committees agreed that the 2018 Christmas Fayre Review should include an element of stakeholder engagement, including the following consultees:

- OurBuryStEdmunds
- Town centre businesses
- Businesses that provide services to the Fayre
- Bury and Beyond
- Arc management
- Emergency services

It was also suggested that we should involve schools or a youth group to ensure we get feedback from a range of different ages. Analyses of these surveys is included at the end of this document.

2. Stallholder survey analysis
3. Local School survey analysis

The summary table below outlines all the stakeholders that were contacted via email. Separate surveys were also undertaken to capture views from stallholders who attended past Christmas Fayres and from local school children.

In the interests of keeping this report concise responses have been summarised.

Initial engagement (before the first meeting of the Task & Finish Group)

Officers asked key stakeholders for initial views on the options available to us for reviewing and improving the fayre, the following summary is from both emails and some face to face meetings.

Organisation	Response summary
Our Bury St Edmunds	Our BSE Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restrict area to Abbey gardens• Ticketed event

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer (over two weeks?) • Showcase for BSE • Quality • “Cracking” product currently • General rule – food and drink, retail and gift businesses benefit; service businesses need to do more to take advantage of opportunity • Is current operation resilient?
Suffolk Chamber	Suffolk Chamber kindly passed on our request for feedback to businesses and we received two responses from this exercise which are outlined below (anonymised for this public report)
Arc Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of success is increasing visitor numbers – wants this to increase • Locals day a success • Does not support zoning
Bury and Beyond Development Management Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not supportive of a reset year - PR disaster • Samey - have a percentage of new stalls each year • Need to translate into our tourism and heritage (themed?) • Do more to encourage return visits
The Apex	<p>Fed into officer feedback sessions including providing the following suggestions:</p> <p>Happy to support premium Christmas fayre ticket implementation and improving programmes and promotional materials</p>

General Engagement

Requests were sent to the following key stakeholders asking for responses to all or some of the engagement questions outlined in the main report, depending on the nature of their business with regards to the Christmas Fayre. These questions were provided to help stakeholders engage but we welcomed any feedback outside of these responses as well.

Organisation	Response summary
Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The town is able to cope with the size of the Fayre and believe it should continue to be held across four days They have not experienced an increase in crime or anti-social behaviour There is clear disruption due to road closures but the police believe this is managed well by the council
St John's Ambulance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need advance warning of involvement so they can attend table-top exercises. Keen for centralised control room to be located away from the fayre for all emergency services and have offered their HQ to be used (including IT and communications facilities).
Ambulance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The success of the fayre has led to increased congestion ("a victim of its own success") which could affect response times, however this is not currently detrimental to the provision of the service Fayre should remain across 3-4 days The main control room should be re-located away from the fayre
Fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns around access in the event of an incident (particularly due to concrete barriers to prevent terrorist attack) and stall holders blocking emergency equipment.
Weekly market traders representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better promotional material to encourage visitors to return to BSE throughout the year, in particular to visit local businesses. It would be difficult to ensure all stallholders dressed in a theme. Changing the date of the fayre may conflict with other national events e.g. Lincoln Christmas fayre Consider extending so that it runs for longer.
Bury St Edmunds businesses <i>(responded to call for feedback by Suffolk Chamber)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased sales 3 years ago as it coincided with our sale launch but sales have dropped year on year since then (decreased by 65% last year) Fayre should be held closer to Christmas., in mid-December There are the same amusements each year - this needs to be looked at to add variety The fayre, Christmas lights switch on and late night shopping should all coincide and be held closer to Christmas. Fayre negatively impacts business and has done for at least 7 years, largely due to travel disruption to customers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fayre is held over too many days.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fayre negatively impacts business and has done for at least 7 years, largely due to travel disruption to customers and stalls selling competing products • The fayre is held over too many days. • "The Fayre is a big negative for customers, sales and profits."

Parish and Town Councils

In addition to this, the Task & Finish group agreed in August that the engagement should be extended to parish and town councils across West Suffolk. Given the short deadline before the September meeting we only received responses from 11 parish and town councils, most of which are set out below. The Task & Finish group understand this did not allow for different schedules of council meetings and have agreed that this should just be the start of the conversation and engagement with Town and Parish Councils should continue into the 3 year review period.

1. Do we currently do enough to ensure the fayre is a showcase for West Suffolk, encouraging people to return after the event?
2. Should the stalls have a local emphasis?
3. How important is the quality and variety of products being sold on the stalls?
4. Do you want the fayre to be more festive, perhaps through a theme?
5. Should the format of the fayre be the same every year?
6. Can Bury St Edmunds continue to accommodate the increasing visitor numbers?
7. When should the fayre be held?
8. Does a 4-day event give the right balance between enjoyment of the fayre and the impact on local residents/infrastructure?
9. Do you have any other comments on the current arrangements of the fayre?

Town/Parish Council	Response summary
Chevington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the fayre and boost repeat tourism • Consider increasing stallholder costs if overall costs are going to be higher due to security requirements • More park & ride places or move fayre out of town
Cowlinge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stalls should have a local emphasis • The quality and variety of products is important • A theme is not needed • The format should be the same every year • Some concerns around over-crowding • The timing is about right • Perhaps with increasing numbers an extra day would be sensible. • More parking for park & ride.
Great Barton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the fayre but spread more evenly across town so all local businesses benefit. For example more signage between the arc and Angel Hill • More local bias where possible • Variety is very important • Suggestion for theme to include a treasure trail that takes visitors to other parts of Bury St Edmunds not included in the fayre • Timing and duration about right - locals night is good • Themed quarters to reflect diversity of town
Stradishall, Risby, Ousden, Dalham, Lidgate, Stansfield	<p><i>(one clerk for multiple councils - summary of feedback from councillors)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most avoid Bury over the weekend as it is too crowded and there are problems with parking. Some attend the locals night. • Would like a more local feel • Increasing variety, perhaps through a theme, would be welcome • The fayre shouldn't get any bigger

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a good opportunity to widen the appeal, particularly to locals
Hawkedon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good fayre that is well advertised but needs more variety • more focus on local • More variety in food stalls, less fast food and hog roasts for example • More Christmas themed stalls • No theme other than Christmas • Vary stalls and pitches more • Huge traffic and parking problems, particularly last year • Assume it is profitable for the town?
Honington & Sapiston <i>(2 separate replies)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good fayre that is well advertised and advocates the town • High standard of quality products on offer • People expect a focus on local products, within reason • Variety is important, there are a lot of food stalls at the moment • It feels festive and does not need another theme • Format needs changing every year - it has become stale • More parking and park and ride spaces required for more visitors • Timing and duration about right - residents and commuters adjust to the disruption as it is a once a year event
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good showcase for West Suffolk • Don't think local focus is particularly necessary • More variety needed - Currently too many food stalls at the expense of others • Only need Christmas theme • The format is successful, why change it • The park and ride is expensive - needs to be accessible for local residents • Need to mix up stalls each year to 'keep it fresh' • The Council should be congratulated for running such a successful venture.

Bury St Edmunds Masterplan group

As part of a regular meeting, the Bury Masterplan Group were asked to comment on the current arrangements of the fayre and make any suggestions for future fayres if possible.

The following points were made:

- Approximately 2/3 of Bury St Edmunds businesses are supportive of the fayre (the BID)
- Retail and food and drink businesses are more positive on the whole, while services and wellbeing businesses are less so
- (BID view) Predominantly excellent and a positive for the town
- The fayre has become stale – should be higher quality
- Financial sustainability could be reached through higher charges
- Infrastructure is important for residents who can't get around the town
- The fayre is not popular as a resident/town councillor – but local bias could support this
- Longer duration fayre?

Overall the group focussed on the quality of the fayre at 4 days and making sure the stalls were of high quality

Christmas Fayre Marketing Informal Group

Growth team officers discussed publicity for the fayre with OurBuryStEdmunds, BuryandBeyond and The Apex at an ad hoc meeting. The following points and suggestions were made:

The immediate focus for 2018 is to drive people to the Bury St Edmunds and Beyond website as the main portal for all things Bury St Edmunds. From there the other attractions and activities will be discoverable rather than keeping them on the Christmas Fayre website.

We agreed that the following initiatives would be beneficial:

- Find and utilise the existing Christmas Fayre database
- Set up a Facebook event for the Christmas Fayre
- Produce a Bury St Edmunds and Beyond branded postcard with a clear and generic call to action to the website
- Work with accommodation and attraction providers to offer a sign up competition
- Work with stewards to promote Bury St Edmunds and Beyond to encourage returning visits
- Place an advert in the brochure promoting Bury St Edmunds and Beyond

Bury St Edmunds Residents Associations

The following paragraphs summarise the discussion at a meeting of the Bury residents associations on Thursday 27th July 2018. In summary, the group reached the following conclusions:

- Timing and format stay the same
- Bury has reached capacity
- Quality very important
- Raise stall costs to cover rising operational costs
- Good showcase for Bury but more needs to be done to encourage tourism for wider Suffolk
- Better signage required to connect some streets to fayre (station route - Hatter street and St Johns Street)
- Do less to accommodate more parking (town space at visitor capacity) but make sure buses don't get stuck in traffic

A full description of the discussion is outlined below:

1. Is the fayre a showcase for West Suffolk?

The consensus was that the fayre was more of a showcase for Bury, although coaches from out of town helped showcase and encourage a wider experience within Suffolk. The fayre was noted to 'expand your view of Bury' and one member highlighted that one of the reasons he moved to Bury was due to the Christmas fayre. It was mentioned that even locals who are most impacted by the fayre seem to on the whole love the fayre.

2. Should stalls have a more local bias?

The members agreed that 80% of stalls being from West Suffolk was plenty however were unaware of this statistic until it was mentioned by Officers. They agreed that more marketing needs to be focused on advertising this further and branding the fayre as a local fayre. There were some concerns that the fayre may expand so much that Bury loses its character, however this could be reduced by highlighting and showcasing the other areas and events within West Suffolk such as church and village fetes.

3. Can the town accommodate the number of people?

It was mostly argued that the town cannot accommodate the size of the fayre, and although there could be a separate showground for part of the fayre, 'being in the town is what it's all about'. People stated they 'loved the buzz of it', despite others viewing the weekend as 'four days of chaos'. It was mentioned that visitors who may find Bury too busy may instead visit other local areas within West Suffolk.

4. Is the quality of products acceptable?

The quality was viewed as of high importance by the group. Some felt that the area was too broad and quite a bit of 'tat' was turning up in recent years. However others noted that this would self-correct over the years due to sales, and that the market holds something for everyone, although not everyone will like everything. There was mention of a separate Christmas charity fayre, potentially during the switch on to reduce the number of stalls during the weekend. Some felt that the stall prices could be raised to help fund the rising security costs for the event.

5. Should the fayre be more festive?

Individuals felt that the fayre should not emulate continental fayres by becoming too festive. There could be more done to make shop windows more festive, however the carousels and 'fayre rides' add to the festivity.

6. Travel concerns.

There was almost unanimous support for better signage around the fayre, particularly regarding the journey from the train station. This could ensure that St John's Street is connected to the fayre itself. To reduce the strain on parking, it was suggested that more buses should be put on, and estates should be encouraged to cycle and walk to town. Another member noted that there may be a lot of shopping to carry which may make this less possible.

With regards to the park and ride, individuals felt that pre-booking parking removes the spontaneity of the weekend. It was also felt that the fayre was at capacity with the number of visitors, and that less should be done to accommodate more individuals regarding parking if there was no space for individuals once in the fayre. Instead, there should be more done to ensure buses do not get stuck in traffic and to advertise other methods of transport for local individuals. This could potentially be done using parking notices on the A14.

7. Should the format be the same every year?

The group agreed that with the number of complaints being roughly <100 for an event with 130,000 attendees, it may be the case that nothing needs to change about the format. The only place where most people felt needed to be reconsidered was the entrance to the Abbey Gardens, as this was too small and caused congestions. It was suggested that this could be done through a one-way and single sided system, with a 'no stall zone' at the opening. Overall however, the group felt that the fayre should be kept as it is, which was described as 'not wanting the supermarket aisles to be changed' due to knowing how the event works. There was agreement that stalls should change a bit each year to ensure it isn't boring, but this may be hard for people to find their favourite stalls each year.

The group agreed that Hatter street and St Johns street need revisiting, as it was felt that these are not connected enough to the rest of the fayre and therefore do not get enough footfall. The indoor venues of the Apex, Athenaeum and Moyses Hall were also in need of better advertising and to ensure they do not become gridlocked.

8. When should the fayre be and for how long?

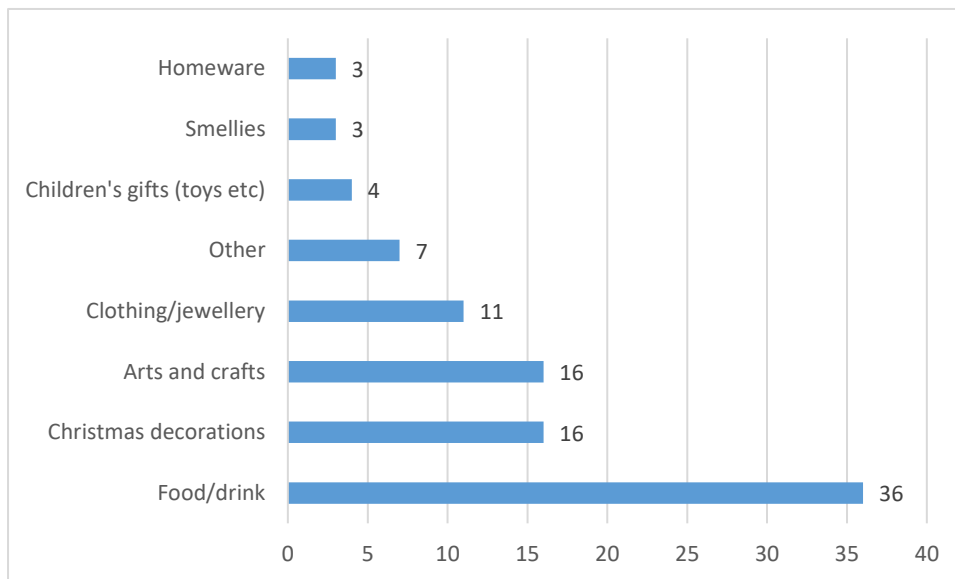
It was felt that the fayre should be on the whole kept as it is, however some felt that if the business is there for more days, then this should be investigated. Regarding when the fayre should be, people agreed that it was a little early but allowed for people to get into the festive spirit and meant that Bury was not too hectic closer to Christmas.

2. Stallholder survey analysis

In total, there were 98 responses received, however, this included one completely blank response, meaning the total number of responses analysed was 97.

The following graphs and tables give a summary of the responses received to each question in the survey. The first four questions were asked to gain an understanding of the different types of stallholders.

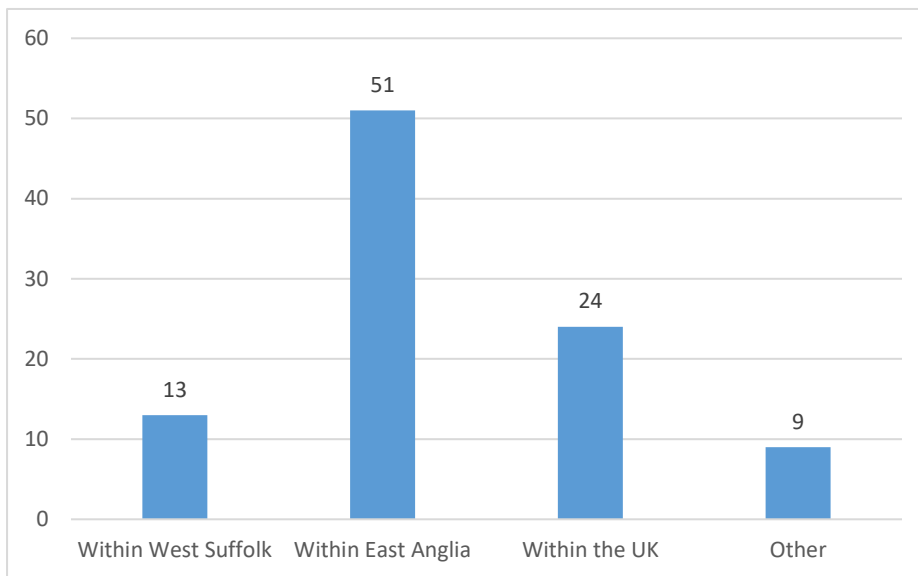
Q1. What kind of stall do you run at the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre? (For example type of product or service offered)



'Other' stalls include:

- Vintage comics
- Heritage goods
- Mobile climbing wall
- Forged steel stand
- Advertising driving school
- Ladies gifts

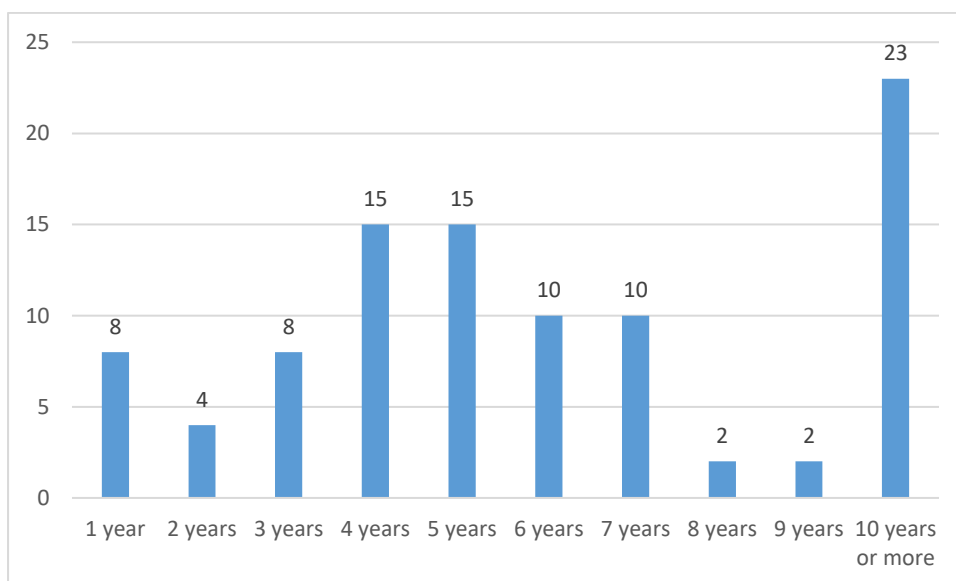
Q2. Where is your business usually based, when you are not at a fayre?



