

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath  
District Council

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Agenda</b>									
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Thursday 10 January 2019</b>									
<b>Time:</b>	<b>6.00 pm</b>									
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Council Chamber District Offices</b> College Heath Road Mildenhall									
<b>Full Members:</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chairman</b> Simon Cole</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Vice Chairman</b> 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										
<b>Substitutes:</b>	Named substitutes are not appointed									
<b>Interests – Declaration and Restriction on Participation:</b>	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.									
<b>Quorum:</b>	Three Members									
<b>Committee administrator:</b>	<b>Christine Brain</b> Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) <b>Tel:</b> 01638 719729 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk">christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>									

# Public Information



**Forest Heath**  
District Council

<b>Venue:</b>	<b>District Offices</b> College Heath Road Mildenhall Suffolk, IP28 7EY	Tel: 01638 719000 Email: <a href="mailto:democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk">democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a> Web: <a href="http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk">www.westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>
<b>Access to agenda and reports before the meeting:</b>	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.	
<b>Attendance at meetings:</b>	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.	
<b>Public speaking:</b>	<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. There is an overall time limit of 15 minutes for public speaking, which may be extended at the Chairman's discretion.</p>	
<b>Disabled access:</b>	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.	
<b>Induction loop:</b>	An Induction loop operates to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter.	
<b>Recording of meetings:</b>	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). 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.	
<b>Personal Information</b>	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: <a href="https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Data_and_information/howweuseinformation.cfm">https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Data_and_information/howweuseinformation.cfm</a> 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 - 10**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 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. Annual Report by the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture** **11 - 68**

Report No: **OAS/FH/19/001**
- 7. Customer Access Strategy 2019-2022** **69 - 96**

Report No: **OAS/FH/19/002**
- 8. Car Parking Update** **97 - 102**

Report No: **OAS/FH/19/003**
- 9. Work Programme Update** **103 - 106**

Report No: **OAS/FH/19/004**

#### **Part 2 – Exempt**

#### **NONE**

This page is intentionally left blank

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath  
District Council

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Thursday 8 November 2018** at **6.00 pm** at the **Council Chamber, District Offices**, College Heath Road, Mildenhall IP28 7EY

Present: **Councillors**

**Chairman** Simon Cole  
**Vice Chairman** Rona Burt

Chris Barker  
John Bloodworth  
Brian Harvey  
Christine Mason

Robert Nobbs  
David Palmer  
Nigel Roman  
Reg Silvester

**By Invitation**

Susan Glossop, Cabinet Member for Planning and Growth (SEBC)  
James Waters, Leader of Forest Heath District Council

263. **Substitutes**

There were no substitutions declared.

264. **Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies received.

265. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2018 were confirmed as an accurate record, and signed by the Chairman.

266. **Public Participation**

There were no questions/statements from the public.

267. **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 2 October 2018, and presented the Overview and Scrutiny Report from its 13 September 2018 meeting, which was noted.

## 268. **West Suffolk Housing Strategy and West Suffolk Tenancy Strategy**

*[Councillors Chris Barker and Rona Burt arrived at 6.07pm during the consideration of this item].*

The Leader of the Council, Councillor James Waters provided Report No: OAS/FH/18/029, which presented the West Suffolk's draft Housing Strategy (Appendix 1) and draft Tenancy Strategy (Appendix 2).

A review of the Housing Strategy was due in 2018. By adopting a new strategy the Councils would be aligning its priorities with the Strategic Framework 2018-2020 and responding to new legislation and additional duties. Attached to the report were a number of appendices relating to the Housing Strategy which provided additional information:

- Appendix A: Was an illustrative summary of the types of housing available as well as the council's role in supporting the delivery and availability of each of these options.
- Appendix B: Sets out data relating to West Suffolk's population and housing that had supported the development of the strategy.
- Appendix C: The implementation plan would identify the main tasks needed to increase and improve the provision of appropriate housing over the next five years. The plan was being developed during the consultation period and would be finalised once the consultation had concluded.
- Appendix D: provided an overview of the Equality Impact Assessment. No negative impacts as a result of the strategy had been identified.

The strategy had been informed by an engagement exercise that included Councillor workshops and a consultation event with key partners. The formal consultation was taking place for a six week period between 9 October and 20 November 2018 and involved an online survey that was available on the council's webpages.

As at 5 November 2018, 21 responses had been received and there was strong support for the priorities and actions set out in the strategy and for the issues that the council was addressing. Specific comments had been received that relate to affordable housing, the need for appropriate housing for specific groups and the importance of infrastructure and transport to support the needs of individuals and communities.

A review of the Tenancy Strategy was also due in 2018. The Localism Act 2011 required local authorities to produce a Tenancy Strategy that outlines

how councils and registered providers approached issues which affected tenants living in the area.

Informal discussions had taken place with registered providers operating in West Suffolk about the proposed changes. As with the Housing Strategy, the formal consultation was taking place for a six week period between 9 October and 20 November 2018 and involved an online survey that was available on the councils webpages.

As at 5 November 2018, two responses had been received which would help the council continue to develop how it worked with registered providers and assist tenants living in West Suffolk.

The Housing Strategy and Tenancy Strategy, together with any feedback or comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, would be considered by the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee on 11 December 2018.

The Committee considered the report and the attached appendices in detail and asked a number of questions, to which comprehensive responses were provided. In particular discussions were held on rough sleepers / homelessness; specialist housing providers and securing suitable provision; and bringing empty homes back into use (privately owned and registered providers).

In response to a question raised, members were informed that it was not in the interest of registered providers to leave properties empty. Where a registered provider had empty homes, these were on a rolling work programme to bring them back into use.

In response to a question raised regarding whether the council knew where rough sleepers were coming from, members were informed that the Housing Forum met on a weekly basis to discuss all of those who were rough sleepers. The Housing Forum was able to monitor if there was any migration from outside of the area, which it had not seen any evidence of.

During the meeting, the Committee did not suggest any amendments to be made to the draft West Suffolk Housing Strategy or the draft West Suffolk Tenancy Strategy.

Councillor Rona Burt then moved the recommendations, this was duly seconded by Councillor Nigel Roman, and with the vote being unanimous, it was:

**RECOMMENDED:**

**That Draft West Suffolk Housing Strategy and the Draft West Suffolk Tenancy Strategy, attached as Appendix 1 and 2 to Report No: OAS/FH/18/029, be approved by Joint Executive (Cabinet) on 11 December 2018 and Council on 18 December 2018, where appropriate.**

**269. Introduction of Universal Credit Full Service in the Forest Heath Area**

*[Councillor Brian Harvey declared a local non-pecuniary interest as his granddaughter worked for the Citizen Advice Bureau at the District Offices, and remained in the meeting].*

The Committee received Report No: OAS/FH/18/030, which updated and informed members on the council's preparation for the implementation of Universal Credit Full Service in the Forest Heath area.

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 do to the same for Forest Heath on 12 December 2018.

The report included information on learning from the St Edmundsbury implementation; observations from the Anglia Revenues Partnership, the Housing Options Team, Havebury Housing and the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB); considerations and plans for the Forest Heath roll out and what's been done so far to prepare.

The Committee considered the report in detail, and asked a number of questions to which comprehensive responses were provided.

In response to a question raised regarding a funding issue from April 2019, it was reported that the council had received information a few weeks ago that ministers had decided to change the way that funding was being awarded to Local Authorities, which was an unexpected announcement. Currently the council received funding to cover both elements of the Universal Support package for Universal Credit customers (Personalised Budgeting Support and Assisted Digital Support), and the council chose to work with the CAB in the St Edmundsbury area in order to deliver the budgeting element, and the council paid them to do so. From April 2019, the government would now fund the CAB directly which could potentially undermine arrangements the council currently had in place within the partnership. However, all partners were determined that this would not happen.

The Chairman raised concerns regarding the government announcement and suggested the council makes representation to the government because of the following:

- 1) The way the decision was communicated (unexpected with no early warnings/consultation with any of the key agencies, including the DWP.
- 2) The impact the removal of the funding from the council would have on capacity and our ongoing ability to support UC customers.



- 3) In West Suffolk the council already had in place arrangements with the CAB which worked well, and the recent decision could potentially pose a risk to that working relationship.

In response, officers confirmed they could write to the minister, but would continue to monitor the support it provided to UC claimants and potential claimants.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the contents of the report, in particular the learning from the St Edmundsbury rollout and the support and advice available to residents and councillors.

## 270. **Review of Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre - Final Report**

Councillor Christine Mason presented Report No: OAS/FH/18/031, which summarised the review of the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre and presented a draft Action Plan (Appendix F) for taking forward the recommendations from the Christmas Fayre Joint Task and Finish Group.