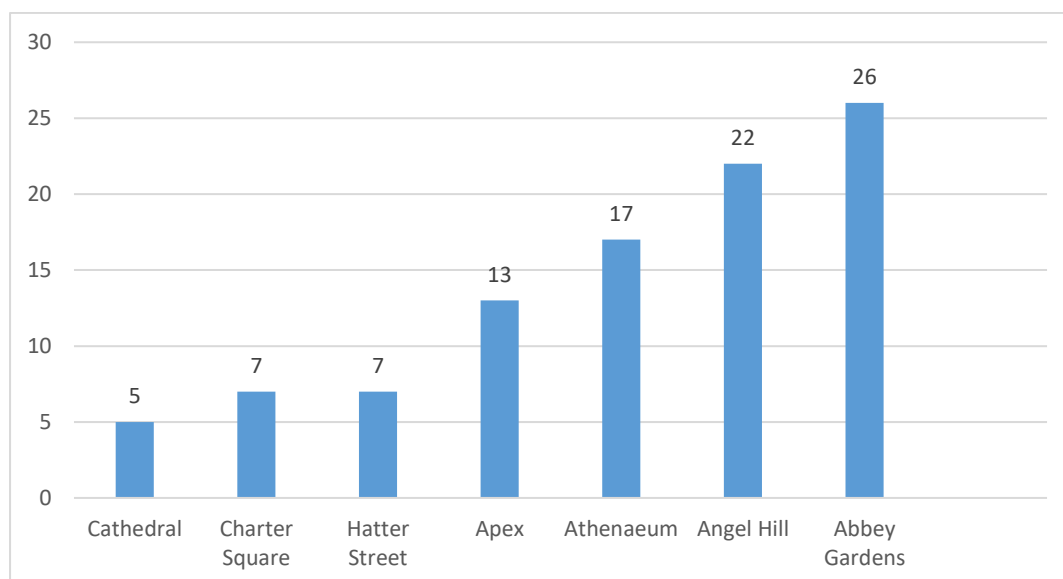
Other locations include:

- Normandy
- Festivals
- Any fares which come up
- Lincolnshire
- It depends if there is an alternative venue
- We are a family co-operative with members based in East Anglia, High Wycombe and London
- Mid Suffolk
- Suffolk

Q3. How many years have you had a stall at the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre?



Q4. Please indicate from the list below where your stall is usually located:



In answering the following three questions, respondents had the opportunity to give a free text answer. The following tables record the frequency with which common themes appeared in the responses. The numbers refer to the number of mentions made of a given theme not to the number of respondents who included it in their response. Some respondents may have included more than one theme in their response.

Q5. What elements of the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre work well?

Theme	Number of responses that included a mention of a theme
Organisation	52
Footfall	26
Atmosphere	19
Staff	16
Location	13
Selection of stalls	12
Everything	11
Marketing	10
Layout of stalls	8
Level of security	7
Cost of pitches (affordable)	3

Illustrative examples of common responses given in relation to the top three themes:

"The organisers do a fantastic job, it all works brilliant"

"There is a great atmosphere and a large foot flow"

"The atmosphere is always good"

Q6. What elements of the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre do not work well?

Theme	Number of responses that included a mention of a theme
Nothing	28
Stallholder parking	15
Poor selection and variety of stalls	12
Overcrowded	10
Cost of pitches (unaffordable)	8
Layout and size of stalls	7
Marketing (of the overall fayre and specific location of stalls)	6
Lack of Christmas theme (e.g. costumes, lighting and decorations)	6
Visitor parking	4
Lack of local stalls	4
Low footfall	3
Lack of toilets	3
Lack of signage	3
Impractical costumes	2
Poor lighting	2
Organisation	1
Police presence	1
Too short a day	1
Too long a day	1

Illustrative examples of common responses given in relation to the top three themes:

"It all seems to work like clockwork, I have never had any issues at Bury."

"Exhibitor parking is a long way away when you've had a long day on your feet and are exhausted"

"Way way too commercial. There are tatty, commonly seen, generic brought in stock and stalls. Some food stalls are expensive and poor hygienically and just cash in on food that's poor quality."

Q7. Can you think of anything that other Christmas fayres you attend do well that the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre could benefit from?

Theme	Number of responses that included a mention of a theme
Nothing	44

Review pitch fees	4
Closer, cheaper parking for stallholders	3
More Christmas atmosphere	3
More quality/unique products	3
Incentivise local traders	2
Marketing	2
One way system (Lincoln)	2
Wooden cabins	2
Stewards who offer stallholders breaks	2
Limit stalls offering the same product	2
Charge visitors	2
Encourage food stall to use recyclable/biodegradable materials	1
Outfits for stallholders	1
Discount for regular traders	1
Discounted accommodation for stallholders	1
More street entertainment	1
Better signage	1
Ensure previous stall holders re-apply each year with new ones, to encourage variety	1

Illustrative examples of common responses given in relation to the top themes:

"No. This fayre has grown over the years and has gone from strength to strength. BSE is now firmly on the map."

"Reviewing the pricing structure, to ensure it is affordable for craft stalls. If not the fayre will only have market trader type stalls"

"Closer free parking for stall holders"

"All I will say is the organisers should take a look at the Christmas fairs throughout Europe which have a wonderful Christmas atmosphere."

"Better quality unique goods for sale -- avoiding Sunday market effect."

Q8. Out of all the Christmas fayres you attend, which are best from your point of view as a stallholder (please name up to 5)?

Rank 1 (most mentioned 3)

Fayre	Number of respondents who ranked this fayre first
Bury St Edmunds	49
Ely	8
Lincoln	6

Rank 2 (most mentioned 3)

Fayre	Number of respondents who ranked this fayre second
Bury St Edmunds	14
Lincoln	11
Bath	5

Rank 3 (most mentioned 3)

Fayre	Number of respondents who ranked this fayre third
Bury St Edmunds	7
Woodbridge	5
Bath	3

Rank 4 (most mentioned 3)

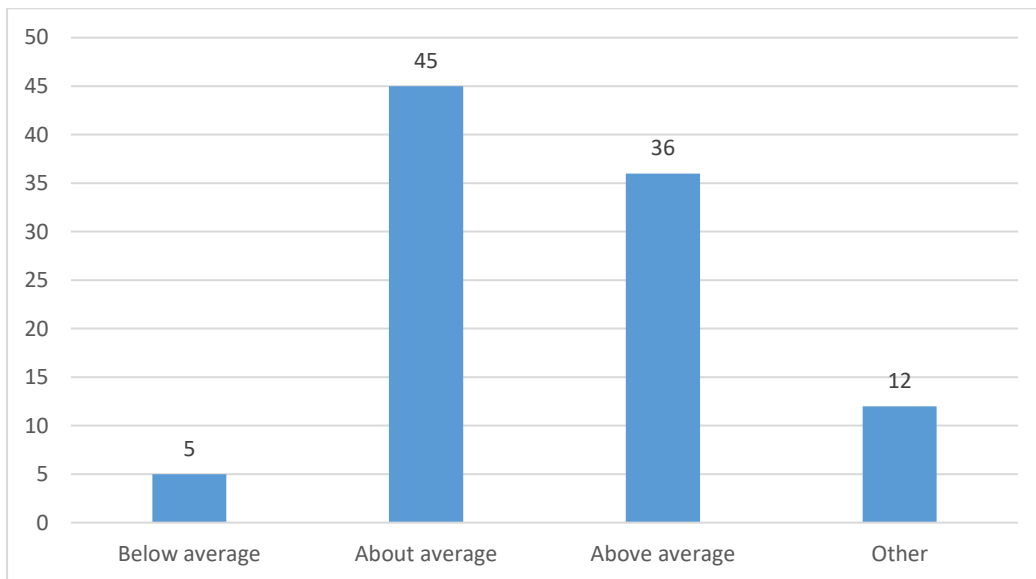
Fayre	Number of respondents who ranked this fayre fourth
Ipswich	3
Chichester	2
Harrogate	2

Rank 5 - Each of the following fayres were ranked fifth by one respondent each:

Fayre	Number of respondents who ranked this fayre fourth
Bury St Edmunds	1
BBC Good Food	1
Beverely	1
Billericay	1
Birmingham	1
Country Living	1
Halesworth	1
ICHF	1
Knebworth	1
Lincoln	1
Mill Road	1
Newcastle	1

Newark	1
RHS Wisley	1
Salisbury	1
St Albans	1
Stratford Upon Avon	1
Wherstead Park	1
Worcester	1

Q9. How would you describe your experience of sales at the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre?



Q10. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre?

44 respondents left only positive comments about the fayre and 18 left comments related to pitch fees:

"Keep it going but keep the pitch fee down!"

"Keep on having the fair. Please don't put up the prices anymore."

"The price for the stalls are now way too high for the space provided"

"Please stop increasing the rates year on and year out especially as there does not seem to be any investment in actually making it feel more christmassy and not just a Fayre."

Other comments from a smaller number of individuals (2 or less) include:

"Please get better signs outside the apex."

"Keep stall prices sensible and keep control of organisation within the City - do not pass to outside organisations."

"Would not be damaged by being smaller - keep more E. Anglia based companies."

"Too many of same, dilutes overall and very little return for hours put in."

"Over the years that I have attended, the Thursday has had increased sales time and the opening time has also been changed to earlier. I do not know of one stallholder who is pleased with the change. It does not result in more sales, only longer trading hours."

3. Local school survey analysis

In total, 70 responses were received, however, this included one respondent who did not answer any of the questions, meaning the total number of responses analysed was 69.

The survey was sent to the following schools and representatives of young people:

- West Suffolk College
- County Upper
- Sybil Andrews
- King Edwards IV
- Engagement Hub officer who works with children leaving care, SEND young people.
- Youth Parliament members

The following graphs and tables give a summary of the responses received to each question in the survey.

The respondents had the opportunity to give free text answers throughout the survey. The tables included in this summary record the frequency with which common themes appeared in the responses. The numbers refer to the number of mentions made of a given theme, not to the number of respondents who included it in their response. Some respondents may have included more than one theme in their response.

Q1. Do you think the fayre is a good showcase for Bury St Edmunds and West Suffolk?

99% of respondents thought the fayre was a good showcase for Bury St Edmunds and West Suffolk.

36 respondents gave a reason for their answer to the question 1:

Theme	Number of responses that included a mention of a theme
Attracts visitors and tourists to the town	14
It has a fun Christmas atmosphere	9
Brings people together	7
Helps local business	4
There is something for everyone	4

Illustrative examples of common responses given in relation to the top three themes:

"Many people visit the fair from the nearby and also further afield. If they like the atmosphere and town they may visit again."

"It's good and fun and I like the stalls and lights."

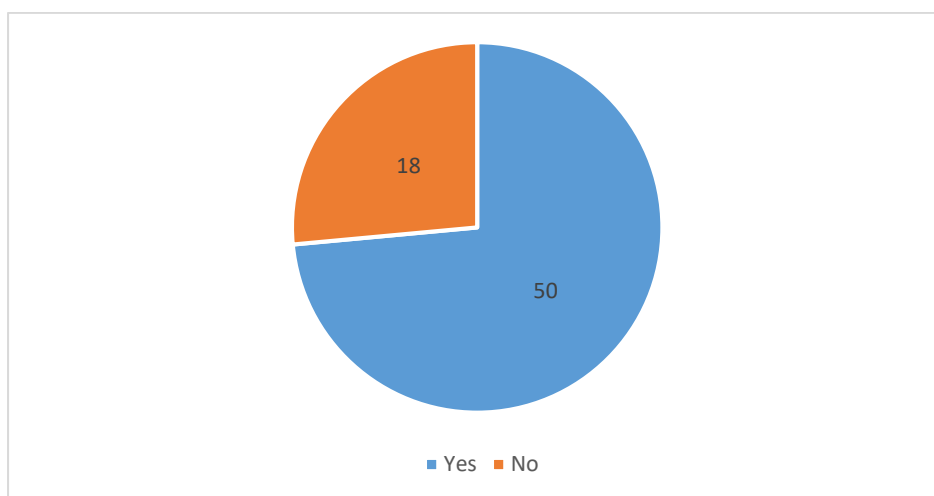
"Because brings everyone together."

Q2. Is there anything else you think we could do to highlight the best of Bury St Edmunds to visitors?

Only one respondent answered this question:

"Shops like fossil, wilkos, game should promote themselves."

Q3. Should more of the stalls be allocated to local shops and producers?



28 of those who said 'yes' provided the following reasons:

Theme	Number of responses that included a mention of a theme
Helps local business and boosts the local economy	21
Helps showcase Bury St Edmunds	2
Only if there are not many local stalls currently	2

Illustrative examples of common responses given in relation to the top three themes:

"It's a good opportunity for them to publicise their business."

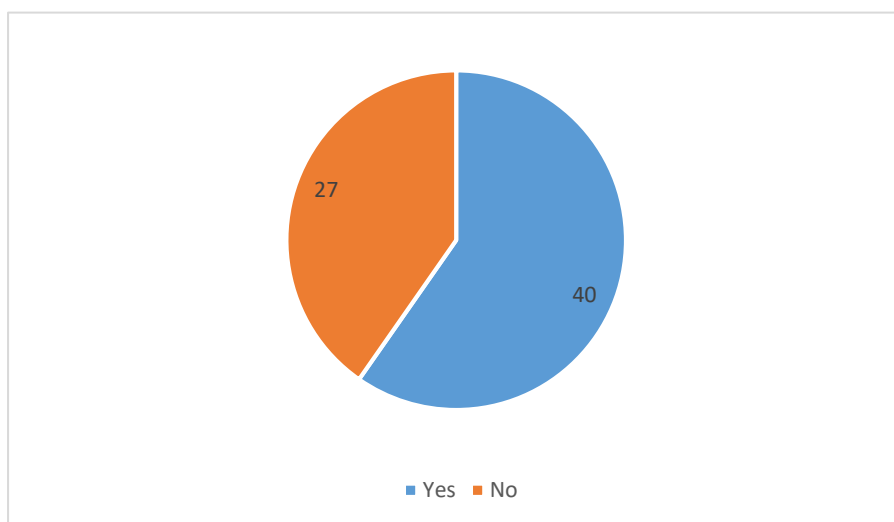
"Shows more of what BSE is."

"Only if there are not enough local producers/retailers included already. It is important to provide a good range of products - appropriate to the time of year."

Out of those who answered 'no' in question 3, 8 provided a reason for their answer:

1. Not necessarily - shouldn't have a set allocation for locals and non locals
2. I think it should be about showing new stalls and things we can't usually get in Bury
3. local shops are in the town all year round and are visible and accessible. the shops can also be open during the fair so it would be more worth it for other stalls to be set up
4. people don't always like local shops and want to see something different
5. people want variety something different
6. Because they can be visited any other day
7. The shops already have an area in the town. So if they want customers they should just open their door.
8. Too busy anyways

Q4. Is there enough variety of stalls?



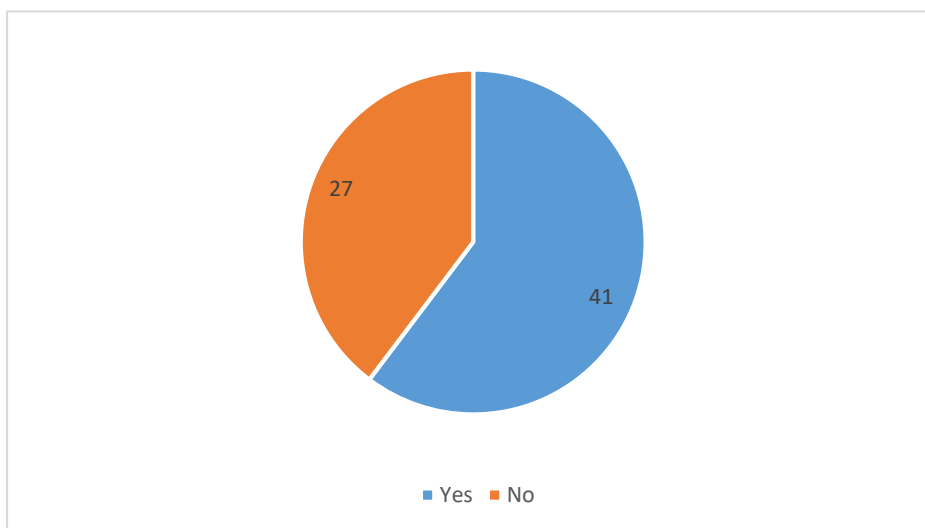
Q5. What would you like to see more or less of?