On 18 and 19 April 2018, both St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath Overview and Scrutiny Committees resolved to establish a Joint West Suffolk Task and Finish Group (the Group) to complete a review of the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre. The Group met to discuss the planned approach to the review and to consider the specific areas to be explored. It was agreed that the review would explore the following areas:

- Principle and ownership
- Vision
- Timing and length
- Format and venues
- Type of stalls
- Links to wider economy (retail and tourism)
- Transport and accessibility
- Finance
- Staffing and volunteers
- Safety and Security
- Examples from other places
- Communications and marketing
- Management and resources

The report summarised the review of the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre and presented a proposed three-year action plan for taking forward the recommendations from the Group. It also included an introduction; the background to the review; engagement; evidence base and Christmas Fayre review findings and recommendations. Also attached to the report were a number of appendices, namely:

Appendix A – Christmas Fayre key details document.

Appendix B – 2015 Christmas Fayre Review Action Plan and progress table.

Appendix C – Christmas Fayre Engagement/surveys summary document.

Appendix D – Information from Christmas Fayres held in other places and scheduled of Christmas events in West Suffolk.

Appendix E – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats document.

## Appendix F – Proposed Three Year Action Plan.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth then thanked the Committee for the opportunity to address the Committee, and commended the Group on its work which had resulted in the recommendations proposed. She then updated members on how important it was to ensure the safety of the public at events, and referred to paragraph 5.32 in the report. She explained that two weeks ago, the Council led a table-top exercise to test how all partners would be able to respond in the event of an incident occurring at the Fayre. This unfortunately took place after the Group's final meeting, but raised some important points and hoped the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would support an additional recommendation arising from the review. This would add the following wording to Appendix F on "Safety and Security" as follows:

*"An Independent Peer Review of the Council's Command and Management of the Christmas Fayre and Event Safety Plan is commissioned. This should consider the management and skills/expertise to deliver the roles required, learning and development as well as whether the skills set within the organisations involved are fit for purpose for continuing to deliver the Plan in the future. The recommendations of the review will be considered by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth".*

In addition, the Portfolio Holder suggested a further minor change for the purposes of clarity; in Appendix F under "Finance", which states "Contact town centre organisations offering them the opportunity to contribute towards the Christmas Fayre". She proposed that the word "organisations" be replaced with "stakeholders", as this felt a broader word which potentially captures all parties who might contribute.

The Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) then updated members on the outcomes from the St Edmundsbury Overview and Scrutiny Committee who had considered the report on Wednesday 7 November 2018, and had recommended an additional recommendations as follows:

*"That the Shadow Executive (Cabinet) be recommended to accept the proposed amendments put forward by the Cabinet Member for Planning Growth, subject to an Annual Report on the Christmas Fayre being presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and specifically in 2019, to report back on discussions with the Destination Management Organisation and the BID (Our Bury St Edmunds) on willingness; desire of businesses to have/provide additional Christmas stalls throughout the town, over a longer period to create "Christmas in Bury".*

The Committee then scrutinised the report in detail and asked a number of questions to which comprehensive responses were provided.

In particular discussions were held on how many stewards attended the event and how they communicated with each other; the "possible" increase in the "provision of" park and ride and health and safety.

In response to a question raised, members were informed that the Christmas Fayre was run as a community event, therefore there was no charge made by the Police as it was a non-profit making event. The Christmas Fayre organisers took on board Police advice. There was a health and safety plan in place and CCTV cameras were installed across the town to monitor crowd control.

The Chairman congratulated the Group on an incredibly thorough piece of work and the report presented to the Committee reflected that.

Councillor Rona Burt then moved the recommendations, this was duly seconded by Councillor Nigel Roman, and with the vote being unanimous, it was:

**RECOMMENDED:** That

- 1) The Christmas Fayre Review Report (OAS/SE/18/032) and the Three-Year Action Plan (Appendix F), be approved, subject to the inclusion of the following paragraph in Appendix F under "Safety and Security":**

**"An Independent Peer Review of the Council's Command and Management of the Christmas Fayre and Event Safety Plan is commissioned. This should consider the management and skills/expertise to deliver the roles required, learning and development as well as whether the skills set within the organisations involved are fit for purpose for continuing to deliver the Plan in the future. The recommendations of the review will be considered by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth".**

- 2) To modify the Finance Section, contained in Appendix F, in order to replace the word "organisations" with the word "stakeholders".**
- 3) That the Shadow Executive (Cabinet) be recommended to accept the above recommendations (1 and 2 above, subject to an Annual Report on the Christmas Fayre being presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and specifically in 2019, to report back on discussions with the Destination Management Organisation and the BID (Our Bury St Edmunds) on willingness; desire of businesses to have/provide additional Christmas stalls throughout the town over a longer period to create "Christmas in Bury".**

**271. Garden Waste Collection Service Review - Final Report**

Councillor Rona Burt presented Report No: OAS/FH/18/032, which summarised the review of the Garden Waste Collection Service (GWCS) by a

Joint Task and Finish Group and presents recommendations for the service moving forward.

On 6 and 7 June 2018, both St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath Overview and Scrutiny Committees resolved to establish a Joint Task and Finish Group to review the progress of the GWCS and to consider the Motion put forward by Councillor Nettleton to introduce a sliding scale of subscription charges. The Joint Task and Finish Group met on five occasions to discuss the planned approach to the review and to consider the specific areas to be explored. It was agreed that the review would explore the following areas:

- Finance
- Customer access
- Service terms and conditions
- Impact on residual waste
- Communications and marketing
- Operational changes
- Impact of proposed changes

The report included the background to the review and progress to date; the review carried out by the Joint Task and Finish Group and proposed recommendations. Also attached to the report were a number of appendices, namely:

- Appendix A – Summary of meetings
- Appendix B – Financial modelling
- Appendix C – Subscription charges of other councils
- Appendix D – Subscriptions through the Customer Access Team
- Appendix E – Information flow and process map
- Appendix F – Examples of branding used
- Appendix G – Summary of meeting content, observations, recommendations

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 the Joint Task and Finish Group formulated its recommendations, which were set out in Section 4 of the report. Subject to the approval of the recommendations, officers would then develop an Implementation Plan.

The Committee considered the report in detail and asked a number of questions to which comprehensive responses were provided. In particular discussions were held on the proposed increase to the subscription charge; ensuring the GWSC was financially self-supporting; gate fees; the amount of garden waste being put in the black bins; the tendering process for the composting contract, and whether the Council received an income from the final product.

In response to a question raised, members were informed that there was no issue with flytipping with regards to garden waste.

In response to a question raised, members were informed that householders were able to purchase bags of high quality soil-improver from 11 household waste recycling centres across Suffolk.

Councillor Rona Burt then moved the recommendations, this was duly seconded by Councillor Brian Harvey, and with the vote being 9 for and 1 against, it was:

**RECOMMENDED:**

**That the recommendations, as set out in Section 4 of Report No: OAS/FH/18/032, be approved by the Shadow Executive (Cabinet).**

**272. Annual Report by the Cabinet Member for Operations**

The Committee was reminded that on 9 November 2017, it had received a presentation from the Cabinet Member for Operations 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/18/033 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 David Bowman firstly thanked the Committee for the questions submitted, as set out in the report, and introduced Jonathan Miles, Principal Growth Officer (Economic Activity and Investment).

The Committee then asked a number of follow-up questions relating to markets delivery; and who was responsible for the safety barriers behind the market stalls; to which comprehensive responses were provided.

In particular discussions were held on the make-over and relocation of Newmarket's market to the high street, which had been an overwhelming success, and had a positive impact on the high street. Members looked forward to the roll-out at other markets across West Suffolk.

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.

**273. Work Programme Update**

The Committee received Report No: OAS/FH/18/034, which updated Members on the current status of its rolling work programme of items for scrutiny during 2019 (Appendix 1).

The report also requested that Members identify questions they would like the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture to cover on 10 January 2019.

The Committee considered Appendix 1 and due to the size of the work programme suggested that the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee Decisions Plan and the Shadow Executive (Cabinet) Decisions Plan be removed from the January 2019 meeting to allow sufficient time to consider the rest of the proposed agenda.

Also, at the time of the meeting members had not identified any questions they wished to put to the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture, but would submit questions following the meeting to the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) by Wednesday 21 November 2018.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the update and the removal of the Decisions Plans from the January 2019 meeting.