24 respondents who answered 'no' to question 4 provided the following reasons:

Theme	Number of responses that included a mention of a theme
More unique products e.g. artisan	6
Less food	5
More things to attract young people e.g. Christmas themed photo booths	3
More Christmas gifts	3
More food	3
More clothes/jewellery	2
Less clothes	2
Less fairground	1
Less homeware	1

More local crafts	1
More charity stalls	1
More businesses from outside Bury St Edmunds	1
More things for people with disabilities	1
Less activists	1

Q6. Do you want the fayre to be more festive, perhaps through a theme?

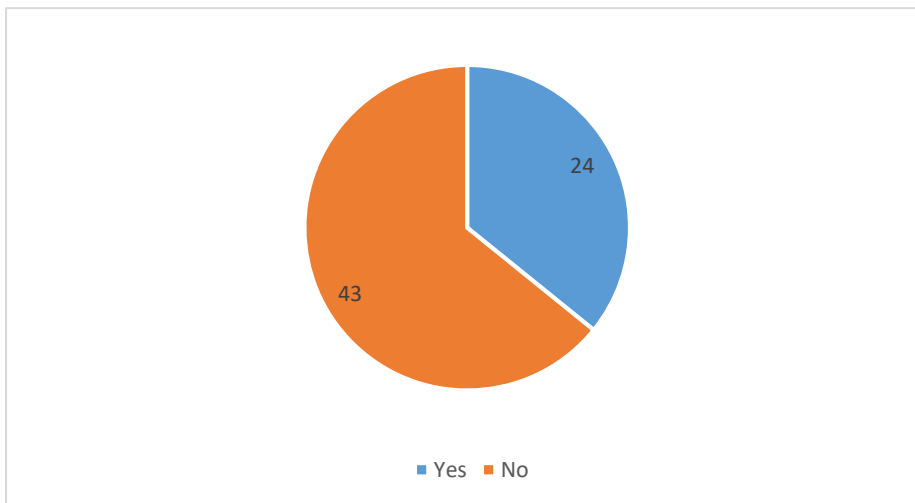


Q7. Do you have any suggestions for how we could do this?

28 respondents answered this question and provided the following suggestions:

Theme	Number of responses that included a mention of a theme
Christmas theme	12
Lights	4
Festive music	4
Decorations	3
Disney theme	2
Celebrating different religions/cultures	2
Larger fairground	2
Street entertainment	1
Ice skating	1
Stewards wearing Christmas outfits	1
Glitter	1
Fake snow	1

Q8. Should the layout of the fayre be the same every year?



Q9. What would you like to change?

29 of those who answered 'no' to question 8 provided the following answers:

Theme	Number of responses that included a mention of a theme
Change something each year	7
Have a different theme	5
More stalls in the Abbey Gardens	2
Make it more spread out	2
Parking	1
Different areas of the town to be the main area	1
Crowd control	1
Change the location of stalls	1
Have more variety of food (not just hot dogs)	1

Illustrative examples of common responses given in relation to the top three themes:

"Some people return year after year and it would be good for some elements of the fayre to be different each time. This would keep it fresh. I don't think the basic layout or premise needs to change."

"Every year have a different theme."

"Bring more into the abbey gardens."

Q10. What do you think of the increasing visitor numbers?

Theme	Number of responses that included a mention of a theme
Good for promoting the town and local businesses	17
The business is annoying as a local, but it is good for the town	9
It's too busy (no positives)	4
It brings the community together	2

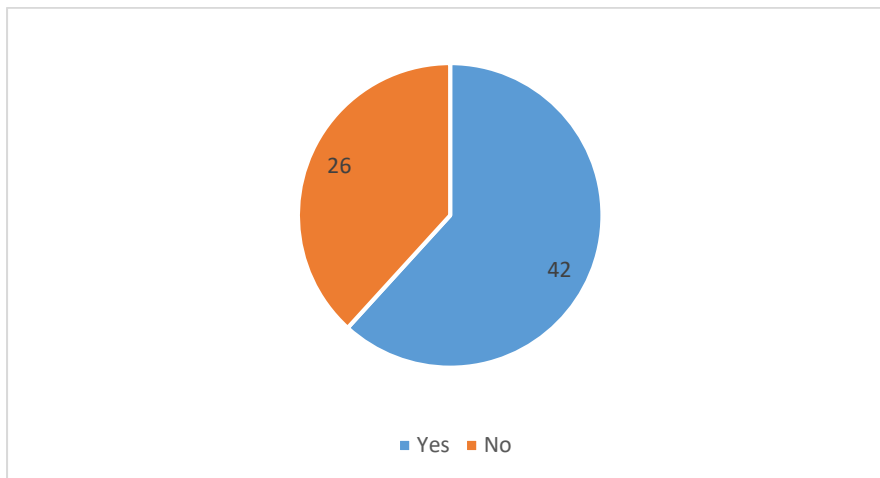
Illustrative examples of common responses given in relation to the top three themes:

"The more visitors there are, the more money made and the best impression will be given out."

"Makes the place very busy and hard to navigate but is good for the town."

"Becomes exceptionally packed and busy, it can lose its appeal."

Q11. The event is currently held around the last week of November. Do you think this is the right timing for a Christmas Fayre?



Q12. When do you think it should be held?

Theme	Number of responses that included a mention of a theme
Early December	8
Closer to Christmas	7
December (not specified when)	6
Mid December	5

Q13. Do you have any other comments on the current arrangements to the fayre?

16 respondents left additional comments:

1. I think it would be nice to have more space to sit and enjoy the atmosphere - perhaps undercover?
2. They should have more music and better rides
3. Try and make it easier to move about. Too much of a squeeze on angel hill and abbey gardens
4. Food
5. No
6. New fayre rides, keep the wheel and mer rigo round but change some of the other sources of entertainment.
7. Could a list of all companies be provided somehow? And perhaps a map showing what the general areas in town are offering e.g. food, games, stocking fillers etc.
8. No
9. too many food stalls and I would like to see the boys brigade band
10. more gift sets and keep it in November so that people haven't finished their shopping and be christmassy
11. bigger stands with more stock a chocolate fountain
12. buses from villages local towns
13. No
14. Nearer to Christmas
15. I think it's a good time because it's good having it before Christmas
16. More patrolling the fayre
More fireworks, less children's rides

This page is intentionally left blank

CHRISTMAS FAYRE REVIEW 2018

Best Practice Summary

A study of practice across other Christmas Fayres has been conducted and the headline successes are set out below. The details of each fayre review in this best practice study are set out in Appendix A. General recommendations from reports by the National Association of British Market Authorities and the Local Government Association are set out in Appendix B.

Headlines:

1. Consider developing a long-term plan with BID or other partners for Christmas events delivery as a whole
2. Incorporate the Cathedral more into the event so it can be showcased to visitors
3. Ensure there are stalls or events attracting visitors to all major parts of the town/city
4. Investing in and setting up wooden chalet stalls are costly but make a big difference to the appearance of the fayre.
5. Consider running over an extended period of time if at all possible: initial set-up costs are high but daily costs are low so more cost-efficient to run over a longer period of time (more income from stall-holders for same set-up costs)
6. The option to extend the length if the fayre is only viable if it is located on already pedestrianised streets or off street areas such as shopping centres, parks and cathedral grounds
7. Work closely with local producers and trades and businesses located within the vicinity of the fayre and develop supportive initiatives to encourage them to be more involved
8. Whilst one way systems for foot traffic seems like a good solution to reducing overcrowding it can be unpopular with shoppers. Simpler techniques can be used such as clearer signage and maps and extending the fayre to allow stalls to be more spaced out

Appendix A - Best Practice from elsewhere

Destination	Salisbury (population 40,302, 2011 census)
Organiser	Salisbury BID
Delivery by	External Events Company
Website	https://salisburychristmasmarket.co.uk/
Timing/Dates	23 November to 22 December (30 days)
Location	Guildhall Square
Visitors	200,000
Visitor Spend	average per visitor: market £11.65, locale £37.60
Stalls	75 chalets (up to 95 in 2018)
Income (if known)	Turnover c. £200,000
Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small number of chalets in a contained area of the city (Guildhall Square) – due to change in 2018 • Mix of local and international delicacies, festive foods, and sweet treats to accommodate all tastes. • Range of artisan gifts and beautifully crafted homewares, unique fashion items and a collection of toys and present possibilities, plus festive events • Partnership formed between SCC and the BID to deliver all Christmas in Salisbury activities from 2016 • In early 2016, following discussions between SCC & BID, it was jointly agreed to devise a 5 year delivery plan for Christmas in Salisbury that would include the Christmas Market, Christmas in Salisbury marketing as well as the wider events such as Christmas Lights Switch On and Salisbury’s Festive Markets. • Event delivery tender currently live: https://salisburybid.co.uk/news/latest-news/47-christmas-market-2018-tender-invitation • Large-scale changes this year to enable the event to attract visitors all over the city, as a lot of the attractions are spread out. This means more local businesses will benefit. • Aim to centralise some of the attractions around the Cathedral to really make the most of it, following the success of the Winchester Cathedral Fayre in recent years • Fayre generates a small turnover which is reinvested into the fayre the following year

Best practice opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outsource to the BID to deliver with an events company • Consider developing a long-term plan with BID for Christmas events delivery as a whole • Incorporate the Cathedral more into the event so it can be showcased to visitors • Ensure there are stalls attracting visitors to all major parts of the town/city
-----------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Destination	Winchester (population 45,184, 2011 census)
Organiser	Winchester Cathedral
Delivered by	Winchester Cathedral
Website	http://www.winchester-cathedral.org.uk/home/christmas-at-the-cathedral/christmas-market/
Timing/Dates	17 November to 20 December (34 days) Open from 10.30am – 6.30pm Sunday to Wednesday and 10.30am – 8pm Thursday to Saturday
Location	Cathedral grounds
Visitors	400,000
Visitor Spend	Not available – purely anecdotal to date
Stalls	110 chalets
Income (if known)	£6 Million, 'retained' income £1.1. Million (2015)
Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspired by traditional German Christmas markets with festive entertainment • Market contained in and around the grounds of the Cathedral (no road closures) • Wooden chalets are situated in the Cathedral's historic Close surrounding an open-air real ice rink. • All exhibitors are hand-picked for their interesting, high quality and unique products many of which can't be bought on the high street • 47,000 visitors to the ice rink in 2017 • Complex stall booking procedure and pricing structure (varying days/times/size) • Traders apply for whole 34 days or first/second half of this period. Approximately 30% of stalls change which gives returning locals some variety • High set up costs (mainly infrastructure) but then low daily costs means significant return on this investment • Foot traffic management needed as there are pinch-points
Best practice opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditionally themed event contained in an area • Uniform wooden chalets owned by the cathedral • Provides an opportunity to showcase the cathedral and generates income to maintain and invest in it

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider running over an extended period of time: initial set-up costs are high but daily costs are low so more cost-efficient to run over a longer period of time (more income from stall-holders for same set-up costs)
--	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Destination	Bath (population 88,859, 2011 census)
Organiser	Visit Bath (DMO)
Delivered by	Visit Bath (DMO)
Website	https://bathchristmasmarket.co.uk/
Timing/Dates	22 November to 9 December (18 days) Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday: 10am – 7pm, Thursday, Friday & Saturday: 10am – 8:30pm and Sunday: 10am – 6pm
Location	Along the streets of World Heritage Site
Visitors	429,000
Visitor spend	Average per visitor: market £11.65, locale £37.60
Stalls	200 chalets
Income (if known)	Unable to disclose – do have a turnover which is reinvested into the fayre the following year
Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Founded in 2001, Bath Christmas Market has grown in size and duration over the past 18 years and has established itself as one of the busiest and most popular Christmas markets in the South West. High quality Christmas gifts, homewares, food and drink, jewellery and so on. Over 80% of the stallholders came from Bath and the South West, and an impressive 99% of all products were either handmade by the stallholders' own hands, in Britain or abroad with fairtrade certification. When you shop at the Bath Christmas Market, you are also supporting all of the wonderful small business owners. Last year they handpicked over 60 brand-new stallholders Each year, Bath Christmas Market has a selection of pop-up chalets on Bath Street for a limited time only. They are passionate about supporting small businesses and offer these micro-businesses short-term lets because they would not be able to operate for the full duration. Throughout the Market, a different local charity takes a chalet for free every single day. That's 18 local charities who are able to raise over £10,000 for their causes. This offers a fantastic opportunity to raise the charity's profile and build awareness, as well as raising valuable funds.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor spend in 2017 approximately £8.1m within the market and £21m throughout the city, an increase of +40% compared with 2016. • Family friendly events throughout course of market • Bath & North East Somerset residents who are in the possession of a Discovery Card are able to enjoy exclusive discounts and promotions across the Christmas Market. Discounts were available from Monday – Friday direct from the market stalls, for the duration of the market only and with the presentation of a valid Discovery Card to the stallholder. • Sponsored by National Express • Children’s festive story telling • 7 day extension planned for 2018 and welcomed by local businesses • Event of the Year Award 2017 by the National Outdoor Events Association.
Best practice opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of stallholders from Bath • Handpicked over 60 brand new stallholders • Pop up chalets for micro businesses • Local charity takes a free chalet every day • Children’s festive story telling • Discovery card • User friendly map • Food prices and some stall prices published online beforehand

Destination	Lincoln (population 130,200, 2011 census)
Organiser	City of Lincoln Council
Delivered by	City of Lincoln Council plus contractors
Website	http://www.lincoln-christmasmarket.co.uk/
Timing/Dates	6 to 9 December (4 days)
Location	The medieval square between the Norman castle and gothic cathedral, plus surrounding area
Visitors	260,000 (2016)
Visitor spend	Total £14 Million, average per visitor: market £26 locale £27 (2015)
Stalls	200 chalets and marquees (2016, down from 250 in 2015)
Income (if known)	£597,575 (£495,499 expenditure) – no income prior to 2016
Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Christmas market in the UK (1982) • Cultural entertainment

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the 2015 visitor survey carried out by the University of Lincoln, total visitor spend has been estimated as in the region of £14 million with the estimated economic value to the City of £2.65 million. • 2016 budget surplus carried over as reserve • The market is located in the grounds of the Cathedral Quarter in five zones, • Similar problems with overcrowding and congestion – including a steep cobbled street. The one way system has been implemented in the past but wasn't very popular as visitors like to browse and then loop back to buy goods once they have made a decision • The one way system is planned for as a contingency and only implemented if the number of visitors appears to exceed a safe level and overcrowding becomes a problem, but is avoided if possible • 3 day event in 2017 due to adverse weather • Later opening to 9.30pm • University events management students get involved by running surveys for visitors, which also benefits them as it forms part of their coursework
Best practice opportunities	<p>Annual review of the event and budget to understand the value of the market</p> <p>One-way system planned as a contingency if necessary to manage flow around stalls</p> <p>Later opening successful and allows festive lights to be shown off</p>

Destination	Stratford-upon-Avon (population 27,830, 2011 census)
Organiser	Stratford-upon-Avon district and town councils (joint partners for decision making, 60:40 funding split respectively for security and fun fair costs)
Delivered by	Stratford-upon-Avon district and town councils with procured operator LSD (already runs weekly markets in town and themed market in Worcester)
Website	https://www.stratford.gov.uk/markets/stratford-upon-avon-victorian-christmas-market.cfm
Timing/Dates	Friday 8 December to Sunday 10 December (3 days)
Location	3 main retail streets and food & drink stalls on a busy side-street
Visitors	Over 100,000
Visitor spend	£838,599, average £11.45 in market and £27.95 in locale (2015, prior to themed weekend market)
Stalls	207 (2017) 300 (2018 expected)
Income (if known)	Income from market contract: £6000 expenditure £30,000 (2017) £43,000 (2018 estimated)

Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victorian theme including street entertainment such as Victorian chimney sweeps, stilt walkers, a victorian carousel and barrel organ music • The BID reported a 64% increase in footfall since the Victorian fayre was introduced • The town's history and culture as William Shakespeare's birthplace is an important draw for tourists and hospitality is a major employer • Expanded in 2017 to alleviate problems with congestion and extend influence to other areas of town centre. Further expansion planned for 2018 • The main focus is local/regional traders and those selling goods from local producers • Local businesses within market area encouraged to take part by trading outside of their premises promoting or selling their normal stock/service (as long as they comply with theme, where possible) • Non-seasonal weekly Friday and Saturday markets relocated to join the Sunday market on the river, enabling a whole street to be used for the carousel and fun fair • Other sources of income for council: advertising in specialised brochure (procured), screens at event • Overcrowding managed by security company stewards to control pinch-points • Retendered market contract in 2012 following issues with previous contractor and wishes to expand. • The contract is lucrative for the partner councils and managed by regular market forum meetings, based on best practice guidance by NABMA. This ensures effective management of any contractor issues
Best practice opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A themed fayre where not only the goods are Victorian – all stall-holders, entertainment and street performers are in character • Theme draws on the historic/cultural feature that already attracts visitors to the town • Social media main driver for attendance • Contractor runs fayre (except security and fun fair) and works closely with district and parish councils