The Meeting concluded at 8.04 pm

**Signed by:**

**Chairman**

---

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee



**Forest Heath**  
District Council

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Annual Report by the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture</b>	
<b>Report No:</b>	<b>OAS/FH/19/001</b>	
<b>Report to and date:</b>	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	10 January 2019
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Councillor Andy Drummond Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture <b>Tel:</b> 07710 027343 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:andy.drummond@forest-heath.gov.uk">andy.drummond@forest-heath.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Lead officers:</b>	<p>Mark Walsh Assistant Director (Operations) <b>Tel:</b> 01284 757300 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:mark.walsh@westsuffolk.gov.uk">mark.walsh@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Damien Parker Service Manager (Operations, Leisure and Culture) <b>Tel:</b> 01284 757090 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:Damien.parker@westsuffolk.gov.uk">Damien.parker@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Christine Brain Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) <b>Tel:</b> 01638 719729 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:Christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk">Christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a></p>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	<p>As part of the "Challenge" role, Overview and Scrutiny are asked to consider the roles and responsibilities of Cabinet Members. It is part of the Scrutiny role to "challenge" in the form of questions.</p> <p>Therefore, to carry out this constitutional requirement, at every ordinary Overview and Scrutiny meeting at least one Cabinet Member shall attend to give an account of his or her portfolio and answer questions from the Committee.</p>	

<b>Recommendation:</b>		<p><b>Members of the Committee are asked to question the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture on his portfolio responsibilities, and having considered the information, the Committee may wish to:</b></p> <p><b>1) Make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture for his consideration; OR</b></p> <p><b>2) Request further information and / or receive a future update; OR</b></p> <p><b>3) Take any other appropriate action as necessary.</b></p>	
<b>Key Decision:</b> <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that <b>do not</b> apply.)</i>		<p><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"/></p>	
<b>Consultation:</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>	
<b>Alternative option(s):</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>	
<b>Implications:</b>			
Are there any <b>financial</b> implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
Are there any <b>staffing</b> implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
Are there any <b>ICT</b> implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
Are there any <b>legal and/or policy</b> implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
Are there any <b>equality</b> implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
<b>Risk/opportunity assessment:</b>		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
<b>Risk area</b>	<b>Inherent level of risk</b> (before controls)	<b>Controls</b>	<b>Residual risk</b> (after controls)
	Low/Medium/ High*		Low/Medium/ High*
None			
<b>Wards affected:</b>		All	
<b>Background papers:</b>		Brandon Country Park Report to Cabinet on 13 February 2018, Report No: <a href="#">CAB/FH/18/012</a>	
<b>Documents attached:</b>		<b>Appendix 1</b> – Brandon Country Park Management Plan 2018-2028	



## **Key issues and reasons for recommendation**

### **1. Background**

- 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.
- 1.2 Last year, on 11 January 2018, Councillor Andy Drummond, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture attended this committee and presented a report which summarised the areas of responsibility covered under his portfolio.

### **2. Scrutiny Focus**

- 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 leisure and culture portfolio:
- 1) **Parks and opens spaces:** Are there any long-term plans currently being considered for Brandon Country Park?
  - 2) **Parks and open spaces:** Request an update on progress of the re-surfacing of the main Brandon Country Park car park.

### **3. Response to Key Questions Set out in the Scrutiny Focus**

- 3.1 **Parks and open spaces:** Are there any long-term plans currently being considered for Brandon Country Park?

Brandon Country Park transferred to Forest Heath District Council from Suffolk County Council on the 1 June 2018.

In accordance with the transfer agreement, Forest Heath District Council prepared a 10 year Strategic Management Plan for the site. (Attached as **Appendix 1**)

This ten-year plan was prepared in accordance with the industry best practice which follows the principals of the Green Flag judging criteria. The plan includes a detailed plan of action which sets out six key objectives and below each objective there are then specific targets to be achieved:

The six objectives being:

- (1) Provide an accessible green space managed for informal recreation available to all, while maintaining the un-spoilt character of the site.
- (2) Conserve and enhance the landscape, historic and

ecological features of the site.

- (3) Monitor site features and recreational use to determine the effects of site management.
- (4) Promote the benefits of visiting the Country Park to the local community and provide visitors with information and events to enhance their enjoyment of the site.
- (5) Check and manage the site to ensure that it is safe for public access and informal recreation.
- (6) Reduce the overall cost of maintaining the park by increasing income whilst maintaining service standards.

The Council has now been responsible for the Park for just over six months and the following has been achieved without any disruption to peoples enjoyment of the site:

- Management of the Café and the staff associated with managing it have been transferred to the council's joint venture company; Verse Facilities Management. Under this arrangement the council are now receiving an agreed rental sum as well as a share of any Verse profits.
- A new Senior Ranger (Sarah Austin) has been appointed to help manage this site along with the other public open spaces in Forest Heath. Sarah is accompanied by two other part-time rangers who were TUPE'd across as part of the site transfer.
- The Engine House is now being marketed as a venue to hire. Leaflets have been produced and bookings are increasing.
- The play area is now on the council's play inspection regime. Investment in the play area was made over the summer period to top-up the large bark pit.
- The site has been subject to an internal H&S audit and a number of issues have been addressed.
- The car-park has been properly licenced as a Pay & Display car-park and new payment machines have been installed.
- The main car-park has been resurfaced.
- The activities and events hosted at the park are now marketed on the sites web page and 'What's on West Suffolk' see links below:

<http://www.brandoncountrypark.org.uk/>

<https://www.whatsonwestsuffolk.co.uk/whats-on/2018/12>

The Parks team were successful in obtaining the Green Flag accreditation for Aspal Close Nature Reserve this summer (a first for a park in Forest Heath) and we hope to get Brandon Country Park assessed over the forthcoming summer.

3.2 **Parks and open spaces:** Update on progress of the re-surfacing of the main Brandon Country Park car park

The sites main car-park which was in a poor condition was resurfaced week commencing 3 December 2018. The marking of the car-park will take place in the spring of 2019 when the risk of frost has past.

4. **Proposals**

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

This page is intentionally left blank

# Brandon Country Park

## Management Plan 2018 - 2028



Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury councils

**West Suffolk**

working together



## Contents

1	<b>Forward</b>	
1.1	The Vision	5
2.	<b>Introduction</b>	
2.1	The Team	5
2.2	Consultees to the plan	5
2.3	Legal Compliance	6
2.4	Brief Overview	6
3.	<b>Site Description and Information Base</b>	
3.1	Map 1: Brandon Country Park, location	7
3.2	Location	7
3.3	Local Landscape assessment	7
3.4	Ownership and management agreements	8
3.5	Designations	8
3.6	Access	8
3.7	<b>Definition of site features</b>	
3.7.1	Recreation	10
3.7.2	Historic Landscape	11
3.7.3	Biodiversity	12
3.7.4	Species	12
3.7.5	Evaluation of site features	13-15
4.	<b>Management</b>	
4.1	Site Management (Staffing)	16
4.2	Site Management (Financial Resources)	16
4.3	Site Management Health & Safety	16
4.4	Site Promotion & interpretation	16
4.5	Policies and Procedures	17
4.6	Parks Based Planning, Development, Performance & Review	17
4.7	Management of the Park for Formal Recreation	17-18
4.8	Management for Nature Conservation	19
4.9	Management for Historical Landscape	20
4.10	Promoting the site and involving the local community	20
4.11	Water, Waste and Energy management	21
5.	<b>Analysis &amp; Assessment</b>	
5.1	A Welcoming Place	22
5.2	Heathy, Safe and Secure	22
5.3	Clean and Well Maintained	22
5.4	Sustainability	22
5.5	Conservation and Heritage	23
5.6	Naturalness	23
5.7	Rarity	23
5.8	Fragility	23
5.9	Landscape	23
5.10	Building	23
5.11	Community Involvement	24
5.12	Marketing	24
5.13	A Venue for Events	25
5.14	Scope And Potential Future Development	25

6.	<b>Aims &amp; Objectives</b>	26-27
7.	<b>Work Plan</b>	28-33
8.	<b>Monitoring &amp; Review</b>	35
	<b>Bibliography</b>	36
	Appendix 1 - Site Management Budget	37
	Appendix 2 - Species Data	38-40
	Appendix 3 - Links to Corporate Strategies and Objectives	41-42
	Appendix 4 - Grass Cutting Regimes	43
	Appendix 5 - Staff Structure	44
	Appendix 6 - Risk Assessment	45-51

### Glossary of Acronyms

Acronyms	Full tittle
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
FC	Forestry Commission
FHDC	Forest Heath District Council
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
SEBC	St Edmundsbury Borough Council
SCC	Suffolk County Council
SLA	Special Landscape Area
SSSI	Site of special Scientific Interest
WOW's	What's on West Suffolk
WS	West Suffolk (Combined Officer group of Forest Heath District Council & St Edmundsbury Borough Council)



## 1 Forward

### 1.1 The Vision

Brandon Country Park will continue to provide an outstanding visitor destination for the enjoyment of its historic and natural landscape. The Park will act as a gateway to the Brecks and champion the environmental and cultural diversity of the area. The park will continue to provide good quality facilities and enable the enjoyment of its unique environment for a diverse range of users. The park will continue to host a broad range of events and activities to ensure that the facility remains popular and footfall remains high.

## 2 Introduction

This management plan was compiled by West Suffolk's Parks service using best practice guidance from a variety of national organisations. The plan will be reviewed annually to respond to public feedback, changing circumstances and consultation with the sites volunteers and other relevant interest groups.

This management plan is being prepared at a time of great change which includes the freehold transfer of the park from Suffolk County Council (SCC) to Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) and the proposed merger of Forest Heath District Council with St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) to form West Suffolk. The Officers of FHDC & SEBC have, at the time of preparing this plan, been working together as a single management team for nearly two years.

### 2.1 The Team

Damien Parker – Leisure & Cultural Services Manager  
Gary Quilter – Parks and Open Spaces Manager  
Mark Felton – Landscape Supervisor  
Simon Collin – Parks Infrastructure Manager  
John Smithson – Interim Senior Ranger  
Malcolm - Ranger  
Matt Vernon – Ass Arboricultural Officer  
Rebecca Davis – Horticultural Officer  
**Appendix 5** – Provides a structure chart of the Parks Service

### 2.2 Plan consultees:

Elected Members Forest Heath DC  
Brandon Town Council  
Officers from the Local Authorities – Planning, Engineers, Estates, Legal and Waste Management Sections  
Brandon Parkrun Organisers  
Verse – Catering concessionaires & building cleaning contractor  
Suffolk Wildlife Trust

## 2.3 Legal Compliance

There are a number of legal provisions, statutory obligations and guidelines that affect the delivery of park services.

These acts enable local authorities to hold land, provide services, enforce byelaws and in some cases impose fines.

Like many Country Parks Brandon Country Park was designated in the 1970s by the then Countryside Commission, under the Countryside Act 1968.

## 2.4 Brief Overview

Brandon Country Park comprises of thirty two acres. The Park is the vestige of a much larger nineteenth century country estate which once covered upwards of 3,000 acres. The current park landscape consists predominately of mixed species woodland, through which run a series of paths, drives and open rides. The Park has a number of exotic species such as Giant Redwood and Blue Atlas Cedar, planted in two main phases during the mid and late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Brandon Park has no physical boundary and is surrounded by the coniferous plantations of Thetford Forest. Some open glades and areas of heathland exist. Brandon Heath; a large restored Heathland managed by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust lies to the south. The site is visually self-contained. There are few views into or out of the country park, apart from 3 open rides and the main west vista from Brandon Park House with its beech avenues established in the early twentieth century. The remaining parts of the site is woodland: A mix of forestry plantation, remnant park landscape and twentieth century natural regeneration.

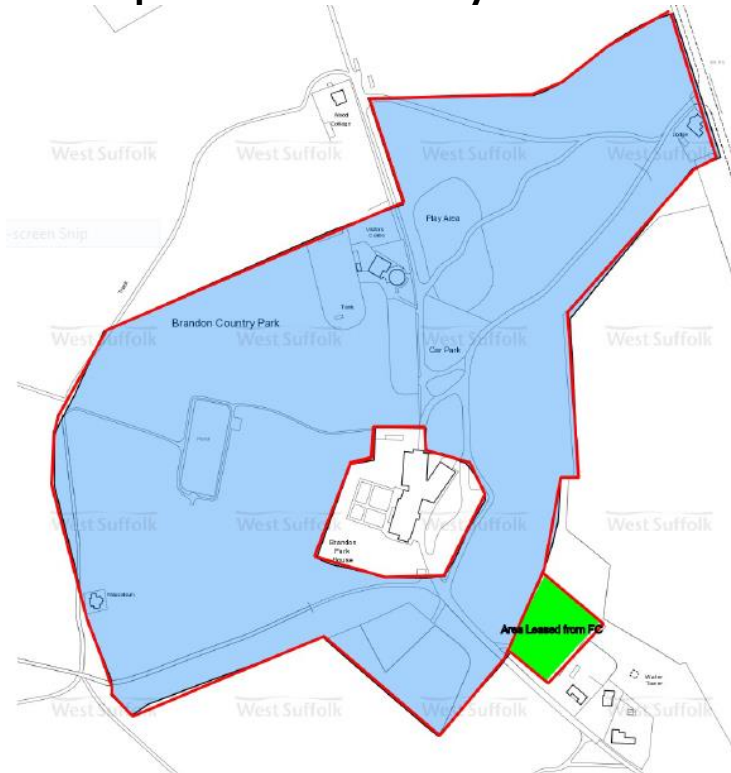
The site is managed to provide a green open space for informal recreation and education, and to conserve and enhance the natural, historical and archaeological features of the site.



The Copper Beech cafe

## 3.0 Site Description and Information Base

### 3.1 Map 1: Brandon Country Park Location



Blue area - owned by FHDC

Green area - Forestry Commission leased to FHDC

### 3.2 Location

**Site name:** Brandon Country Park

**Grid ref:** TL 788854

**County:** Suffolk **District:** Forest Heath

**Ward:** Brandon West

### 3.3 Local Landscape assessment

Brandon is recorded as estate sand lands by SSC local landscape assessment, Estate sand lands are defined by the following features:

- Flat or very gently rolling plateau of freely-draining sandy soils, overlying drift deposits of either glacial or fluvial origin.
- Chalky in parts of the Brecks, but uniformly acid and sandy in the south-east.
- Absence of watercourses.
- Extensive areas of heathland or acid grassland.
- Strongly geometric structure of fields enclosed in the 18th & 19th century.
- Large continuous blocks of commercial forestry.
- Characteristic 'pine lines' especially, but not solely, in the Brecks.
- Widespread planting of tree belts and rectilinear plantations.
- Generally a landscape without ancient woodland, but there are some isolated and very significant exceptions
- High incidence of relatively late, estate type, brick buildings North-west slate roofs with white or yellow bricks. Flint is also widely used as a walling material

Brandon Country Park is surrounded by the coniferous plantations of Thetford forest. Within Thetford forest are some areas of open heath and clear fell. The local

landscape is a low lying and gently undulating, with a dry climate. Brandon Country Park has a bedrock of Cretaceous chalk covered by thin deposits of sand and flint. The soil varies in acidity levels across the site, mainly depending on the depth of the chalk bedrock. The local area is sparsely populated with populations mainly confined to the river valleys. Post war developments are much in evidence in Thetford, Mildenhall and Brandon.

### 3.4 Ownership and management agreements

- **Total area of the site:** 12.95 Hectares (32 acres)
- **Landowner:** As of the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 FHDC will own the freehold to the majority of the Park, it leases the area of land to the East, which has the old engine house located on it from the Forestry Commission. The Care home located in the center of the site is privately owned and managed
- **Managing authority:** FHDC
- **Factors influencing the sites management:**
  - The current sites management plan produced by FHDC.
  - The lease and contract between FHDC & Verse who manage the sites cafe.
  - Agreements with Brandon Park House, owned and run as a nursing home.
  - Conditions placed on the management of the Engine House by the Heritage Lottery Fund.
  - Areas of agreement with the Forestry Commission who own and manage the surrounding land and who lease the Engine House to FHDC.
  - Natural England in reference to the SSSI and SPA.

### 3.5 Designations

Brandon Country Park was declared in 1972 and byelaws were made under Section 41 of the Countryside Act 1968. It lies within a Special Landscape Area (SPA) as defined in the Forest Heath Local Plan. Brandon Park House, the principal building, is listed grade II. Though not individually listed, the entrance lodge, walled garden and Mausoleum are considered to be curtilage structures to Brandon Park House and therefore covered by listed building legislation. This listing would also consider the former well house and outbuildings at Laundry Cottage, which was part of the nineteenth century stables complex, and also falls within the definition of curtilage structures.