Appendix B - General Best Practice Recommendations from LGA/NABMA reports

- Extending fayres into the evening is normally only successful if a town/city already has a vibrant evening economy
- Visitors generally want to see goods they would not be able to acquire anywhere else, particularly locally-made and hand-made goods and the support for community/charity initiatives
- Locations away from the main retail area can be beneficial as long as they are easily accessible from these areas – showcase the town’s local attractions to visitors and can reduce road closures
- Authenticity is key, especially given the increasing number of Christmas fayres across the country
- Quality food and drink is key, as is widely known as one of the biggest drivers of footfall – especially with the rise of the larger German style or international markets
- The inconvenience for some local businesses is a common problem, but some fayres have shown positive ways to address this – such as encouraging businesses to promote or sell their goods/services off-premises as part of the market
- Involvement of community groups, charities and local business partnerships has worked well elsewhere and ensure the economic benefits of the Christmas markets are inclusive, interactive and collaborative. For example St Alban’s market has a number of community-based initiatives, including:
 - ‘community chalet’ made available on a day-by-day basis to community groups and chalets, or the council’s partner organisations, such as leisure providers
 - a ‘BID’ chalet made available on a day-by day basis to BID levy-payers which can also include charities, pop-up shops, and local gyms
 - a chalet offered to the cathedral’s enterprise arm;
 - local performers, schools, and special needs groups, are offered the opportunity to perform in the dedicated entertainment tepee

CHRISTMAS FAYRE REVIEW**Research on other Christmas events across West Suffolk**

LOCATION	EVENT	AREA	TIMING	ORGANISER	DESCRIPTION
Brandon	Christmas Lights Switch-on	Town centre	Early December	Town Council, local groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Switch-on followed by firework display • Fireworks may not happen in future due to noise complaints
Bury St Edmunds	Christmas Light switch-on	Across town centre	Thursday night: mid-November	BID – OurBuryStEdmunds, Town Council and Arc centre management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charity stalls and entertainment, including local amateur groups (mainly schools/colleges) perform on stage, Santa appearance and animal enclosure (penguins and reindeer) • Street entertainers in Cornhill shopping centre • Musical entertainment, games and festive stalls at the arc shopping centre
	Late night shopping	Town-centre	Starts from light-switch on event	BID - OurBuryStEdmunds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shops stay open until 8pm every Thursday during this period • Free parking in town centre
	Other attractions throughout December	Across town centre		OurBuryStEdmunds, Town Council and Arc centre management	Permanent rides/entertainment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Santa's grotto • Dodgems • Christmas Carousel
Clare	Winter Festival (including small Christmas Market)	Various Locations in Town Centre	3 week festival Late November – mid-December	Visit Clare (BID) and Clare Community Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual events are run by different local organisations • Includes events like Arts Show and Christingle • Opens with a Children's parade, carol singing and family entertainment • Christmas Fayre at St Paul's Church over first weekend

	Christmas Market (part of Winter Festival)	Market Hill	Last Saturday of Winter Festival	Churches Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Started by the Parish Church working with the Community Association In 2018 Clare plans to make the fayre more special by including a World Food Fayre
	Christmas Light switch-on	Market Hill	Late November/ December	Clare Business Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated Christmas Lights Committee Parade Switched on by the Mayor of St Edmundsbury in the past
	Late night shopping	Town Centre	Early December	Town Centre Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicised by Clare Businesses Association
Haverhill	Christmas Market, music & funfair	Queen St	Early December	Town Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Village Market featuring Christmas Children's funfair Music & performances on Queens Street
	Late Night shopping	Town Centre	Early December	Town Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of Christmas Market
	Christmas Lights Switch on and fireworks	Town Centre	Early December	Town Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of Christmas Market Switch-on by local celebrity followed by firework display on Recreation Ground
Lakenheath	Lakenheath Christmas Light switch on	Pavilion Lakenheath	Last Sunday of December	Pavilion Committee and Lakenheath Playing Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrival of Santa Turning on of the Christmas lights Craft fayre Children's entertainment
Mildenhall	Merry Mildenhall	Market Square	First Thursday of December	Parish Council (previously FHDC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turning on of the Christmas lights Procession of Christmas lanterns Market stalls Entertainment changes each year but include small rides, arrival of Santa, Street performers, singers
Newmarket	Winter Wonderland	High St/ Memorial Hall Gardens	Weekend, mid-December	Town Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Light display and free outdoor skating Ice lounge Lantern Parade (as of 2017, 2018 event description to be decided)

Appendix D

	Christmas Market	Town Centre	Mid-December	Guineas shopping centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of Winter Wonderland festival
	Christmas Lights switch-on	Town Centre	Mid-December	BID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of Winter Wonderland festival

This page is intentionally left blank

Christmas Fayre Review 2018

SWOT analysis of current arrangement for Christmas Fayre

The analysis below has been produced using the results of the 2016 and 2017 Christmas Fayre public surveys; the 2017 Christmas Fayre Health and Safety Review; discussions with the Christmas Fayre Operational Officer Group; brainstorming with officers; the LGA report on the 'Impact of Christmas Markets' (2018); the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) 'Christmas Markets – Bringing Markets Alive For New Supporters' (2015), with case study of Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre; and engagement with other stakeholders.

The analysis has been grouped under the headings provided in the Scope of the Christmas Fayre Review.

<p>1. Principle and ownership: Consider whether West Suffolk Council should continue to support a 4 day Christmas Fayre in Bury St Edmunds from 2019 that is run on a not-for-profit basis and organised directly by the Council.</p>	
<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived by partners and other stakeholders as a well-run event (we are approached by other event organisers for best practice advice) • The concept of 'not-for-profit' means we get services in kind from some partners (e.g. police) • The council can influence the direction of the fayre since it directly organises it 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income from the event does not cover costs • Same layout, stalls, entertainment, and so on (apart from minor adjustments) year on year, which may become less appealing for those who like variety • Resource intensive, both during preparation of the event (starting a year in advance) and the event itself • To date, we do not have robust data to tell us what the economic benefits are in terms of visitor spend and return visits (day trips/overnight stays)
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresh the event to address weaknesses • Consider whether the event should be organised and delivered by a partner or contracted out • Look at best practice elsewhere to understand if there is anything we can do better 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition from other Christmas markets/fayres • Return tourism (day trippers and overnight stays) do not materialise

<input type="checkbox"/> Consider whether the event should now be run for profit	
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

2. Vision:

Review current vision ("The Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre is a fun, festive and inclusive event for all ages. The event is designed to attract visitors and have a positive effect on local people and businesses. The Fayre is provided by SEBC".)

Strengths:

- All-inclusive, so something for everyone to enjoy
- Visitor numbers were up from 125,000 (2016) to 130,000 (2017)
- It showcases the town
- Reported to be the top dozen Christmas Markets in the in terms of its size and economic contribution (NABMA, 2015)

Weaknesses:

- By trying to suit everybody there is a risk that nobody is fully satisfied
- Perceived by some not to be 'festive' enough
- Some local people perceive impact as negative due to road closures and so on
- Some local businesses (i.e. high street retailers) do not support the event because they do not perceive it to be beneficial to their business (some tell us that their income declines over the fayre period)
- Has a vision, but no clear objectives/outcomes

<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target audience/market segmentation – define what this should be, working with Bury and Beyond, and produce a new event that meets this criteria • More festive decorations to increase the ‘festive’ feel • Strong links between various elements of the Christmas Fayre experience to create a unified theme – as in a Victorian market – will make the experience more memorable and tends to improve satisfaction (LGA, 2018). • Use of tour guides to encourage flow of visitors, maybe dressed up to fit a theme • Build a set of clear objectives/outcomes, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Qualitative response from customers and traders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic performance • Local and community benefits • Visitor numbers • Spending patterns 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fayre might displace the usual spend that would associated with a weekend at the start of the festive period • Might deter visitors who may have been looking for overnight accommodation
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p>3. Timing and length: Review dates (currently last weekend in November), timings and length of event, and consider alternative options.</p>
<p>Key details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 days run-up • 4 day event - Thursday 12pm to 8pm, Friday 9am to 8pm, Saturday 9am to 8pm and Sunday 10am to 5pm

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People are used to the event being the last weekend in November and can book their diaries accordingly • Does not clash with other major fayres/markets (that we are aware of) • Does not clash with the main Christmas shopping period in December, when footfall is usually considerably higher • The balance currently between number of visitors and length of event is right in terms of dispersal of crowds safely 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fayre sometimes falls over Black Friday, when footfall and retailer turnover is generally higher anyway • Thanksgiving is always celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November, which can clash with the first day of the Christmas Fayre (the fayre fell on this Thursday on 3 out of the last 4 years) • November can be seen as too early for a Christmas Fayre • Roads currently closed from the Wednesday morning to Sunday night
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at alternative timings and dates - see options appraisal document • Have more days reserved for locals 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ If other Christmas fayres/markets change their dates it may cause a clash, potentially leading to less visitors and stallholders choosing other fayres over ours

<p>4. Format and venues: Review current elements of the Fayre (stalls, entertainment and funfair) and the 10 venues used</p>
<p>Key details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stalls – 322 in total: foods, personal goods, household goods and information, and about 80% are local (based in East Anglia) • Entertainment – Animal attractions, carol concert, fireworks and parade (opening night), local performers and Santa’s grotto • Funfair - Various rides including big wheel, trampolines, galloper, vehicle seated rides and traditional stalls • Venues – 10 in total: Abbey Gardens (105 stalls), Angel Hill (54 stalls), Apex (55 stalls), Athenaeum (40 stalls), Buttermarket (normal provisions market stalls), Cathedral and Cathedral Courtyard (21 stalls), Charter Square (26 stalls), Hatter Street (21 stalls) and Moyse's Hall (stall within the museum) • Infrastructure – including marquees, flooring in the Abbey Gardens, generators/associated power equipment and stages

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitors appear to like the format and return (new visitors 76% (2017 survey) / 83% (2016 survey) of visitors attended previously) • Stalls have a different range of prices and products • Aspects most enjoyed by visitors were: food stalls (50% 2016 survey, 20% 2017 survey), craft stalls (50% 2016 survey, 20% 2017 survey), friendly atmosphere (47% 2016 survey, 19% 2017 survey), and everything (27% 2016 survey, 14% 2017 survey) • Aspects least enjoyed included nothing, it was excellent (35% 2016 survey, 23% 2017 survey) • Provides local performers with an opportunity to perform on stage, whilst raising funds and profile • Bury St Edmunds Fayre awarded Best Market Attraction for St Benedict’s School Market Projects and Puppet Parade (it was an “incubation project for young people using sixth formers to support traders’ social media accounts and free PAT testing”) • Funfair caters for families • Venues are located all around the town, which aids exploration of the town • Variety of venues (e.g. indoor, outdoor, marquee, and gardens) • Promotes our own venues • Free entertainment (e.g. stage music, punch and judy, magic time) 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of traders have been attending the fayre for many years – can be regarded as ‘samey’ • The layout of stalls is generally the same each year so some visitors may head for stalls they know about without venturing to other areas • Could argue that there are too many food stalls, competing with local high street offer • No professional entertainment (though some are semiprofessional) • Musical entertainment not always festive • Occasional gaps between one act finishing and next starting (2016 survey) • Some of the animal entertainment has been criticised due to suggestion of animal cruelty • Funfair takes up lots of space • Have to close Angel Hill car park • Lack of cash points • Not enough bins
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could have themed areas (e.g. food, entertainment) • Consider scaling back (is it now too big for the town?) 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Fayre becomes too big - scale is one of the key elements for creating a successful Christmas market as it needs to be big enough to maximise dwell time, reflect the

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the layout of the funfair (e.g. could be better at the om of the Abbey Gardens, although this would incur extra s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider having another entertainment stage • Could extend to other venues in the town (e.g. Guildhall) • Consider charging more for stalls • Consider local versus non-local stalls (need to define 'local', is this East Anglia, since West Suffolk is too restrictive?) Consider a focus on quality (need to define what retailer the fayre is, for example is it 'Asda' or 'John Lewis') • More carol singing and Christmas music on stage • More street performers (e.g. buskers, magicians, dancing, cooking demos) around the town • Bring back the ice rink (2017 survey) 	<p>scale and population of the town, the capacity for visitors and offer a diversity of products and other attractions; scale should be conducive to the size of the town (LGA, 2018)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large numbers of traders increases the product range and offer and extends the interest of the fayre, but it can also risk diluting the impact of the market, spreading existing spend more thinly, affecting the financial viability of some of the stalls, and creating duplication of products and traders (LGA, 2018) • New traders may not be up-to-standard despite checks that are made • A new layout may have implications for safety (the current layout has been improved year on year in an attempt to use what we have got in the best possible way) • If you use fewer venues then people are constrained to a smaller area which could lead to crowd control issues • If you do not use indoor venues you limit the amount of traders because certain traders need to be indoors
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p>5. Type of stalls: Review current split of stalls (i.e. approx. one third of each of household goods; foods; and personal goods)</p>
<p>Key details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household goods (e.g. linens, lamps, rugs, vases, photo frames, Christmas decorations) • Foods (ranging from snacks to larger meals, e.g. nuts, doughnuts, crepes, chilli, noodles, burgers, hot dogs, duck wraps, fish and chips and hog roasts) • Personal goods (e.g. bath products, fragrances, skin creams, make up, jewellery, gift sets.) • Information (e.g. RSPB, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, business promotional stands such as those selling experiences or photographers)

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fairly even spread of the different types of stalls 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough healthy/gluten free/vegan food available Inconsistent structure of stalls Some stalls are seen by some as not good enough Some stalls are not particularly 'festive' Some consider cost of goods to be too expensive World food market can be seen as detrimental as local food traders may lose out on business
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce duplication of stalls selling the same items Update the eligibility criteria Consider whether permanent wooden chalets for stalls should be purchased or hired Consider quality versus quantity of stalls Have a more transparent selection process – consider having a group to assess and approve stallholders Rather than automatically re-inviting the previous year's stallholders, start afresh. Ask interested parties to submit evidence to ensure they meet any new criteria 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stalls may take business away from existing retailers (though no evidence of this to date)

6. Links to wider economy (retail and tourism): The impact on local businesses, both positive and negative.

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brings in 130,000 visitors • Over 4 times higher footfall (through available counters) than average weekend in mid-November to mid-December (BID, 2017 footfall data) • Showcases the town as a whole • Showcases our venues and tourism attractions (e.g. abbey gardens, apex, cathedral, and so on) • Increases repeat visits (though we do not have robust data to prove this, survey responses tell us that people plan to return) • Hotels and B&Bs always fully booked • Car parking income increases • Almost all people surveyed made additional purchases elsewhere in the town centre (NABMA, 2015) 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all businesses benefit, particularly appointment-based businesses due to road closures and parking issues • There are some areas of the town that are not included • Visitors do not necessarily get to see the best of Bury (e.g. ruins of a vast abbey) • Lack of robust data to understand impact of fayre at various levels (Nb. NABMA will be developing standard templates to assist markets to routinely capture key information) • Highest quality security equipment is sought, so this was brought in from Manchester rather than being able to obtain from local businesses
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Bury and Beyond Destination Management Organisation and other partners to produce comprehensive marketing to encourage return visits (pushing overnight stays and not just day trips) to Bury St Edmunds and wider West Suffolk • Research best practice and put in place a robust method of tracking return visits (as far as possible) • Promote the work of Our Bury St Edmunds or its Levy payers or showcase new start up business opportunities (LGA, 2018). • NABMA (2015) said that the average market visitor spend was £27.50, and visitor spend in the town centre was £614,000 in 2014 (visitor spending has no doubt increased yearly since then, however more can be done to raise this spend) 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People stop coming to the fayre • Return visits do not materialise

7. Transport and accessibility:

Review the current transport and accessibility arrangements, including parking; coaches; park and ride; disabled access.

Key details:

- Public car parks – All apart from Angel Hill
- Christmas Fayre car parks - Greene King, Rugby Club and Priory School
- Excursion coaches – On arrival coaches are directed to the drop off/pickup point by the side of St Marys Church on Honey Hill. The empty coaches are then directed to the lorry park at Rougham Hill. Nowton Park has been designated as a parking overflow if required and the Bus Station is overflow for coaches to drop off visitors.
- Park and ride – Located at Claas Business Park in Saxham (3 miles west of Bury). A fleet of buses operate between the site and St Mary’s Church on Crown Street. The service is in operation from 0830 hrs to 2030 hrs on the Friday and Saturday and 0900 hrs to 1730 hrs on the Sunday with a frequency of approximately 15 to 20 minutes.
- Park and walk – West Suffolk College and Olding Road
- Disabled access – Dedicated spaces within car parks as normal and a limited number for the Doctor’s surgery in Chequer Square

Strengths:

- Park and ride has 1000 spaces and is located just off A14.
- Good signage to car parks
- Car parks are well used

Weaknesses:

- The most common issues visitors had were too many people and traffic (2017 survey)
- Not enough car parking
- Not enough disabled spaces

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses benefit from providing their car parks (e.g. Rugby Club and Priory School) because car parking fees are retained by them • Coaches are pre-booked and allocated set departure times so that organisers can understand and manage volumes of vehicles and passengers during the Christmas Fayre opening times, especially through the busy egress phases. • Coaches are well managed on the day and visitors are dropped off at the best possible identified place for the fayre. • Repeated coach bookings year on year – companies promote the fayre and help put West Suffolk on the map • Income from coaches • Income from parking at council car parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At peak points car parks become congested • Coaches are at capacity on some days • There were a number of coaches that dropped their passengers off to visit the fayre on the Thursday which raised safety concerns on Honey Hill. • Resource required for managing coach companies and shuttling drivers on days of the event • There is no flexibility in the system for additional train services (until 2019/20) • Ram Meadow car park was locked by a third party at the normal time, although an arrangement should have been put into place over the event period to leave open longer. • The Traffic Management Company were late in closing the roads and implementing the traffic management plan. The majority of traffic management signs deployed were not sandbagged as required, resulting in signage blowing down. The company had to be contacted to come back to site to rectify these issues which took 4/5 hours. • Angel Hill road closed which causes traffic disruption
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider having another park and ride • Consider running the park and ride on the Thursday • Encourage coaches to come on less busy days • Park and Ride team to manage slip roads when car park become full. This will require revised signage and to potentially erect signage on the dual-carriageway to advise people that car parks are full • Consider using a different Traffic Management Company next year. • Foot traffic system to manage flow of people past the stalls • Better signage to different parts of the fayre 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If people cannot park then they may have to leave and won't necessarily come back another time • Coaches have got to be managed well so they get off on time – if not they will not come back again

8. Finance:

Review the current financial position of the Fayre (including security costs) and other potential options. Consider the overall cost of the Fayre, including opportunity costs and the indirect benefits.