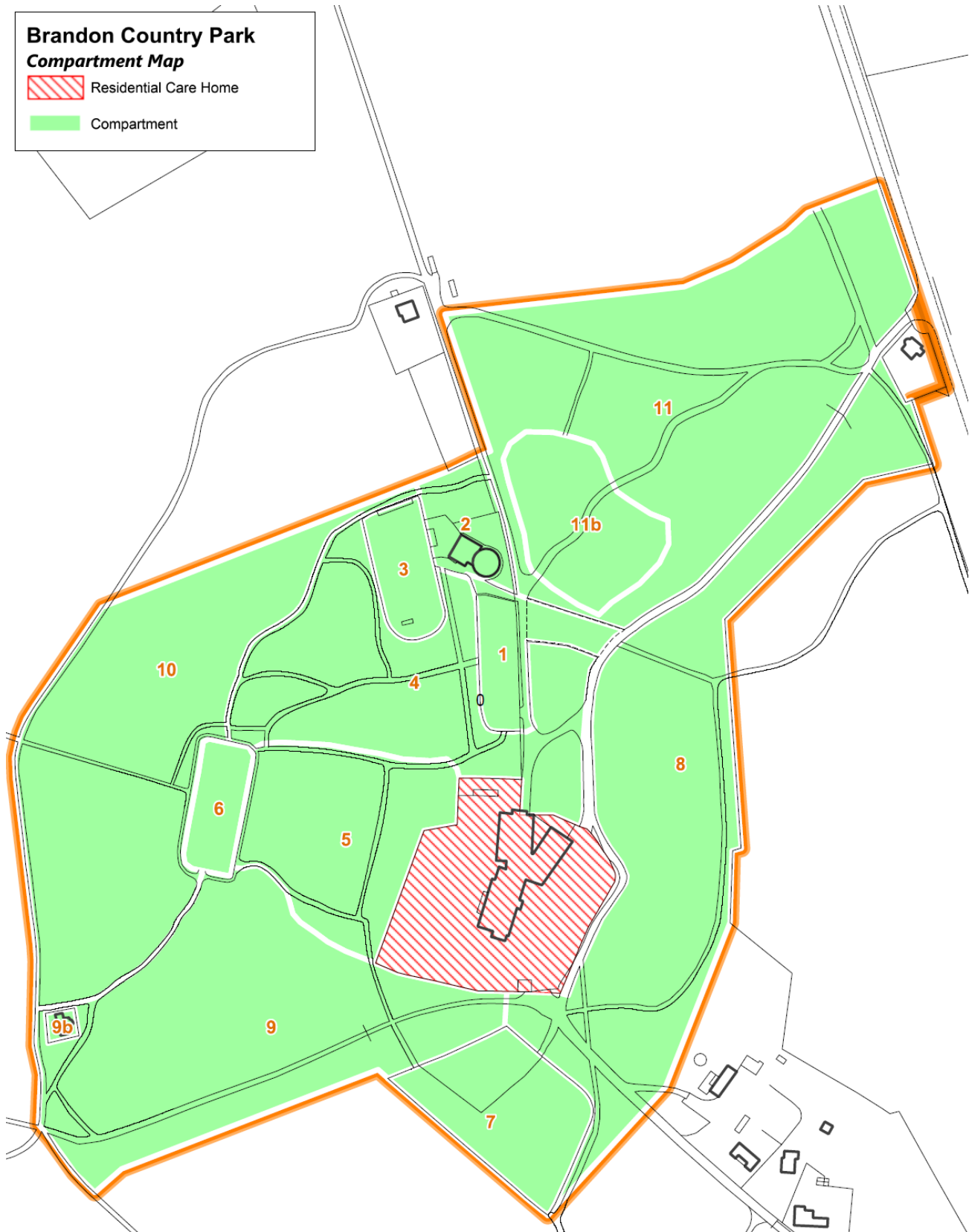
Within Brandon Country Park, a small section of South Ride is notified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) under section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) by Natural England which forms part of Thetford Forests SSSI



### 3.6 Access

The main vehicular access and egress point for the park is located in the North Eastern corner of the site off the B1106 (Bury Road, Brandon).

## Map 2: Brandon Country Park, boundaries and compartments





### 3.7 Definition of site features

SITE FEATURES	LOCATION OF FEATURE
<b>3.7.1 Recreation</b>	<b>Site Compartments (</b>
12.95 hectares (32 acres) of accessible green space of significant ecological value managed for informal recreation.	All of Country Park.
1 surfaced all weather car park and one grass car park which provides approximately 90 car parking spaces	1, 7
4 picnic areas and lawns for informal recreation which are clean and safe for public use.	3, 4, 5, 7, 11
11 miles of permissive paths running into the wider Thetford forest area	Within the Country Park and the surrounding
Linked easy access trails which enables less able visitors to access main site features	1,3,4,5,9, 11
Tree and History Trail to allow visitors to identify some of the parks specimen trees.	All of Country Park.
A bird feeding area enables visitors to gain close experience with several bird species.	4
Events programme to provide exercise and learning opportunities for children and adults and involve volunteers in conservation management tasks.	Within the Country Park
A ranger service to assist and inform visitors, promote & manage volunteering activities.	Within the Country Park
A ranger service to physically manage the site.	Within the Country Park
Copper Beech Tea Room supplies refreshments, using high quality ingredients, some Fair Trade and Rainforest Alliance products. Food and drink is provided via a self-serve counter.	1
Sales Area sells merchandise such as books, maps, gifts and children's novelties. Also provides take away, self-serve hot and cold drinks, ice creams and confectionery.	Sales shelves in Café. 1
Interpretation Area provides information about the park and wider countryside to all ages. It contains text, photos and interactive elements about the natural history and heritage of the park.	1

<b>SITE FEATURES</b>	<b>LOCATION OF</b>
<b>3.7.2 Historic Landscape</b>	<b>Site Compartments</b>
The entrance lodge is considered to be a curtilage structure to Brandon Park House and therefore covered by Listed Building legislation as grade II	11
The Walled garden is considered to be a curtilage structure to Brandon Park House and therefore covered by Listed Building legislation as grade II	3
The Mausoleum is considered to be a curtilage structure to Brandon Park House and therefore covered by Listed Building legislation as grade II	9
Suffolk County Council's Sites and Monuments Record shows no significant archaeological sites or features actually within the area of Brandon Country Park. There are however various archaeological sites, finds and features recorded in the locality. There is some evidence of the sites past land uses still remaining, for example remnants of a sheep drift.	Whole of the site
Original parkland with specimen trees is still evident, partly hidden by natural succession.	4, 8, 9, 10, 11
The Lawns and lake are the remnants of the late c19th and early c20th Pleasure Gardens. The formal bed system has now disappeared, and would be impractical to reinstate, but the views across this area remain an intrinsic part of the original park design	5, 6
The Orchard was originally the paddock for the estate but was turned into an orchard in the second quarter of the c20th. Some of the original apple trees still remain although in poor condition.	7

<b>SITE FEATURES</b>	<b>LOCATION OF</b>
<b>3.7.3 Biodiversity</b>	
<b>Habitats</b> <b>Farm Environment Plan handbook (2005)</b>	<b>Site Compartments</b>
Brandon Country Park is categorized as H14 'Designed landscape and parkland', with H15 'parkland structures and exotic tree species' using Natural Englands guide.	The whole of site
<b>3.7.4 Species</b>	
<b>(For a full species list see appendix 2)</b>	
<b>Birds</b> <b>UK Biodiversity Action Plan (2008)</b> <b>Joint nature Conservation Committee (2008) Schedule 1</b>	<b>Site Compartments</b>
Cross Bill, Firecrest	2, 3,11
<b>Amphibians &amp; reptiles</b> <b>UK BAP (2008)</b>	
Great Crested Newt, Common Toad & frog, Common Lizard, Grass snake, Adder	2, 3,4,5,6,9,10
<b>Vascular Plants</b> <b>UK BAP (2008), Suffolk Scarce Plant register (2005)</b>	
Barberry	9
<b>Fungi</b>	
Earth Star ( <i>Geastrum coronillum</i> )	4, 8, 9
745 species of fungi	Whole of site
<b>Bats</b>	
Pipistrelle ,Soprano Pipistrelle , Brown Long eared, Noctule, Daubentons and Barbastelle	Whole of site
<b>Butterflies</b> <b>regional Action Plan For Anglia (Butterfly Conservation) 2008, uK BAP (2008)</b>	
White-Letter Hairstreak , Green hairstreak, Grayling	Unknown
<b>Moths</b> <b>uK BAP, Mike Hall (2009)</b>	
Lunar Yellow Underwing, Square-spotted Clay , False Mocha, Rosy Minor	Unknown
25 other BAP listed species	Unknown



### 3.7.5 Evaluation of site features

SITE FEATURE	SIGNIFICANCE			REASON FOR SIGNIFICANCE
	Local	Regional	National	
<b>Recreation</b>				
Permissive trails linking onto Forestry Commission land	X	X		Allows public access to the wider forest area. Promotes health.
Site paths	X	X		Allows wheelchair access to the majority of site features
Orienteering course	X			Provides health benefits and leisure facility for a wide variety of users.
Play area including wheelchair swing	X	X		Provides play activities for children including low income families.
FC cycle network	X	X	X	Promotes links with FC. Provides low cost recreation for a variety of user groups. Promotes healthy living
Bird feeding area	X			Well established, bird watchers and photographers can get very close to the birds
An events programme, to provide exercise and learning opportunities for children and involve volunteers in conservation	X	X		Very popular with the local community with 2,300 people attending per annum. Educational and enjoyable
A Ranger Service to assist and inform visitors, physically manage the site.	X			Rangers provide a highly visible presence combined with cost effective site management.
ParkRun	X	X		Provides health benefits and leisure facility for a wide variety of users.
Interpretation area	X	X		Promotes understanding of the ecological and historical aspects of the site. Provides activities for free.
Tourist information point	X	X		Promotes the wider Brecks area
Copper Beech Tearoom	X	X		Enables more wet weather visits. Encourages longer visits.
Toilets including disabled toilet and baby changing area	X			Allows for public to visit the site for a longer periods of time

SITE FEATURE	SIGNIFICANCE			REASON FOR SIGNIFICANCE
	Local	Regional	National	
<b>Landscape</b>				
32 acres of mixed woodland and designed landscape	X	X		Provides a green space for informal recreation. Suitable for low income families. Regional Historical significance
<b>Historic Environment</b>				
Walled Garden	X			Interesting apsidal end, South gate is the second oldest intact built feature of the designed landscape.
Brandon Park House	X	X	X	Grade II Listed. One of the main design elements it visually links the park and Gardens especially on the west side.
Brandon Parks designed landscape		X		Reflects historical changes in fortunes and attitudes and changing tastes.
Mausoleum	X	X	X	Known association with Edward Bliss. Few buildings of this type exist in the country. Unusual materials used for this type of building.
The Lodge	X	X		The lodge and entrance piers are important historic and visual elements to the site.
Engine House	X	X		The Engine House was built in around 1883 to surround an existing 150ft well and to mechanise the process of pumping water to a tower for the main house. The Engine House restoration was undertaken as part of a Brecks HLF Breaking New Ground project. The site is on Forestry Commission land and leased to FHDC.
<b>Biodiversity</b>				
<b>Birds</b>				
Marsh tit, Song Thrush,	X	X	X	Red List
Flycatcher	X	X	X	
<b>Amphibians &amp;</b>				
Great Crested Newt	X	X	X	European and national Protection
Common Toad, Common Frog, Grass Snake, Adder,	X	X	X	Protection under Wildlife and Countryside act. On new BAP priority list

SITE FEATURE	SIGNIFICANCE			REASON FOR SIGNIFICANCE
	Local	Regional	National	
<b>Vascular Plants</b>				
Barberry	X	X		Listed on the Suffolk scarce plants register. Good habitat for various
Pheasants Eye, Shepherds Needle, Henbane, Small	X	X		Listed on the Suffolk scarce plants register. Food source
<b>Butterflies</b>				
White-Letter Hairstreak, Green Hairstreak,	X	X	X	UK BAP Priority list
Small Heath ( <i>Coenonympha</i> )	X	X	X	*UK BAP Research only
<b>Moths</b>				
Lunar Yellow Underwing, False Mocha, Square-spotted	X	X	X	UK BAP Priority list. Important and threatened moths (Mike)
Broom Tip, Small Square-Spot, Powdered Quaker, Shoulder-Striped Wainscot, The Sallow, Mouse Moth, Rosy Minor, Ear Moth, The Rustic, Dark-Barred Twin-Spot Carpet, Small Phoenix, The Streak, White Ermine, Buff Ermine, Green-brindled Crescent, Cinnabar	X	X	X	UK BAP Priority list
Royal Mantle, Wood Carpet, Scarce Tissue, Scallop Shell, Clouded Magpie, Speckled Yellow, Rosy Footman, Cream-spot Tiger, Tripe-spotted Clay, Dotted Clay	X	X		Locally important (Mike Hall 2008)
<b>Fungi</b>				
Earth Star ( <i>Geastrum coronillum</i> )	X	X	X	Nationally rare
745 species of other fungi	X	X		Exceptional diversity on a small site. Good for educational
<b>Bats</b>				
Soprano Pipistrelle	X	X	X	European and national
Brown Long eared	X	X	X	European and national
Noctule	X	X	X	European and national
Pipistrelle	X	X	X	European and national
Daubentons	X	X	X	European and national
Barbastelle	X	X	X	European and national

## 4 Management

### 4.1 Site Management (Staffing)

Brandon Country Park will, as of the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018, be managed by West Suffolk's Parks Service. The site will be staffed by a Senior Parks Ranger and two part-time Rangers and also benefits from a number of volunteers from the local community, who help the Rangers implement the tasks outlined in this management plan. **Appendix 5** provides a staff structure chart for West Parks Service

The Copper Beech Tea room is now managed by Verse a joint venture facilities management company with Forest Heath District and St Edmundsbury Borough Councils.

### 4.2 Site Management (Financial Resource)

The Council reviews its budgets annually and the current year's budget is included in **Appendix 1**. The three main sources of income generation for the Park are: car-parking fees, concession on the café and shop, and events.

The Leisure & Cultural Services Manager holds a monthly budget planning & review meeting with the Parks Manager to ensure that spend and income are adhered to. In 2018-19 SCC contributed £25,000 to the management of the site and FHDC's overall budget subsidy is £22,000.

### 4.3 Site Management (Health & Safety)

St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Forest Heath District Council have a joint Health & Safety Policy and Brandon Country Park will be managed in accordance with this policy.

As well as its duties to employed staff and volunteers the Council also has a duty of care to visitors to the park. The Parks Service has a number of inspection regimes in place to ensure that visitors are not exposed to unnecessary risks. These include weekly inspection of play areas, an annual independent inspection of play areas, Tree inspections, Legionella checks on sources of water, footway checks to name but a few.

The Council also has a comprehensive protocol for the management of third party events to ensure that those hosting events in the park do so in a safe and proper manner.

West Suffolk's Health & Safety Manager aims to visit each of the Council's main parks on a three year cyclical regime to assess compliance against the Council's H&S Policy.

A risk assessment for the activities linked to the features on site has been prepared and will be reviewed annual (**Appendix 6 refers**)

### 4.4 Site Promotion & Interpretation

The site will be promoted via a mix of leaflets, via its own website, what's on West Suffolk (WOW's) website, social media.

## 4.5 Policies and Procedures

The scope of the Parks section is wide ranging and a multi-disciplined, a 'Parks Manual' references all the current policies, procedures and protocols employed to deliver the service safely, efficiently and effectively. The Manual is a working document and is regularly updated to reflect changes to service delivery.

## 4.6 Park Based Planning & Development & Performance Measurement & review

The Parks Manager holds monthly meetings with Senior Rangers from each of West Suffolk's Parks to discuss site based issues, to review progress against site action plans and to discuss proposed changes and developments in the service area.

Each year the Service contributes to the Leisure & Cultural Service area business plan which links to the various aims and objectives of the Council as a whole and is monitored on a quarterly basis.

## 4.7 Management of the Park for Formal Recreation

Brandon Country Park was declared in 1972. Byelaws for its use have been passed under Section 41 of the Countryside Act 1975. Brandon Country Park provides an informal countryside recreation site for picnics, walking and cycling.

Brandon Country Park consists of mixed woodland, avenues, rides, lawns, lake, Walled Garden, the recently restored Mausoleum and a Play Area with wheelchair swing.

The park offers a café (Copper Beech Tea Room) with a Heritage and Natural History interactive interpretation area, as well as a Tourist Information Point. The Park provides toilets with disabled and baby changing facilities.



The site offers access trails, which have a surface suitable for wheelchairs or push chairs, which link many of the site features. It also has a Tree and History trail, an Orienteering Course and Forest Walks; permissive paths (owned by the FC) which radiate out from the country park into Thetford Forest. Three routes are available:

- Red - 1.5 miles/2 km
- Purple - 3.5 miles/5.5 km
- Orange -6 miles/9.5 km

The Walks are supported by leaflets and on site way marking. Way marking posts are colour coded, reflecting the routes listed above.

A Forestry Commission 10.5 km off-road cycle loop runs through the park. This links into a further three cycle loops. The surrounding land is open to the public under agreement of the owners, The Forestry Commission.

Brandon Country Park has around 175,000 people visit each year. Vehicle counters are located along the access road and a people counter is located on the café's entrance door.

The Walled Garden, toilets and Visitor Centre and park are managed to provide an inclusive, enjoyable and safe visitor experience.

The site is litter picked and the toilets are cleaned on a daily basis to ensure that the Park is clean and safe for visitors.

Litter bins, a poo bag dispenser (free) and several dog bins are located across the site to encourage visitors to leave the site clean and tidy at all times.

Rangers regularly patrol the site to assist visitors and manage incidents.

Recreation areas and footpaths are mown frequently to maintain the high standard of the amenity (See appendix 4).

Play equipment is checked weekly and site furniture is checked regularly and replaced as required. Footpaths are checked every six month.

Trees on site are inspected on a regular cycle and managed in accordance with the West Suffolk Tree Management Policy:

See Link:

[https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Policies Strategies and Plans/upload/F116-Appendix-A-West-Suffolk-Tree-Management-Policy.pdf](https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Policies_Strategies_and_Plans/upload/F116-Appendix-A-West-Suffolk-Tree-Management-Policy.pdf)





#### 4.8 Management for Nature conservation

Brandon Country Park is an important site for nature conservation, containing both flora and fauna of national or regional importance.