Key details: *CONFIDENTIAL*

- Total income in 2017 was **£232,566.08** Consisted of:
 - Income from stallholders - £198,216.05 (approx. £600 per stall)
 - Income from coach bookings - £5,845.80
 - Income from Greene King Car Park - £5,557.56
 - Income from Park and Ride - £20,196.67
- Total expenditure in 2017 was **£239,954.22** which includes (list not exhaustive):
 - Staffing costs - estimated at approximately £24,023.08 (including staffing during the event itself and the organisation of the event in the year-preceding)
 - Contractors - £92,680.93 (e.g. infrastructure costs; Nb. security stewards and formal security are included in this figure, specific details below)
 - Security costs – approximately £43,181 (consisted of £7590 for additional CCTV, £8898.75 for security stewards, £16,040.25 for formal security (please note: this figure will increase in 2018 due to additional resource requirements) and £10,652 for the hire of the Hostile Vehicle Mitigation Systems (please note: this figure is due to increase by approximately £2,500 for an additional HVMS); Police gave their services for free; these would have cost £49,688)
 - Room/hall hire and internal room/hall hire recharge - £9,960.00
 - First Aid provision - £7,062.10
 - Support costs - £10,290.13
 - Advertising - £7,654.95
 - Park and Ride expenditure – £25,182.16

Total income minus total expenditure gives a loss of £7,388.14 for 2017

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policing is given in-kind because the event is promoted as a community, not-for-profit event • Entertainment is on a donation basis so costs are kept lower • Excellent partnership working • Enables the council to build relationships with local businesses 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actual cost of the fayre has not been accurately reflected in the past (e.g. not all staff time was included) • Not all items are currently costed out (e.g. time given in kind like Volunteer stewards) • Officer time spent on preparation of the fayre could be utilised on other projects • Difficult to measure some benefits of the fayre, for example there is currently no accurate data on return visits to the town and wider west Suffolk
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider whether in the future the fayre should have a focus on making a profit or at least cover costs • Investigate how we can increase our income (e.g. through increasing charges for stalls and coaches) • Increase income from sponsorship • Investigate whether the administrative process can be streamlined and made more effective in terms of staff time 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unforeseen security costs • Other regulatory changes • If the council looked to make a profit, in-kind support from the Police would be charged for (this would have cost £49,688 in 2017)

9. Staffing and volunteers:
 Review current staffing arrangements (employed by SEBC) and volunteers

<p>Key details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This section covers staffing during lead-up to event, event itself and wash-up (management/resources and organisation of event is covered by no. 13) • Council – internal (apart from some additional hours/working days from Economic Development, Health and Safety, Parks and Waste, other services provide support within normal working days): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Car parks ○ Communications ○ Economic Development ○ Finance ○ Health and Safety ○ Highways ○ Human resources ○ ICT ○ Markets ○ Parks and Landscape ○ Public halls ○ Waste • Casual workers – internal staff (x32) and external (x18) • Contractors – for work including putting up marquees, laying down flooring, erecting staging, security, first aiders • Unpaid Volunteers (approximately 150) – including Bury Tour Guides, people via the Suffolk Volunteer Society, and West Suffolk College students 	
<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal staff regularly help at the fayre and are aware of protocol • Qualified security staff • Good mix of local people who have knowledge of the town • Forged good relationship with West Suffolk College (work on the fayre is linked into courses) • Volunteers enable us to be inclusive 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some West Suffolk College stewards were not up to standard • Some volunteers were not up to standard • Staffing costs have increased as fayre has got bigger and due to security risk • Volunteers do not always turn up so always have to have a plan B • Internal staff are taken away from the day job for the duration of the event

<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate how the community can get more involved – accepting the need to get the right balance of paid security and local staff • Manage volunteers in a different way – provide more training • 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If sufficient volunteers do not turn up it may cause a safety/security issue • A certain standard of stewarding is not met in case of emergency
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p>10. Safety and security: Review the anti-terror measures put in place for the 2017 Fayre and note the separate review of health and safety of the 2017 Fayre.</p>	
<p>Key details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counter Terrorism Strategy written and implemented • 22 health and safety zones • Health and Safety officers x 2 • Fire service attend site to ensure appropriate access • First aid provision – St John’s on site • Police officers x 24 and Anti-terrorism officers x 2 • Additional CCTV • Security equipment – IT kit, Hostile Vehicle Mitigation Systems (HVMS) • Security stewards (FIA registered and trained, from a security contractor) x 20 • Formal security (NVQ trained from a security contractor) x 50 • New Anti-terrorism measures required security operations to increase dramatically in 2017 □ 	
	<p>Christmas Fayre Health and Safety Review 2017</p>

Strengths:	Weaknesses:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police said that safety plan was comprehensive and event was well run • Organising group includes variety of stakeholders (e.g. Members, Police, Chamber of Commerce and Officers) • Liaison throughout the year with Police and Counter Terrorism Intelligence Unit (CTIU) • Used advice from the Centre of Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI) • Terrorism strategy was successfully implemented, with positive media coverage and positive feedback about police presence and HVMS • Throughout the event CCTV and zone leaders monitored visitors, noting crowd behaviours and potential issues that may lead to potential crowd issues • Although there was a greater amount of visitors than ever before, the crowd flows and dynamics were constant. • current layout of fayre and its egress points naturally spreads visitors across the footprint of the event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two areas (Abbeygate Street and Abbey Gate (access from Angel Hill to and from the Abbey Gardens) have been identified as high risk areas with regards to crowd flows. However additional crowd control measures would be used if these areas were to become over crowded • Stewarding company were not locally recruited so their staff had no knowledge of the town, surrounding area and event footprint • Lack of toilet facilities close to the different zones, which resulted in staff having to queue with the public so at times zones were left under resourced. • Some of the temporary CCTV camera either froze or had an unacceptable delay

<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work closely with the Police and CTIU. • Steward briefings for paid staff and volunteers should take place no sooner than 2 weeks before the event. • Whatever security/steward company employed will need to be briefed the day before the event, so they have enough time to familiarise themselves with the Town and event footprint • Additional HVM be deployed at the South end of Hatter Street • Review and enhance where necessary counter terrorism strategy. • Review and enhance where necessary the deterrent communications plan • All trader required documents (employee/public liability) must be received by the organiser at least 3 weeks prior to the event. • All Zone leaders, SIA and stewards remain in their allocated zones until told to do otherwise by control. • The majority of day time security/stewarding should be contracted out to one provider, the company would then manage their staff and the majority of zones with SIA (Zone Leaders) and NVQ 2 trained stewards, additional stewards including students will be allocated to the zone under the control of the zone leader. • Review zones to identify welfare facilities for security/stewards, where possible provide cordoned off porta loo for staff only. • Radio channels to be split – zones security/stewards, event organisers, and so on to reduce amount of traffic on each frequency (this will also reduce supervisors workload). • Security Company to have representation in the operations room 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security will increase further dependent upon world events, with the inevitable rise in costs • Although there is capacity within the event footprint the event should not try to attract additional attendance to the fayre • If a trader did not have the required public liability insurance and there was an incident involving the trader or their goods subsequently causing harm or damage then the council would be liable.
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

11. Examples from other places:

Consider examples of best practice from other places

Key details:

Salisbury:

- Organised by Business Improvement District, delivered by external events company
- 23 Nov to 22 Dec
- 200,000 visitors
- 75 chalets
- Held within historic Guildhall Square
- Mix of local and international delicacies, festive foods, and sweet treats; range of artisan gifts, beautifully crafted homewares, unique fashion items and a collection of toys and gifts; and festive events

Winchester:

- Organised and delivered by Winchester Cathedral
- 17 Nov to 20 Dec
- 400,000 visitors
- 110 chalets
- Held within and around grounds of the Cathedral
- Inspired by traditional German Christmas markets

Bath

- Organised and delivered by Visit Bath (Destination Management Organisation)
- 22 Nov to 9 Dec
- 409,000 visitors
- 200 stalls
- Held along the streets of Bath, a world heritage site
- Selling handmade and local Christmas gifts, plus a packed calendar of family friendly events

Lincoln:

- Organised and delivered by City of Lincoln Council
- 6 to 9 December
- 260,000 visitors
- 200 stalls
- Held within the Lincoln Castle grounds, around Lincoln Cathedral and through the rest of the Cathedral Quarter
- Stalls, entertainers and seasonal themes

Stratford-upon-Avon:

- Jointly organised and funded by district and town councils
- Procured operator works closely with councils and manages all except security and funfair
- 8 December to 10 December
- Over 100,000 visitors
- 300 stalls
- Victorian themed

Opportunities (Nb. strengths, weaknesses and threats will not be considered for this section):

- Outsource organising and delivery to one of our partners (e.g. as Winchester and Bath) or to a third party via a partner (e.g. as Salisbury)
- Long-term delivery plan with partners for all events across the Christmas period, for Bury St Edmunds and other West Suffolk towns (e.g. in Salisbury there is a joint agreement between the County Council and BID to devise a 5 year delivery plan for Christmas in Salisbury that includes the Christmas Market, Christmas in Salisbury marketing as well as the wider events such as Christmas Lights Switch On and Salisbury's Festive Markets).
- Themed market in a contained area (e.g. as Winchester)
- Using uniform wooden chalets (e.g. as Winchester)
- Running the event over a longer period than the current 4 days (e.g. Salisbury, Winchester, Bath)
- Increasing the number of local stallholders further (e.g. in Bath's 80% of stallholders are from Bath - although we currently have a similar percentage)
- A big refresh on new stall holders (e.g. Bath handpicked over 60 brand new stallholders for 2017)
- Pop up chalets (e.g. in Bath they offer local micro-businesses short-term lets because they would not be able to operate for the full duration)
- Local charity has a free stall every day (e.g. in Bath, a different local charity takes a chalet for free every single day, so supporting 18 local charities to raise their profile and build awareness, as well as raising valuable funds).
- Children's festive story telling (e.g. in Bath)
- A loyalty/discount card for residents (e.g. in Bath residents can have a 'Discovery card' through which they can gain exclusive discounts and promotions across the Christmas Market).

12. Communications and marketing:

Review the current arrangements for communication and marketing about the Fayre, and consider alternatives.

<p>Key details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Marketing plan • Christmas Fayre website • Social media – ourselves and stall holders • Press releases throughout the year, starting in July • Press-briefing: Counter-terrorism measures • Joined up marketing with Our Bury St Edmunds, Visit Suffolk, Arc website, Bury and Beyond • Programme with a map – launched in October and also handed out on day • Marketing at Cambridge Park and Ride • Marketing with Abellio through their website and at stations – promoting coming by train and buses □ Greene King promote on website • Paid for and in-kind advertising with EADT and Bury Free Press • RWSFM local radio and Radio Suffolk • Look East and Anglia TV (because of new security measures) • Promotional 'save the date' postcards which we print and stallholders give out □ What's On West Suffolk website 	
<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications team on hand all the time so important messages can get out • Social media very cost-effective • Sponsorship of programme • Website promotes local businesses as well as the fayre itself 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Do not have enough time to do as much social media as would like

<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications need to be understood in context of what the organisation wants to achieve (link to 'Vision'). So do we encourage more people to attend, encourage people from outside Bury to come, gain the support/ acceptance of local people whose lives it disrupts, a mix of these – or should it be more in relation to tourism (i.e. come more often, stay longer, spend more and then book your return visit) • Improve website • Do more on social media • Investigate the benefits/cost of paid for ads in BFP and EADT versus the cost of paid for Facebook/Instagram advertising. £500 spent on Facebook may have a greater reach and impact than one week in the BFP. The radius for reach can be targeted at a particular geographical area (e.g. we could set an advert that targets Cambridge, or we could use Bury as the epicentre but reach further out to Cambridge, and so on). • If we choose to have newspaper ads, perhaps we should look more to the nationals – Times, Telegraph, and so on • Depending on what our aims are (and presuming it is still very much about encouraging visitors from elsewhere to discover our town), we can investigate the costs of TV advertising. • More of our paid for efforts should be for people from outside the area, while the in-house press releases and free social media should be for our local communities. 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Marketing can lead to too many people attending which can lead to other issues (e.g. safety and security)
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

13. Management and resources:
 Review the management arrangements in previous years and outline the benefits and costs of alternatives

Key details:

- Organised and delivered by St Edmundsbury Borough Council (staffing during event itself is covered by no.9)
- Event managed from the Economic Development team within Growth

- Internal Christmas Fayre Operational group:
 - Event Manager (Market Development Officer, Economic Development)
 - Growth Officer
 - Health and Safety Officers
 - Highways Officer
 - Environmental Health Officer
 - Finance Officer
 - ICT Officer
 - Markets Officer
 - Car Parking Officer
 - Parks and Landscapes Officer
 - Communications Officer
 - Public Halls Officer
- Internal and External Christmas Fayre Working Group:
 - Officers above and Town Councillors
 - Arc Management
 - Bury St Edmunds and Beyond (Destination Management Organisation)
 - Businesses (invited through Our Bury St Edmunds)
 - Cathedral
 - Charities (e.g. EACH)
 - Fairground representative
 - Our Bury St Edmunds (Business Improvement District)
 - Police – Safer Neighbourhood Team
 - Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities
 - Representatives from St John’s Street and The Traverse

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly experienced team • BSE Christmas Fayre often seen as best practice and contacted by other authorities and event organisers • By managing the event ourselves, we maintain control • We have a reputation for delivering a well-run event • Key partners are part of Working Group 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation of the event is mostly in the hands of one person (Event Manager, Market Development Officer) • Reliance on a small team • No plan B if key staff are unable to run the event • Resource intensive, particularly during the months preceding the fayre
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Succession planning in the longer term • Consider an events team within the council to run this and other council events • Investigate whether partners would be willing to manage the fayre • Investigate whether a third party should manage the fayre • Look into alternative forms of management including the above. 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ If for any reason key staff became unavailable, it would be difficult for others to step into these roles.

This page is intentionally left blank

BURY ST EDMUNDS CHRISTMAS FAYRE - ACTION PLAN 2019-22

FINAL

Document author	Andrea Mayley, Service Manager Economic Development and Business Growth			
Document owner	Sharon Fairweather, Markets Development Officer			
No.	Theme	Action	Person or group responsible	Timings
1	Principle and ownership	<p>The Council should commit to the Christmas Fayre for three years (2019, 2020 and 2021). This will allow the Markets Development Officer to procure contracts for the Fayre which should generate budget savings.</p> <p>West Suffolk Council should continue to run the Christmas Fayre for this period, however alternative options for the delivery of events in West Suffolk should continue to be explored.</p>	Cabinet	December 2019 - December 2022
2	Vision	Endorse the current vision for the fayre as: "The Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre is a fun, festive and inclusive event for all ages. The event is designed to attract visitors and have a positive effect on local people and businesses."	Cabinet	December 2019 - December 2022
3	Timing and length	The Council should keep the same duration of the fayre (running over four days) and ensure that the timing of the event does not conflict with other major Christmas Fayres or local events.	Cabinet	December 2019 - December 2022
4	Format and venues	<p>A food/drink/entertainment space should be created within the layout of the fayre with covered seating.</p> <p>Make changes to the location of some stalls to benefit the layout of the event and to enhance the customer experience.</p> <p>Consider incorporating the Cathedral to a greater extent.</p>	Service Manager - Health and Safety; Markets Development Officer; Service Manager - Economic Development	December 2019 - December 2022
5	Type of stalls	<p>Undertake an audit of the stalls at the 2018 Christmas Fayre; record the appearance and note the offer.</p> <p>Create a pricing structure for stalls that reflects the location of the stalls and incentivises the provision of local craft products and healthy eating choices.</p> <p>Enforce the requirement for stalls and stallholders to maintain a festive appearance.</p>	Policy Officer Markets Development Officer	December 2019- December 2022
	Links to wider economy (retail and	The Council should continue to provide the Christmas Fayre for the benefit of its communities and businesses and should work in partnership with other organisations to maximise the potential of all major events that are delivered across West Suffolk.		