Historic survey information has revealed that the site has a significant quantity and quality of fungi. 745 species of fungi have been recorded at Brandon Country Park including *Geastrum coronillum*, a nationally important species, located near the Walled Garden and along the entrance drive.



There are several fauna species nationally protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (amended). These species include Barbastelle Bats, Brown Long Eared Bats and Noctule Bats. Great Crested Newts (a European protected species) also occur on the site. Eight Bat species were recorded in 2014.

Crossbills and Firecrests protected under Schedules 1 of the 1981 Wildlife Act can be found on the site. Firecrests breed on the site. Several bird species also occur which are on the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) red and amber lists or are Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) listed.

*Brown Long eared bat*

The records for birds listed in appendix 2 are incomplete but will provide a good basis for future monitoring. There are a number of bird species of national interest (see appendix 2) that have been recorded at Brandon Country Park, but monitoring has been weak. Further surveys need to be carried out in order to determine if the species are still present on the site.



*Great Crested Newt*

The park has over 30 Species of Moths and Butterflies that have UK Biodiversity Action Plans, or are on the BAP Priority List, for example, the Lunar Yellow underwing moth and the Grayling and White-letter Hairstreak butterflies

A planting program of shrubs and flowering plants was initiated in 2004 by the then managers, SCC, to provide more regular food sources for species such as butterflies.

The areas of water are managed in order to provide suitable habitat for Great Crested Newts, (see Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook) amphibians and dragonflies.



*White-Letter Hairstreak butterfly*



*Lunar Yellow Underwing moth*



*Earth Star Fungi*

The Park is surrounded by the Breckland Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). A small part of the SSSI extends on to the southern boundary of the country park. The woodland is managed to promote biodiversity through a rotational thinning and coppicing regime. The regime takes into account the sites high number of bat species. Wood that is thinned out is used for habitat creation such as newt refuges and log piles.

Rides are kept open using a mowing regime (See appendix 4). Cut material that is created from the ride management is used to create hibernation piles.

#### **4.9 Management for Historical landscape**

Within the park, remnants of a 19th century designed landscape can be seen. A lake, open terraced lawn, Mausoleum and Walled Garden still survive. Brandon Park House, a Grade II listed building, provides an important focal point for the park placing the parkland in context and dramatically setting off the vistas and views in the park. Brandon Park House is not owned or managed by SCC but is bound by management agreement not to disrupt these views. The park also boasts the remnants of a c19th Pleasure Garden.

Overlaying this landscape is the later succession towards beech woodland, 20th Century forest planting and service facilities developed as part of the country park.

Some evidence still survives in the park of the sheep drives, surviving from the time when the area was occupied by open heaths and sheep walks.

The natural regeneration of trees on site has been managed by selectively thinning around specimen trees. This is carried out in order to reveal an impression of the original planting scheme and to promote the health and prolong the lives of the specimen trees.

Original site features are maintained in accordance with relevant good practice; these include the drives, avenues, rides, Walled Garden, Mausoleum and terraced lawns including a Ha-ha.

#### **4.10 Promoting the site and involving the local community**

The Country Park has an extensive events programme. This programme offers events for children and adults which aim to be both educational and enjoyable. Events include guided heritage and conservation walks, children's treasure trails, den building and Forest Schools. The Park holds a number of conservation work days and has a regular volunteer day once a week. The park is also the venue for several other privately run events such as Explore Outdoors and mountain bike racing, Parkrun.



The Park has a number of user groups that include vulnerable adults and those with learning difficulties. The Country Park is promoted by publications distributed in the local community, the local and regional media, and through the Council's web-site.



The Park provides access to research by survey groups and academics, together with educational visits from school groups which are linked to the national curriculum. The Park offers a learning resource Education Pack. The Park provides popular, enjoyable and educational events to promote life-long learning to both children and adults for example Fungi Walks and Dawn Chorus

#### **4.11 Water, waste and Energy management**

Management aims to protect the ecological value of the site and the wider environment: Disposing of waste appropriately, and considering its Carbon Footprint, waste and environmental damage when purchasing. Wherever practical, the site buys sustainable, environmentally friendly and local produce.

The shop and tearoom use local and fair trade products where viable. The Dog glove bags given away to the public are biodegradable. There is a rain water collection unit for watering the walled garden and a compost heap which takes shredded paper from the office and uncooked kitchen waste from the tearoom as well as garden materials. Dry recyclables are separated on site, and other general rubbish is sorted at a local recycling plant.

The park complies with the standards identified by Environmental Management System.

Artificial fertilizers and pesticide use is restricted on the site.

Wood cut, when thinning, is made into habitat piles. There is the potential for the sale of woodland products.



## 5. Analysis & Assessment

### 5.1 A Welcoming Place

---

Signage at the main entrance point and throughout the park is clear and logically placed.

The car-park would benefit from a new surface dressing and the remarking of the bays.

The Copper beech café is inviting, and offers a pleasant array of refreshments. Staff in the café are well presented and uniformed.

The toilet facilities are maintained to a good standard and are visited by caretaker staff daily.

### 5.2 Healthy, Safe and Secure

The children's play area is very popular and is inspected regularly for faults. Dog fouling has not been an issue and the bins supplied adequately control the situation. The Council recently adopted new Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO's) which means that dogs are not allowed in the children's play areas and dog owners are required to clean up after their pets have defecated.

There is a range of checks and procedures in place to safeguard sites, facilities and visitors.

The Parks Staff undertake a range of mandatory health and safety training sessions as part of their induction and during their ongoing employment with the Council.

### 5.3 Clean and well maintained

The relationship with the landscape team and ranger staff is good and the annual meeting between the two reviews the performance effectively. Similarly the annual inspection with Property Services sets the priorities for the next 12 months and picks up defects that will need resolution or monitoring.

Building Services staff are on 'call out' if there is a need for repair or replacement for all built infrastructure. The duty ranger records any defects on their patrols and will call out Building services if required, particularly where there is an obvious hazard created as a consequence of the identified fault.

Waste management empty all bins on site x3 times a week most of the year and extend to x4 times a week for the summer. A daily litter pick is undertaken in and around the car park and picnic area by the ranger team and volunteers with a wider sweep of the site on a monthly basis.

### 5.4 Sustainability

All green waste is removed from site and recycled as part of the maintenance agreement with our landscape team. The use of pesticides and herbicides on site is

kept to a minimum. Tree works are prescribed by the Council's Arboricultural Officer and carried out by either the Council's in house tree team or an approved contractor, where possible material is chipped on site.

The Council will in 2018-19 investigate the merits of investing in renewable energy sources on site e.g. solar photovoltaics (PV) and solar thermal. The Council has successfully installed such technology at other park venues in its quest to improve the authority's performance in meeting carbon reduction targets.

As part of the woodland management firewood is harvested and sold locally.

## **5.5 Conservation and Heritage**

Section 4.8 of this management plan outlines the significance of the site for nature conservation and outlines the key flora and fauna which is of regional/national importance.

Current management practices are designed to maintain and improve the three main habitats; opportunities to extend habitats should be considered where appropriate.

## **5.6 Naturalness**

The park has been influenced by human land practices for many generations. There are no natural features that have not been affected by man. However, remnant populations of flora associated with natural landscapes are still present in small pockets and these are considered to be semi-natural.

## **5.7 Rarity**

There are no rare historic, geological or ecological features present in the park. The flora is locally significant and there are a few protected and BAP species recorded on the site (Appendix 2).

## **5.8 Fragility**

The habitats present are stable under the current management, with no significant threats identified; however the growing popularity of the park could have some destabilising effects. The ageing tree population is the most fragile and susceptible to rapid damage and loss from high winds.

## **5.9 Landscape**

The current main features should be maintained:

- The Avenue of Beech Trees along the main avenue should be thoroughly inspected and a plan put in place to ensure that they are suitably maintained and individual specimens replaced when deemed necessary to ensure a continuity of effect.
- The reed in the ornamental lake should be maintained so that there is no further encroachment on the clear water areas.
- The boundaries of the formal lawn should be maintained to stop the encroachment of scrub species.
- The topiary shrub species in the walled garden should continue to be trimmed to ensure that they do not exceed their current size.

## 5.10 Buildings

The walled garden, Mausoleum, Engine house and café represent the key built facilities within the park and are an intrinsic part of the heritage value of the site. The Engine house was the subject of a HLF restoration project associated with the Brecks Breaking New Ground project in 2017.

## 5.11 Community involvement

There is a long established programme for volunteers to participate in the management of the park and there has always been a small core of committed individuals that stay for some years, whilst others come and go at regular intervals. Although servicing this group takes up at least one day a week of ranger time, the site benefits from the work programme and should be continued as it also has great benefits to the participants.

## 5.12 Marketing

The West Suffolk Parks Service manages three other country parks in West Suffolk these being:

- West Stow Country Park (Approx. 12 miles away)
- Nowton Park, borders the south-western fringe of Bury St Edmunds (Approx. 18 miles away)
- East Town Park, Haverhill (Approx. 37 miles away)

West Suffolk Parks Service also assist the Clare Castle Country Park Trust with the routine maintenance of that country Park.