6	Links to wider economy (retail and tourism)	Work in partnership with 'Our Bury St Edmunds'; Apex; "Bury St Edmunds and Beyond"; Discover Newmarket; Newmarket BID; Town and Parish Councils and other groups to explore incentives for Christmas Fayre visitors to return to West Suffolk. A mechanism for recording the success of the scheme should be implemented.	Principal Growth Officer	2019 Fayre
---	---------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------

7	Transport and accessibility	Work in partnership with local travel providers to advertise the availability and frequency of bus and train services to the Fayre.	Markets Development Officer; Highways Officer; and Parking Services Manager	2018 Fayre
		Ensure all areas of the fayre are disabled accessible. Where required implement alternative routes and communicate this on the website in advance of the Fayre and to stewards as part of their briefing.		2019 Fayre
		Create "Premier Parking" opportunities (including pre booking of some spaces and enabling card payments to be taken) to improve the usability of the service/customer experience and increase the resilience of the parking provision.		
8	Finance	The Christmas Fayre should be run within budget as far as possible. Additional budget spend should be approved by the Section 151 Officer.	Finance Business Advisor; Markets Development Officer; and Service Manager - Economic Development	2019 Fayre
		Park and Ride Charges to be increased to £10 per car from 2018 Fayre.		
		The commitment to the fayre for a further 3 year period helps to generate procurement savings to the Christmas Fayre budget.		
		Annual 4% increase in stall charges for many stalls with pricing differentiation for certain stall types e.g. healthy eating.		
		Advice should be obtained from professional sponsorship advisors to assess the possibility and magnitude of additional sponsorship income set against the costs of obtaining sponsorship.		
		Contact town centre organisations offering them the opportunity to contribute towards the Christmas Fayre.		
9	Staffing and volunteers	Implement a new staffing and operational structure for stewards that ensures stewards with suitable experience or qualifications are recruited at the Fayre. Where appropriate, offer training to key staff that manage volunteer/ less experienced stewards.	Markets Development Officer	2018 Fayre
		Investigate organising tour guides and volunteers into recognisable individuals (possibly Christmas themed) to enable them to identify as visitor guides/helpers more easily.		2019 Fayre
10	Safety and security	Continue to produce an Event Safety Plan following the appropriate consultation; consult with the Health and Safety Working Party and enact appropriate changes. Ensure all agencies have access to the plan and are familiar with its contents.	Service Manager - Health and Safety and Environmental Health Officer	2018 Fayre
		Ensure that all food stalls are Food Hygiene rating 3 or above on application to attend and are supplied with the Food Safety leaflet which provides advice and guidance to enable food stalls to meet West Suffolk market inspection standards. Also ensure that any petting animal exhibits have an appropriate risk assessment and procedures in place to ensure risk of infection is low.		
11	Examples from other places	Details of Christmas Fayres held in Lincoln, Salisbury, Stratford-upon-Avon, Bath and Winchester have been documented and opportunities explored.	Policy Business Partner	Complete

12	Communications and marketing	Produce a communications and marketing plan for the Christmas Fayre that maximises the potential of the website, local radio and social media.	Principal Growth Officer and Marketing and Sales Manager	2019 Fayre
		Produce a map and directory of stalls to be available electronically and to be distributed at the Christmas Fayre. Investigate the opportunity to charge a nominal amount to cover costs.		
		Work with Bury St Edmunds and Beyond; Our Bury St Edmunds; and other partners to ensure consistent and targeted marketing for all major events in West Suffolk. Maximise the opportunity to encourage visitors to return for other events on the West Suffolk calendar - for example discount vouchers for return visits.		
13	Management and resources	Set up a separate budget to support the costs of improvements and recommendations - including providing for additional staff resources.	Service Manager - Economic Development; Finance Business Advisor	2019 Fayre
		Share the responsibility for the delivery of the fayre wider across the corporacy.		
		Continue to investigate an arms length events company for events across West Suffolk.		
		Establish a Focus Group made up of organisations involved in delivering the fayre to test the proposed changes.		
		Test the proposed changes with the Operational staff.		
		Establish a light touch Member-led Annual Review to look at the previous year and lessons to be learnt.	Cabinet	

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	Garden Waste Collection Service Review – Final Report	
Report No:	OAS/FH/18/032	
Report to and dates:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	7 June 2018
		8 November 2018
	Shadow Executive (Cabinet)	27 November 2018
Portfolio holders:	<p>Councillor David Bowman (Forest Heath) Portfolio Holder for Operations Tel: 07711 593737 Email: david.bowman@forest-heath.gov.uk</p> <p>Councillor Peter Stevens (St Edmundsbury) Portfolio Holder for Operations Tel: 01787 280284 Email: peter.stevens@stedsbc.gov.uk</p>	
Lead officers:	<p>Mark Walsh Assistant Director (Operations) Tel: 01284 757300 Email: mark.walsh@westsuffolk.gov.uk</p> <p>Mark Christie Service Manager (Business) Tel: 01638 719220 Email: mark.christie@westsuffolk.gov.uk</p> <p>Kate McFarland Waste Strategy Officer Tel: 01284 757668 Email: kate.mcfarland@westsuffolk.gov.uk</p>	

Purpose of report:	This report summarises the review of the Garden Waste Collection Service by a Joint Task and Finish Group and presents recommendations for the service moving forwards.	
Recommendation:	<p>It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:</p> <p>1) Note and comment on the report by the Garden Waste Collection Service Joint Task and Finish Review Group; and</p> <p>2) Agrees the recommendations (as set out in Section 4 of the Garden Waste Collection Service Joint Task and Finish Group report for consideration by the Shadow Executive (Cabinet) on 27 November 2018.</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 Task and Finish Group members have reviewed the GWCS with Portfolio holders.	
Alternative option(s):	At the commencement of the GWCS it was agreed to undertake a review after the first three years of operation. A number of options were considered by the Task and Finish Group for different elements of the service and this report summaries their observations and recommendations.	
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. This includes future changes and alignment with the councils Digital Strategy. 	

<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"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The service is voluntary and available to all households in West Suffolk. 	
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*
Increasing the subscription rate may discourage further household participation.	High	The subscription rate has been frozen for three years – despite annual increases in service variable costs. The proposed £3 increase is modest and one of the lowest charges locally.	Medium
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
Additional resources will be required if changing to a 12 month rolling subscription period requires an increase manual processing.	High	The change must be aligned with the Digital Strategy, be fully automated and be deliverable within budget.	Low
Potential proposals relating to Garden Waste terms, conditions and processes are different to the councils' agreed policies, including the target operating model for customer service.	Medium	Ensure all relevant Officers are involved in the review.	Low
FHDC and SEBC do not collectively agree on the recommendations.	High	Councillors from FHDC and SEBC 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:	<p>Appendix A – Summary of Meetings</p> <p>Appendix B – Financial Modelling</p> <p>Appendix C – Subscription Charges of Other Councils</p> <p>Appendix D – Subscriptions Through the Customer Services Team</p> <p>Appendix E – Information Flow and Process Map</p> <p>Appendix F – Examples of Branding Used</p> <p>Appendix G – Summary of Meeting Content, Observations, Recommendations</p>

1. Background to the review of the Garden Waste Collection Service

1.1 As part of the introduction of the Garden Waste Collection Service (GWCS) in April 2016, Members agreed to undertake a service review after the first three years.

1.2 At the SEBC Council meeting on 19 December 2017, Councillor Nettleton also 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”

1.3 This matter was referred to both Councils Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee for consideration at their joint meeting on 31 January 2018.

1.4 On 6 and 7 June 2018 respectively, the St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath Overview and Scrutiny Committees resolved to establish a Joint Task and Finish Group to carry out a joint review of the GWCS and make recommendations for 2019 onwards. This will allow time for 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).

1.5 The Joint Task and Finish Group included eight Members; four from each council (three from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and one from the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee) with 10 officers in support as required; Assistant Director (Operations); Service Manager (Business); Service Manager (Operations); Waste Strategy Officer; Senior Communications Officer; Finance Business Partner; Business Support Analyst; Service Manager (Customer Services and Transformation); Service Manager (Corporate Policy) and Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny), and the Portfolio Holders . The following Members were appointed to contribute to the Garden Waste Collection Service Joint Task and Finish Group:

Forest Heath District Council

Councillor Chris Barker

Councillor Robert Nobbs

Councillor David Palmer

Councillor Rona Burt (Performance and Audit Scrutiny)

St Edmundsbury Borough Council

Councillor John Burns

Councillor Mike Chester

Councillor Diane Hind

Councillor Sarah Broughton (Performance and Audit Scrutiny)

1.6 The Joint Task and Finish Group met on five occasions during which there was discussion and agreement on:

- a) the scope of the review
- b) the approach to be adopted
- c) Specific areas to be explored, which included the following:

Finance	Note the current financial position of the GWCS and review the subscription charge from April 2019 onwards. Consider the motion put forward by Councillor Nettleton.
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	Consider the approach to payment options – how to pay and the payment period.
Impact on residual waste	The options for managing garden waste in the black bins.
Communications and marketing	Review the current arrangements for marketing and communication with customers.
Operational changes	Evaluate the option of a different collection day to black and blue bin collections to reduce service costs.
Impact of proposed changes	Understanding the impact of proposals, including implementation risks, costs and customer impact.

- d) Observations and recommendations.

1.7 A summary of the Joint Task and Finish Group meetings held is attached in **Appendix A**.

2. Garden Waste Collection Service – background and progress to date

2.1 The Garden Waste Collection Service (GWCS) was introduced in April 2016 as an opt-in discretionary service and is offered to all residents in West Suffolk.

2.2 Members will recall that the adoption of a subscription service was driven by a 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 an organic waste treatment 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.

2.3 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.

2.4 Preparations for the introduction of the 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.

2.5 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.

2.6 During the first three 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. The service involves an annual payment of £40 per bin (max of 4 bins per household) and includes 26 collections per year from 1 April to 31 March. There are no discounts or refunds and residents can apply for bins up to 31 December. No subscriptions are permitted from January to March to enable preparations to take place for the following subscription year. The subscription charge is £40 irrespective of when the resident applies.

2.7 This review of the Garden Waste Collection Service is therefore taking place at an opportune time 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.

3. Review carried out by the Joint Task and Finish Group

3.1 The Joint Task and Finish Group reviewed the introduction of the GWCS and progress to date. The new service is different to the previous "brown bin scheme" and involves the following features:

- It is an optional service - £40 per bin per year.
- Residents must sign up to take part.
- No changes to bin collection day/week.
- Collection is for garden waste only – excludes kitchen waste, cardboard and shredded paper.
- Need to "apply and pay" online using the West Suffolk Councils website using credit/debit card. (direct debit functionality was introduced in Year 2)
- No discounts or refunds and requires prepayment in full.

3.2 To date the service has been performing well and within the initial service assumptions. The initial service design was key to the ongoing success and involved adoption of the following key principles:

- Keep it simple.
- Design for the majority of users and not the minority.
- Use evidence-based decision making.
- Ensure back office systems are capable, aligning IT systems and using in-cab technology.
- Make the transition to online application and payment using the website.

3.3 Whilst the design of the garden waste collection service has been well received by service users and is working well, the Joint Task and Finish Group have considered the following key areas with a view to maintaining financial sustainability whilst improving the service users:

- a) Financial arrangements including the annual charge and a revised charging mechanism.
- b) Customer access
- c) Operational changes
- d) Marketing and communication

Financial arrangements

3.4 *Annual subscription charge*

At the commencement of the GWCS, a number of assumptions were made in order to determine the annual subscription charge. These included estimates on waste collection and treatment costs, numbers of subscribers, the quantity of waste collected, "apply and pay" processing costs etc. Associated with this was the Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) with Suffolk County Council (SCC); a financial agreement whereby costs and benefits would be shared on a 50:50 basis in order that neither council was worse off as a result of the change.

3.5 Based on this and extensive research into the performance of chargeable schemes locally and nationally, the charge across West Suffolk was agreed at £40 per bin per year and was fixed for three years. No discounts are offered for subscriptions that are taken up part way through the year. The charge is the cheapest in Suffolk and is mid-range in comparison to other authorities operating a similar service (alternate weekly collection of 240 litre wheeled bin) where costs vary from £24-96.

3.6 From April 2019, the IAA between the West Suffolk Councils and SCC will change. As a result:

- there will no longer be a cost-sharing arrangement;
- West Suffolk councils will retain 100% of the subscription income (to offset service costs); and
- the Recycling Performance Payment (RPP), which is a payment made by SCC to West Suffolk, will decrease from £54.76 to £30.00 per tonne of garden waste collected and treated.

3.7 It is important that the GWCS achieves a financial breakeven position to secure financial sustainability and to avoid subsidy by non-service users. Based on a review of the current financial year-end budget estimate, the service will require additional funding of £86,729 in 2019/20. As a result, Officers were asked to model the implications of increasing the subscription charge to both £43 and £45 per bin per annum and review the sensitivity between subscription charge and take-up rate. Details of the financial modelling is included in **Appendix B**.

3.8 Based on research undertaken, lower subscription charges generally result in an increase in subscription numbers. However this will not necessarily ensure better financial performance of the service as the service costs will increase due to more customers requiring a collection and more garden waste to be treated. However, using benchmarking with other councils, officers were able to estimate that for every £1 increase in the subscription cost, there would be an approximate corresponding decrease of 1% in subscription numbers. Further details on the subscription charges of other councils is included in **Appendix C**.

3.9 The Joint task and Finish Group agreed that:

- a) The current charge was based on the best available information at the time and was fixed for three years.

- b) It was important for the service to achieve a breakeven position as a minimum.
- c) A charge of £43 would mean that the service would continue to be the lowest subscription charge in Suffolk and any future changes to charging would be considered to reflect changes to operating costs and the new funding arrangements with SCC.
- d) A price increase of £3 would be more acceptable to customers than a £5 increase, whilst achieving a breakeven position.
- e) In addition to cost, it was noted that there are many factors that influence the number of subscriptions including garden size, household behaviours, council policy (for example a "ban" on garden waste in the residual waste bin), affordability and other socio-economic factors.

Charging mechanism

- 3.10 At present, service subscribers pay a single payment of £40. This enables them to use the service for the fixed 12 month period from 1 April to 31 March. This was introduced based on experiences in other councils and aims to ensure that the application and payment system is simple to set up and administer annually, utilising automation and technology where possible to minimise processing costs.
- 3.11 The Joint Task and Finish Group considered the effectiveness of this approach and in particular, the Motion as set out in paragraph 1.2 of this report.
- 3.12 In 2017/18, 86% of the GWCS customers subscribed by the end of April. The remaining 14% of customers signed up to the service during the year – up until November. Using this subscription year, introducing a reduced monthly subscription charge would result in an equivalent loss of income to the service of £29,831. There is also no evidence that reducing the cost of the service each month would increase the number of subscriptions and in addition there is a chance that customers would defer signing up in order to save money, potentially reducing income further. There is also a risk that customers deferring their subscription would use the residual waste bin as an alternative disposal method.
- 3.13 Introducing a reducing charge each month also has impacts on the technology used for administering the scheme, which would require additional financial and staffing resource. As a result, the Joint Task and Finish Group felt that there were insufficient advantages to support the motion and there would be a number of marketing and operational issues incurred.

Customer Access

- 3.14 The Target Operating Model (TOM) was adopted in by West Suffolk Councils in 2014 with the aim of enabling customers to access timely, accurate, clear, accessible and targeted information independently and without the need for face to face interaction. The move away from cash transactions to

electronic methods of payment is also built in the TOM to help reduce transactional costs. Since the adoption of the plan in 2014, there has been a 25% reduction in the number of customer interactions through the customer services team and a 70% reduction in face to face contacts.

- 3.15 The number of GWCS subscriptions have grown year on year as outlined in the table below.

Apply and Pay method	2016/17		2017/18		2018/19 to Sept	
	Subs £	No. h/holds	Subs £	No. h/holds	Subs £	No. h/holds
CS - CASH	15,440	388	13,280	331	11,120	277
CS - CHQ	20,040	487	20,080	480	16,000	387
CS - CARD	366,160	9,113	325,650	8,002	319,460	7,786
CS - DD	-	-	41,280	1,016	72,680	1,772
Online - CARD	736,360	18,269	411,600	10,023	319,880	7,769
Online - DD	-	-	360,480	8,777	486,680	11,821
Invoice - DTB	45,360	1134	43,440	993	33,520	772
TOTAL	1,183,360	29,391	1,215,810	29,622	1,259,340	30,584

- 3.16 Furthermore, 44% of households have signed up using direct debit and 64% have signed up online. Further information on the number of subscriptions through the Customer Service Team (CST) and website are available in **Appendix D**.

Apply and Pay method	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19 (to Sept)
Customer Service	33.94%	32.92%	33.40%
Online	62.23%	63.50%	64.00%
Invoice - DTB	0.10%	3.60%	2.70%

- 3.17 Marketing of the end of the brown bin scheme and the introduction of the garden waste collection scheme was carried out predominantly by information sent out to residents, but all communications pointed them towards the West Suffolk website, where dedicated pages were set up to answer their questions about the close down of the old scheme and the start of the new service. Encouraging residents to sign up to the new scheme online was a priority and the content was designed so that residents could quickly access the correct area of the site so they could do this without having to navigate through different pages.
- 3.18 Customer satisfaction with the delivery of the service is high, as evidenced by both customer surveys and the growth in subscriber numbers year on year. Customers have also complemented the ease of signing up to the service both through the contact centre and the website. Our frontline staff continue to provide a high level of service to customers.
- 3.19 The target operating model for the GWCS has been successful in integrating online forms to the corporate payment system, the Bartec waste management back office system and in-cab devices. This has

automated the application and payment systems for service subscribers and enables the bin collection crews to understand the location of service subscribers and to report bin related issues e.g. if the bin is “not out” or contaminated by materials not accepted through the scheme (for example cardboard or food waste). **Appendix E** shows the flow of information through from the customer sign up process, whether that be via face to face, over the telephone or electronically, through to frontline staff delivering the service. (The Joint Task and Finish Group were able to discuss the operation of the in-cab device with the operational crew).

- 3.20 The Bartec system has enabled the GWCS to be delivered with a high level of accuracy, giving collection crews the confidence that they know which bins are subscribed and allowing the customer services team to quickly identify any problems with service delivery. Many authorities use a sticker system to identify subscribed bins; not doing so provides West Suffolk with an annual saving of approximately £26,000 per annum in sticker purchase costs, administration and postage.
- 3.21 As part of the Customer Access Strategy, automation and self-service were key to achieving success in the move to increasing customers’ ability to manage their interactions with the council. In 2019/20 there are plans to move towards a new target operating model including an account management facility for customers. This platform requires API’s that link the different systems (CST, Finance, Bartec) together to ensure that customer information is shared and acted on correctly.
- 3.22 The Joint Task and Finish Group were keen to progress opportunities to increase the number of subscribers and requested that officers review the option a rolling 12 month annual subscription, thus decoupling it from the fixed financial year.
- 3.23 It was recognised that a high proportion (86%) of subscribers already join at the start of the subscription period, so this would have a greater impact for new GWCS customers and prove to be a more flexible approach. However it was recognised that this new approach would change the way in which the service was delivered, in terms of marketing new and current customers, application and payment systems, including reminders, managing price increases and operational delivery. As a result, the Joint Task and Finish Group supported a move to a 12 month rolling subscription period by April 2020, linked to the Digital Strategy, Customer Access Strategy and marketing approaches. This approach needs to be fully automated and all costs must be assessed, agreed and acceptable within the budget of the GWCS.
- 3.24 As part of the research undertaken, it was noted that some authorities provided a financial discount to customers who subscribed to garden waste services by annual direct debit. The Joint Task and Finish Group agreed that any discounting due to payment method would have to be agreed as a corporate wide policy and not purely for the garden waste collection scheme in isolation. Further work would be required to investigate how this scheme could work. However, it was considered important to progress the automation of processes and encourage greater online sign-up by direct

debit. This would be essential to facilitate the move to a rolling 12 month subscription process.

Operational changes

3.25 *Impact on residual waste*

The introduction of the GWCS has resulted in an overall reduction in the total amount of household waste requiring collection and disposal. As outlined in the table below, there has been a 7,895 reduction in organic waste, albeit there was a related 3,776 tonne increase in the amount of residual waste. This increase will comprise of uncooked food waste, now illegible for inclusion in the brown bin, in addition to garden waste.

	Brown	Blue	Black	TOTAL	% Change Brown	% Change Blue	% Change Black
Year	(tonnes collected per year)				(based on previous year)		
13/14	18,739	11,679	31,805	62,223			
14/15	19,551	12,012	32,303	63,866	4.34%	2.85%	1.56%
15/16	18,787	12,232	32,814	63,833	-3.91%	1.83%	1.58%
16/17	10,892	11,798	36,590	59,280	-42.02%	-3.55%	11.51%
17/18	11,139	11,488	36,402	59,029	2.27%	-2.62%	-0.51%

3.26 The increase in residual waste arisings is greater than in areas of the county where there has not been a change to garden waste collections (Mid Suffolk and Babergh have only ever provided a paid-for service, Ipswich Borough Council has not introduced charges) and is greater than the 1.5% annual increase predicted due to waste increases. This is in line with the original assumptions

3.27 Options were considered to reduce garden waste in the residual bin, such as through the use of marketing campaigns or through the option of “banning” garden waste from the residual bin. This is a legitimate option and experiences of other councils were reviewed. However it was determined that:

- Enforcement action was inconsistent and difficult, requiring resources to implement and requiring the garden waste to be visible in the bin;
- The overall effectiveness of the approach was hard to determine;
- Not emptying the residual bin was undertaken rather than taking enforcement action; and
- A key focus of activity involved the ongoing message not to put garden waste in the residual bin.

3.28 As a result, it was agreed that educational and awareness raising opportunities should be progressed in preference to a ban on garden waste in the residual bin, with the option of reviewing the ban option at a later date. This would also enable full consideration of the options available to be

discussed with the Suffolk Waste Partnership - having consistent and clearer messaging at a countywide level will be more effective in the long term.

Garden waste bin collection day changes

- 3.29 West Suffolk currently operates an alternate week waste collection service whereby the black, blue and brown bins are emptied over a two-week cycle, with each bin emptying taking place on the same nominated day of the week – known as a singular day bin collection.
- 3.30 The current GWCS operates using the same bin collection rounds as the previous brown bin scheme. This was to limit change for residents and to obtain a better operational understanding of service demand, bin put-out rate and the tonnes of waste to be collected.
- 3.31 The GWCS is currently collecting approximately 60% of the waste collected in the brown bin scheme. Collection round modelling has been undertaken to identify opportunities to unlock collection efficiencies albeit the modelling suggests that the only way to achieve this would be by decoupling the garden waste collection day from the blue and black bin collection day i.e. move from the singular day bin collection. Blue and black bins would continue to be collected on the same day over a fortnight (e.g. blue bin Tuesday week one, black bin Tuesday week two) but the garden waste bin would be collected on a completely different day during the fortnight (e.g. Thursday week 2). This system operates well in other councils and there is an opportunity to align the change with the move to the West Suffolk Operational Hub, for which all bin collection rounds will require review.
- 3.32 West Suffolk has a successful track record managing bin collection day changes and this will be an opportunity to build service efficiency, particularly in light of the increase in residual waste requiring collection. For noting, modelling of bin collection rounds takes into account a wide range of different factors and scenarios, so it is difficult to comprehend the extent of the change until the modelling is complete.

Communications and Marketing

- 3.33 As part of the introduction of the GWCS, two key messages were communicated to residents; firstly, that the brown bin scheme was ending and secondly that a new GWCS was starting. This reflected the understanding that not all households would opt in to the new service and those that would needed to understand the service “offer” and the associated changes. One of the major concerns was the waste previously accepted (including brown card, shredded paper and uncooked food) which was no longer accepted by the GWCS.
- 3.34 Primary communications explaining the service change were sent out to all households in February 2016 in West Suffolk branded envelopes delivered by Royal Mail. This was followed up by bin hangers, press releases, information on social media, posters, community engagement events, vehicle side advertising and dedicated pages on the council’s website. Branding for the service was consistent across all design elements,

including bin stickers, leaflets, vehicle advertising, letters, posters and banners.

- 3.35 Using Bartec back office IT system ensured that subscriptions were managed through the crews' use of an in-cab device to identify subscribed properties rather than by using stickers which has been the approach of other authorities. This created an annual saving of approximately £26,000.
- 3.36 In year two, the focus of communications was to retain customers from year one and to introduce the new payment option of annual direct debit. The benefit of an annual direct debit payment is the automatic subscription renewal without the need for targeted marketing and the ability to project how many customers will subscribe to facilitate more reliable and effective service planning.
- 3.37 Year three communications were designed to further encourage take up of the service by direct debit.
- 3.38 The Joint Task and Finish Group commented that the branding used for the promotion of the service was clear, consistent, bright and eye catching and it was recommended to continue using the same branding for future marketing purposes. **Appendix F** includes examples of the branding used.
- 3.39 There was a particular interest in the combined effect of the growth in residential development and residents moving house – there were 11,587 house sales in West Suffolk in 2017. Whilst it was accepted that there are many factors influencing the household's decision to subscribe to the GWCS, the Joint task and finish Group suggested a number of options to encourage an increase in subscriptions through more targeted marketing campaigns, namely:
- Undertake research from current non-subscribers to understand why they have not subscribed;
 - Discuss with the Anglia Revenue Partnership (ARP) options to collectively promote the GWCS;
 - Deliver targeted marketing campaigns, especially in locations with low take up but large gardens or increased garden waste in the residual bin; and
 - Further develop the information and accessibility of the council's website.

4. Garden Waste Collection Service review – recommendations

- 4.1 Throughout the four meetings, the Joint Task and Finish Group reviewed the various elements of the GWCS, experiences from other councils and the options moving forward. At the final meeting of the Joint Task and Finish Group, the following recommendations were agreed.
- 1 Increase the current subscription charge from £40 to £43 for 2019-2020. This included:
 - The subscription charge to be reviewed annually;
 - To be agreed with Portfolio Holders as part of budget setting and the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee

- or the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review the fee annually; and
- The GWCS budget is to be financially self-supporting.
- 2 The Group felt that there were not enough advantages to support the motion from Councillor David Nettleton to SEBC Council on 19 December 2017 and there would be a number of marketing and operational issues incurred. The Group also did not favour supporting a discounted charging scheme.
 - 3 To depart from the singular bin collection day approach for the GWCS to unlock collection capacity.
 - 4 Move towards a rolling subscription model by April 2020, to be linked to the Digital Strategy, Customer Access Strategy and marketing approaches.
 - Approach to be fully automated.
 - Cost to be within the budget of the GWCS.
 - 5 As part of the next subscription process:
 - Find out key reasons why households are not signing up;
 - Run a marketing campaign aimed at rounds where take-up is low but garden space is large;
 - Further promote bin sharing;
 - Investigate an incentivisation scheme to encourage sign up direct debit (part of a corporate approach); and
 - To understand the remaining potential in the households not currently subscribing to the GWCS.
 - 6 To retain the current service branding.
 - 7 Run a marketing campaign trial to change non subscriber behaviours.
 - Identify bin collection rounds with the highest amount of garden waste in the residual waste bins.
 - 8 To undertake collection round modelling to reflect future changes prior to the move to the WSOH.
 - 9 To continue to promote take-up and migration to direct debit.
 - 10 Review at a later date the "ban" option after all marketing options had been carried out, with a caveat on what goes in the black bin.
 - 11 Through colleagues in the Customer Services team, seek to create a new section on the website for residents who are new to the area.
 - 12 Work with ARP and encourage them to refer customers to the council's GWCS.
 - 13 To scope work with ARP and any other partners to introduce a new homes pack for house moves.

Appendix G provides a summary of each meeting including the content discussed, the observations made and the recommendations agreed.

- 4.2 Subject to approval of the recommendations, officers will develop an implementation plan.

Appendix A: Meetings of the GWCS Joint Task and Finish Group

Task	Date
<p>First meeting Discussed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scope of the review - Terms of Reference - Background and progress of the garden waste collection service to date - Frequency of meetings 	12 July
<p>Second meeting Discussed the following:</p> <p>Customer Access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate approach • Technical requirements <p>Financial position</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current financial position • Subscription charge from April 2019 • Incentivising online transactions • Payment options • Review the "Motion" submitted by Councillor Nettleton. <p>Meet the operational crew and the Bartec IT system</p>	3 August
<p>Third meeting Discussed the following:</p> <p>Financial position</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the relationship between service charge and subscription rate. • Review the options for increasing the subscription charge (£43 and £45). • Review the pros/cons of introducing a rolling 12 month subscription model. 	7 September
<p>Fourth meeting Discussed the following:</p> <p>Complete the review of the pros/cons of introducing a rolling 12 month subscription model.</p> <p>Impact on residual waste</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Options for managing garden waste in the black bin. <p>Operational changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating a different collection day for garden waste to the black and blue bin collection day. <p>Communications and marketing Marketing and communication with customers.</p>	21 September
<p>Final meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussed findings from the review - Agreed recommendations 	28 September

Appendix B: Estimated financial position 2019/20 (for comparison purposes)

Year	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	2019/20 (based on 2018/19)			
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Forecast	Forecast		Forecast	
Subscription charge	n/a	£40	£40	£40	£43		£45	
Number of subscribers				30,100	As current	3% reduction	As current	5% reduction
Extra income from price increase (£)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	-£90,000	-£51,300	-£150,000	-£82,500
Service cost (£)	£579,748	£556,725	£141,265	£86,729	£86,729	£86,729	£86,729	£86,729
Net service cost (service cost plus extra income)					-£3,271	£35,429	-£63,271	£4,229
Impact of new SCC financial model from 2019					-£54,836	-£54,836	-£54,836	-£54,836
Balance					-£58,107	-£19,407	-£118,107	-£50,607

Notes:

1. The above represent estimates based on 2018/19.
2. Excludes new service costs.
3. Includes potential positive impact of the new financial arrangement with SCC.

Appendix C: Information from Other Authorities

1. Subscription charge and take up at local councils

Council	Cost	Take Up
Babergh	£ 55.00	14,288
East Suffolk	£ 43.00	
Mid Suffolk	£ 55.00	15,005
Ipswich	Free	47,000
West Suffolk	£ 40.00	30,000
Breckland	£ 44.00	
Broadland	£ 53.50	28,000
Great Yarmouth	£ 65.00	9,040
KLWN	£ 54.00	24,000
North Norfolk	£46-£50	20,500
Norwich	£ 48.00	
South Norfolk	£47-£53	25,000

2. Benchmarking costs of 52 council garden waste collection services nationwide

Cost per annum	Number of authorities
>£30	1
£30-£39	14
£40-£49	19
£50-£60	10
<£60	4

Appendix D: Subscriptions to the Garden Waste Collection Service April – September 2018.

	SEBC			
	Income (£)	No. household subscriptions	%	% Excluding Invoices
Customer Services - CASH	7,720	193	0.9%	0.9%
Customer Services - CHQ	10,720	256	1.3%	1.3%
Customer Services - CARD	213,860	5,202	25.4%	25.4%
Customer Services - DD	51,360	1,247	6.1%	6.1%
Online - CARD	215,640	5,233	25.6%	25.6%
Online - DD	342,520	8,301	40.7%	40.7%
Invoice - DTB	400	6	0.0%	EXCLUDED
TOTAL	842,220	20,438	100.0%	100.0%

	FHDC			
	Income (£)	No. household subscriptions	%	% Excluding Invoices
	3,400	84	0.8%	0.9%
	5,280	131	1.3%	1.4%
	105,600	2,584	25.3%	27.5%
	21,320	525	5.1%	5.6%
	104,240	2,536	25.0%	27.1%
	144,160	3,520	34.6%	37.5%
	33,120	766	7.9%	EXCLUDED
TOTAL	417,120	10,146	100.0%	100.0%

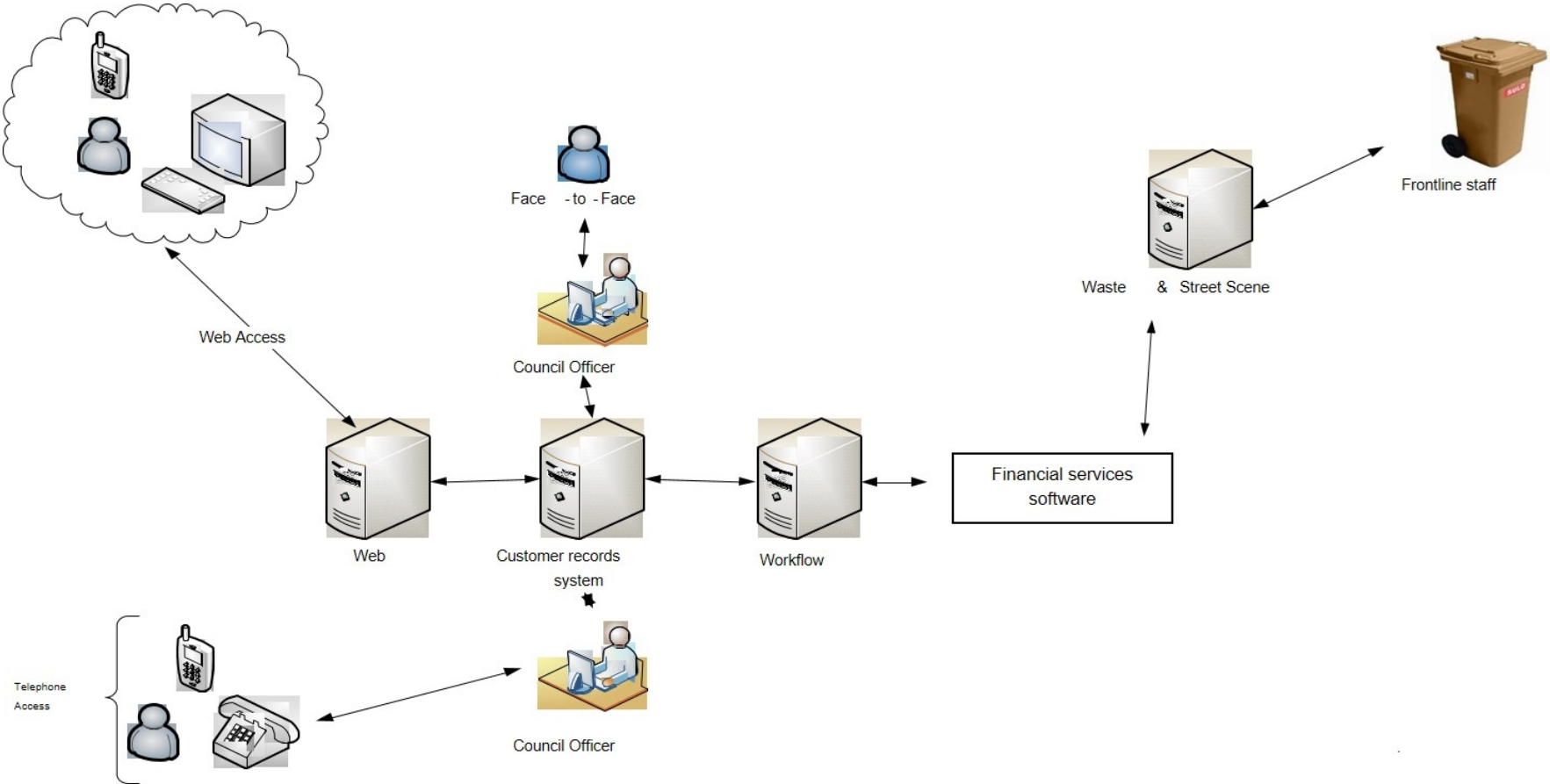
	WEST SUFFOLK			
	Income (£)	No. household subscriptions	%	% Excluding Invoices
	11,120	277	0.9%	0.9%
	16,000	387	1.3%	1.3%
	319,460	7,786	25.4%	26.1%
	72,680	1,772	5.8%	5.9%
	319,880	7,769	25.4%	26.1%
	486,680	11,821	38.6%	39.7%
	33,520	772	2.7%	EXCLUDED
TOTAL	1,259,340	30,584	100.0%	100.0%

Notes:

1. DD refers to direct debit
2. Invoice – DTB refers to the payment of multiple subscriptions in one transaction
3. Customer services refer to subscription taken by telephone or face to face

2018/09/21

Appendix E: Information flow and process map – from customer sign up to service delivery



Appendix F: Examples of marketing materials and branding used

Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury councils
West Suffolk
 working together

Garden Waste Collection Service

Our new service has started!
 If you want to find out more
 or sign up for convenient,
 fortnightly collections of your
 garden waste go online:

westsuffolk.gov.uk/gardenwaste
 or call 01638 719779 or 01284 776119

@binmanandrobyn
 #WSgardenwaste

SIGN UP NOW

Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury councils
West Suffolk
 working together

IMPORTANT

Your brown bin service
 is ending. Details inside
 of the new garden
 waste service.

Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury councils
West Suffolk
 working together

Easter collections
 See details overleaf

Garden Waste Collection Service

Your current brown bin service is ending. Your last collection will be the week commencing 21 or 28 March.

The new Garden Waste Collection Service is £40 for 4 April 2016 to 31 March 2017. Sign up on line at the web address below.

SIGN UP NOW

westsuffolk.gov.uk/gardenwaste



Appendix G: Summary of meeting content, observations and recommendations

Meeting 1:

Subjects covered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. West Suffolk position 2. Why change a successful collection service? 3. The drivers and need for change 4. Convincing Senior Officers, Members and residents 5. Scope of the GWCS project 6. Implementation – project team, technology, 7. Project outcomes achieved: Year 1 - 3 8. Success factors and risk management 9. Lessons learned
Observations	<p>Key outcomes are in line with original assumptions relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subscription level achieved • Channel shift and self-serve progress • Customer feedback from “apply and pay process” • Material quality • Service design <p>Key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate team approach. • £40 charge at the time was perceived to be right. • Difficult decisions were made but service outcomes are in line with original assumptions. • Successful transition to online application and payment using the website. • Waste back office system, using in-cab technology is working successfully. • Limited negative impact received – from residents, users and media. • Overall the design of the garden waste collection service has been well received and is working.
Recommendations	n/a

Meeting 2:

Subjects covered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Experience from other councils. 2. Corporate approach to customer access and the Digital Strategy. 3. Using technology to deliver the end to end process. 4. Financial position and the subscription charge for 2018/19. 5. The GWCS “Motion” for a variable subscription rate. 6. Meet the GWCS operational crew and view the Bartec system.
Observations	1. Important that the GWCS breaks-even financially.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Technology works but further development required. 3. Corporate approach to incentivisation scheme to promote online applications and payments. 4. The Group took the opportunity to meet the Organic Waste Collection staff and see the in-cab devices (Bartec) in operation.
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In relation to Councillor Nettleton's motion to SEBC Council on 19 December 2017, the Group felt that there were insufficient advantages to support the motion; and there would be a number of marketing and operational issues incurred. The Group also did not favour supporting a discounted charging scheme.

Meeting 3:

Subjects covered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Correlation between subscription charge and take-up rate. 2. Financial impact of charging £43 and £45 per subscription.
Observations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The change in the financial relationship with SCC from 2019/20 onwards. 2. Many factors influence the take-up rate. 3. Growth in household numbers. 4. The role of ARP especially with people moving into the area.
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the current subscription charge from £40 to £43 for 2019-2020. This included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The subscription charge to be reviewed annually; • To be agreed with Portfolio Holders as part of budget setting and the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee or the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review the fee annually; and • The GWCS budget is to be financially self-supporting. 2. Work with ARP and encourage them to refer customers to the council's GWCS. 3. As part of the next subscription process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run marketing campaign aimed at rounds where take-up is low but garden space is large. • Find out key reasons households are not signing up. • Further promote bin sharing. • Investigate incentivisation scheme to encourage direct debit (DD) sign up.

Meeting 4:

Subjects covered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rolling 12 month subscription period. 2. Impact of garden waste in residual waste bin. 3. Operational changes to the GWCS to increase efficiency. 4. Communications and marketing plan for 2019 onwards.
-------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high proportion (86%) of subscribers had already joined at the start of the subscription period with 45% automatically subscribed by Direct Debit. • Need to reconsider the marketing message if householders joined at different times. • New system would allow flexibility for customers. • Potential risk of increased quantities of garden waste being placed in the residual bin (black bin) if residents delayed their subscription. • There would need to be stricter operational rules. • The “apply”, pay and marketing processes need to be fully automated. • The benefits to having a rolling subscription would be limited to new customers in the first year only.
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Move towards a rolling subscription model by April 2020, to be linked to the Digital Strategy, Customer Access Strategy and marketing approaches. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach to be fully automated. • Cost to be assessed, agreed and acceptable within the budget of the GWCS. 2. Run a marketing campaign trial to change behaviours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify bin collection rounds with the highest garden waste in residual waste. 3. Review at a later date the “ban” option after all marketing options had been carried out, with a caveat on what goes in the black bin. 4. To undertake collection round modelling to reflect future changes prior to the move to the WSOH. 5. To depart from singular bin collection day approach for the GWCS to unlock collection capacity to support residual waste collections. 6. To continue to promote the take-up and migration to DD. 7. To retain the current branding. 8. To scope work with ARP and any other partners to introduce a new homes pack for house moves. 9. To understand the remaining potential in the households not currently subscribing to the GWCS. 10. A “New to area” section to be added to the West Suffolk website.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	Annual Report by the Cabinet Member for Operations	
Report No:	OAS/FH/18/033	
Report to and date:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	8 November 2018
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor David Bowman Cabinet Member for Operations Tel: 07711 593737 Email: david.bowman@forest-heath.gov.uk	
Lead officers:	Mark Walsh Assistant Director (Operations) Tel: 01284 757300 Email: mark.walsh@westsuffolk.gov.uk Christine Brain Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) Tel: 01638 719729 Email: Christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	As part of the "Challenge" role, Overview and Scrutiny are asked to consider the roles and responsibilities of Cabinet Members. It is part of the Scrutiny role to "challenge" in the form of questions. Therefore, to carry out this constitutional requirement, at every ordinary Overview and Scrutiny meeting at least one Cabinet Member shall attend to give an account of his or her portfolio and answer questions from the Committee.	

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

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation

1.1 Background

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

1.1.2 Last year, on 9 November 2017, Councillor David Bowman, Cabinet Member for Operations attended this committee and presented a report which summarised the areas of responsibility covered under his portfolio.

1.2 Scrutiny Focus

1.2.1 The Cabinet Member has been asked to prepare a report which answers the following specific questions identified by committee members as being relevant to the operations portfolio:

- 1) **Grounds Maintenance:** What is being done to improve the grass cutting and strimming cycle?
- 2) **Markets Delivery:** What is proposed for Mildenhall and Brandon following the revamp of Newmarket's market?
- 3) **Street Scene:** Are there any improvements proposed for Mildenhall because of its historic past and future?
- 4) **Tourism (Operations):** What is proposed to improve Mildenhall and Brandon's tourism?

1.3 Response to Key Questions Set out in the Scrutiny Focus

1.3.1 **Grounds Maintenance:** What is being done to improve the grass cutting and strimming cycle?

As is the case in taking on any new contract of this size and nature, there is inevitably a period of time required to bed down operations.

During July we had some issues that needed to be addressed with the new grounds maintenance team assigned to the work in Forest Heath. A full time grounds maintenance operative has been recruited for strimming work. They have now completed the routes a number of times, becoming more familiar with the requirements and with other team members.

An amended cutting cycle starting in the south of the Forest Heath area and working towards the north is now in place. Rather than operatives being taken off their scheduled work to deal with requests, we have separate resources to call upon to deal with these.

Our mapping system is being constantly developed and updated to accurately reflect requirements on the ground. This means that grass cutting routes are being amended to include small areas previously being missed.

1.3.2 **Markets Delivery:** What is proposed for Mildenhall and Brandon following the revamp of Newmarket's market?

Mildenhall

Four family fun days were organised on the market in August which have included additional stalls and family friendly entertainment. These have been well attended and the stallholders have given discounts and free fruit to children which has resulted in an increase in stallholder enquiries.

FHDC and Mildenhall Parish Council have funded a new electrical feeder pillar (EFP) on the market as currently we are not able to offer stallholders power. The installation of the EFP is scheduled for November ensuring completion in time for Christmas events. Once the market is able to offer a power supply we will hope to be able to attract more stallholders, particularly in the winter months. The EFP will also enable the market place to be used as an event space for other local groups in the area.

The Mildenhall Messenger has been providing free advertising throughout the year for market traders which has included discounts and special offers. We also have an ongoing relationship with Zak FM to promote the market through their local radio station.

Brandon Market

The first family fun day in Brandon was on 1 September and this will continue until December on the first Saturday of each month with additional stalls and family entertainment. There are special offers to community groups and charities in the area which includes stalls being free of charge. The Brandon Musical Arts Project will be providing entertainment and the fun days will finish in December with a special Christmas Event. This market in particular has been struggling for many years and we are therefore seeking to make the fun days an event market rather than a regular provisions market. Take up and interest for stalls has been high and many community groups and clubs are attending during the period.

We are now offering a free 'start up package' to young entrepreneurs and start-up businesses. This package will include a free gazebo, free cover on our insurance package and free business advice. We are promoting this on several websites and social media. This offer will include Brandon, Mildenhall and Newmarket subject to our terms and conditions.

The new West Suffolk Markets website will be up and running by the end of November. This will include details of all our markets, events and special offers as well as events currently being planned for 2019.

1.3.3 **Street Scene:** Are there any improvements proposed for Mildenhall because of its historic past and future?

New zonal working schedules for street cleansing were introduced in June this year. There were two main elements to it:

1. For 'high impact' areas that require more regular cleansing, a weekly cleansing schedule has been adopted for areas where regular activities that take place as well as the type of land use. This includes Mildenhall town centre which now receives three cleanses during the week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) and also a further litter pick on Saturday. This constituted an enhanced cleansing regime to that which had preceded it, if there is a specific issue outside of these times then we will respond as appropriate.
2. For 'lower impact' areas, which for Mildenhall includes the majority of the rest of the town (excluding some of the parks), we aim to work through these zones 5 times per year as well as reacting to specific incidents or issues as they arise using mechanical sweepers, litter pickers and blowers. During autumn these zones may be replaced with temporary schedules to target leaf fall. There is also a separate schedule in place to deal with litter on the trunk roads.

To ensure that the cleansing schedules are achieving the desired outcome we carry out 'local area quality surveys' (LEQs), whereby we grade the amount of litter and detritus at specific locations which are selected based on land use types. This uses a grading system of A-D, where A is free of litter/detritus and D is heavy litter/detritus with significant accumulation. Information from these surveys feeds back into the planning of these schedules to make sure that they are working as efficiently as possible. Results from the surveys carried out this year indicated that 90% of areas visited were deemed to be primarily free of litter and detritus.

1.3.4 **Tourism (Operations):** What is proposed to improve Mildenhall and Brandon's tourism?

In general tourism across West Suffolk is experiencing strong growth with the latest figures (2017) showing an increase in both visits and value. The latest figures show:

- Last year there were 11.4 million tourist trips made to West Suffolk, up 7.3 per cent on 2016.
- Nearly £539 million was spent through tourism in West Suffolk, an increase of 5.4 per cent on the previous year.
- There was an increase of 5.4 percent in tourism jobs between 2016 and 2017. Around 10,650 people being employed in 2017 in tourism in West Suffolk.

Mildenhall and Brandon are currently underrepresented in terms of local tourism organisation provision but businesses and attractions are being

encouraged to work with Bury St Edmunds and Beyond and Visit Suffolk. Visit Suffolk, the county Destination Management Organisation currently promotes the wide Suffolk offer and Brandon and The Brecks are highlighted as a feature destination.

Events and Markets

On a local level there is support for the tourism offer by way of family event days held in both Mildenhall and Brandon which have been run for the last few months.

The family fun days during August were well attended and resulted in three more permanent stall holders trading weekly. Events have been planned during December which will include music and a children's treasure trail. We are in the process of contacting local clubs, charities and community groups to offer a free stall which would include a gazebo and insurance cover to promote themselves or raise funds for their groups/charities.

The first two Brandon fun days have been very well attended and attracted lots of positive comments on social media. Entertainment has included music, magic shows, free roundabout rides and face painting. Each market has a mixture of general stalls and charity/community groups and the last market had 12 stalls.

The next market is Saturday 3 November and the Christmas market is Saturday 1 December which will coincide with the Christmas light switch on weekend.

Our start up package for both markets is continuing and we have had two new traders on Mildenhall taking up this offer. This will continue to be promoted both on social media and in specialist market trader magazines.

For 2019 we are looking at working with the Mildenhall Museum and Brandon Heritage Centre to create a 'pop up museum' for the markets. This is based on a similar model in Bury St Edmunds working with Moyses Hall Museum which was a success.

Filming

In addition West Suffolk councils work in partnership with Screen Suffolk, the official film office for Suffolk, to promote Suffolk as a location to film. The locations hub features locations from across the county and are added daily. Locations in Mildenhall and Brandon have also been added recently as the areas look to attract further filming. Since the inception of Screen Suffolk the area has had a number of shoots in the area.

LEADER Funding

The Mildenhall and Brandon area have also been successful with tourism related funding bids from the Brecks Local Action Group. This programme will continue into early 2019 where future potential tourism

developments may receive funding, increasing the appeal of the area further.

1.4 **Proposals**

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

This page is intentionally left blank

Overview and Scrutiny of Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	Work Programme Update	
Report No:	OAS/FH/18/034	
Report to and date:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	8 November 2018
Chairman of the Committee:	Councillor Simon Cole Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Tel: 07974 443762 Email: simon.cole@forest-heath.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Christine Brain Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) Tel: 01638 719729 Email: Christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	To update the Committee on the current status of its rolling work programme of annual items for scrutiny during 2018-2019 (Appendix 1).	
Recommendation:	<p>Overview and Scrutiny Committee:</p> <p>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that:</p> <p>1) Members review the current status of its Rolling Work Programme for 2018-2019.</p> <p>2) <u>Identify questions</u> for the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture to cover in his annual report to the Committee in January 2019.</p>	
Key Decision: (Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)	<p><i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i></p> <p>Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	
Documents attached:	Appendix 1 – Current Rolling Work Programme 2019	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendations

1.1 Rolling Work Programme

- 1.1.1 The Committee has a rolling work programme, whereby suggestions for scrutiny reviews are brought to each meeting, following the completion of the work programme suggestion form, and if accepted, are timetabled to report to a future meeting.
- 1.1.2 The work programme also leaves space for Call-ins and Councillor Calls for Action.
- 1.1.3 The current position of the work programme, including any Task and Finish Group(s) for 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 Committee's meeting on **10 January 2019**, the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture will be attending to give his annual update to the Committee.
- 1.2.3 The Committee is therefore asked to **identify questions for the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture** to cover in his annual report to the Committee.

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
10 January 2019		
Annual Portfolio Holder Report	Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture	The Portfolio Holder has been invited to provide an update on their portfolio and to answer questions from the Committee.
National Horseracing Museum – Project Close Out	Director	To see if there is any learning which can be applied to future council projects
West Suffolk Customer Access Strategy	Cabinet Member for Families and Communities	To provide input into the new West Suffolk Customer Access
West Suffolk Digital Strategy	Cabinet Member for Families and Communities	To provide input into the new West Suffolk Digital Strategy
Annual Car Parking Update	Cabinet Member Operations	To receive an annual report on Car Parking in Forest Heath.
Asset Management Strategy and Asset Management Plan	Cabinet Member Planning and Growth	To provide input into the new Asset Management Strategy and associated Asset Management Plan.
Joint Executive (Cabinet): 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.
Shadow Executive (Cabinet) Decisions Plan	Leader of the Shadow Council	To receive information on forthcoming decisions to be considered by the Shadow Executive (Cabinet).
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 Report	Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance.	The Portfolio Holder has been invited to provide an update on their portfolio and to answer questions from the Committee.
Shadow Executive (Cabinet) Decisions Plan	Leader of the Shadow Council	To receive information on forthcoming decisions to be considered by the Shadow Executive (Cabinet).

This page is intentionally left blank