East Town Park is smaller and has less facilities and the visitor profile information suggest its catchment area for visitors is very local. West Stow has a reconstructed Anglo Saxon Village and whilst it too is located in the Brecks it has a significantly different landscape character to that of Brandon Country Park. Nowton Park is located on the fringes of a main town and like Brandon Country Park it's located in the grounds of a former Country House estate. Unlike Brandon Nowton has far less woodland coverage and it hosts a number football pitches and meadows.

High Lodge (Forestry Enterprise) is probably the site which most competes for custom with Brandon.

Other sites within the region that offer similar visitor experiences include:

- Belle Vue Park, Sudbury
- Thornham Walks
- Milton Country Park – South Cambridgeshire

Whilst the competition for informal recreation locally and regionally is high with a wide range of interesting sites to visit in Suffolk and beyond it is clear that Brandon Country Park plays a valuable and significant part as a Suffolk attraction and local open space.

The park café is the primary mechanism for information and interpretation and a continued close working relationship with Verse the operators of the Café is essential.

Tourist signs were installed in 1991 to help visitors locate the site.

The facilities are promoted through:

- The council's website and links to other websites.
- Key sites in the town are used as notice locations for posters and information.
- Flyers and leaflet distribution to local schools.
- Local Radio, newspaper adverts and editorials.
- Social Media - Facebook

### **5.13 A venue for events**

The park is widely used by external organisations to host a variety of events as well as those organised by the council. There are limiting factors against the continued growth of events in the park.

- The capacity of the car park.
- The increasing disturbance to the normal visiting profile.
- Attrition on the landscape.
- The size of the park.
- Effects on biodiversity.

Careful consideration will need to be given to the above when agreeing future events.

### **5.14 Scope and potential future development**

The Council will need to constantly consider the balance between existing recreational use and future potential facilities that augment and improve the recreational use.

The current patterns of use are very much centred on the car park, play area and café. There are waymarked walks to guide visitors around the park and into the neighbouring forestry land so that visitors can enjoy the beautiful landscape.

The challenge for future developments will be:

- How to improve access to and use of the Engine House.
- What attractions could be added that would enhance the landscape and improve the visitor experience.
- How would the investment in these facilities be realised and demonstrate acceptable income streams.

### **(1) Provide an accessible green space managed for informal recreation available to all, while maintaining the un-spoilt character of the site.**

#### Targets

- (1-a) Maintain and enhance woodland for amenity and biodiversity, promoting the Parks value as a gateway to the Brecks, its historic and nature conservation value.
- (1-b) Maintain Access through footpath Infrastructure and walking/cycle trails.
- (1-d) Maintain and enhance Walled Garden as a venue for public enjoyment, events and as an historic monument.
- (1-d) Maintain and enhance formal lake area for wildlife and amenity value.
- (1-e) Maintain and enhance the Café and associated amenity infrastructure, including car parks toilets etc. to cope with demands of up to 200,000 visitors per year.

### **(2) Conserve and enhance the landscape, historic and ecological features of the site.**

#### Targets

- (2-a) Maintain and enhance protected species and habitats (SSSI) throughout the park, with specific emphasis on Brecks landscape and species.
- (2-b) Manage woodlands for biodiversity and historic interest. Developing a woodland management plan, that considers a long term sustainable use of woodland resource.
- (2-c) Manage the Historic landscape feature and viewpoints throughout the park to reflect its history as a large estate and its value for wildlife.
- (2-d) Promote BCP as a venue of significance within the Brecks by working with relevant partner organisations and linking to local conservation and tourist strategies.

### **(3) Monitor site features and recreational use to determine the effects of site management.**

#### Targets

- (3-a) Develop a monitoring scheme for key species and designations within the Park, through developing links with partner organisations and local communities.
- (3-b) Monitor key species and designations within the park.
- (3-c) Review the site work plan on an annual basis following the annual audit of the sites facilities and information from surveys.
- (3-d) Monitor and evaluate visitor numbers and carry out a series of visitor surveys.

**(4) Promote the benefits of visiting the Country Park to the local community and provide visitors with information and events to enhance their enjoyment of the site.**

Targets

- (4-a) Develop and implement a year round events programme for the park.
- (4-b) Develop a strategy to promote BCP through interpretation either fixed or information leaflets.
- (4-c) Promote BCP through electronic media such as web site Trip Advisor and Facebook.
- (4-d) Provide a first class venue in the Café and integrate that experience with the wider Park.
- (4-e) Diversify activities that take place in the park to encourage a wider user group and develop activities such as 'Farmers markets' and music events.
- (4-f) Promote the park as an educational resource for local schools through activities such as 'Forest schools'

**(5) Check and manage the site to ensure that it is safe for public access and informal recreation.**

Targets

- (5-a) Carry out safety checks of physical and natural infrastructure of the park.
- (5-b) Review risk assessments on an annual basis (appendix 6).
- (5-c) Ensure staff remain suitably trained and equipped to do the jobs expected of them.

**(6) Reduce the overall cost of maintaining the park by increasing income whilst maintaining service standards.**

Targets

- (6-a) Monitor and review performance of the Catering contract with Verse
- (6-b) Make the car-park a licensed car-park and enforce non-payment of car-parking levy
- (6 c) Promote greater uptake of the annual car-parking permit scheme, linked with other West Suffolk Parks
- (6 d) Promote greater use and a source of income from the Engine house
- (6e) Meet the annual target set for income from externally managed events.
- (6f) Investigate the merits of investing in renewable energy sources on site e.g. solar photovoltaics (PV) and solar thermal.

## 7.0 Work Plan – Brandon Country Park – 2018-2028

	Work Plan Item	Delivered by	Target Completion Date	Resource Required	Output
	<b>1 Provide an accessible green space managed for informal recreation available to all, while maintaining the un-spoilt character of the site.</b>				
1a	Maintain and enhance woodland for amenity and biodiversity, promoting the Parks value as a gateway to the Brecks, its historic and nature conservation value.	Senior Ranger with help from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers</li> <li>• West Suffolk GM Team</li> <li>• Arboricultural Officer</li> </ul>	Ongoing Review annually	Officer Time & Volunteers time + Cost of Tree works	The park maintains an even coverage of trees which are diverse in both species and age.
Page 44	Maintain access through footpath Infrastructure and walking/cycle trails.	Senior Ranger	Inspect quarterly	Officer time	We fulfill our duty of care to visitors
	Maintain and enhance Walled Garden as a venue for public enjoyment, events and as an historic monument.	Senior Ranger with help from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers</li> </ul>	Ongoing through regular work parties	Officer time & Volunteers time	The walled garden continues to look good and hosts events.
1d	Maintain and enhance formal lake area for wildlife and amenity value.	Senior Ranger	Ongoing maintenance review annually	Officer time & Volunteers time	The Lake looks good and provides a habitat for water borne species
1e	Maintain and enhance the Café and associated amenity infrastructure, including car parks toilets etc. to cope with demands of up to 200,000 visitors per year.	Parks & Open Spaces Manager.	Café contract review meetings quarterly. Car-parking income monitored monthly.	Officer monitoring time	The park remains welcoming and those features which we depend on to generate income to help sustain the park remain viable.



## 7.0 Work Plan – Brandon Country Park – 2018-2028 (Continued)

	Work Plan Item	Delivered by	Target Completion Date	Resource Required	Output
	<b>2 Conserve and enhance the landscape, historic and ecological features of the site.</b>				
2a	Maintain and enhance protected species and habitats (SSSI) throughout the park, with specific emphasis on Brecks landscape and species.	Senior Ranger with help from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers</li> </ul>	Ongoing maintenance review annually	Officer time & Volunteers time	The park retains its SSSI status and continues to host a diverse range of flora & fauna.
2b	Manage woodlands for biodiversity and historic interest. Developing a woodland management plan, that considers a long term sustainable use of woodland resource..	Senior Ranger with help from WS Arboricultural Officer	Woodland Plan in place by 2020.	Officer time & Volunteers time	A woodland management plan is prepared.
2c	Manage the Historic landscape feature and viewpoints throughout the park to reflect its history as a large estate and its value for wildlife.	Senior Ranger	Ongoing maintenance review annually	Officer time & Volunteers time	Historic landscape features and vistas are retained.
2d	Promote BCP as a venue of significance within the Brecks by working with partner organisations and linking to local conservation and tourist strategies.	WS Parks & Open Spaces Manager & Senior Ranger	Ongoing review annually	Officer time & Volunteers time Partner Time	Site will help host partnership events which promote the Brecks.

## 7.0 Work Plan – Brandon Country Park – 2018-2028 (Continued)

	Work Plan Item	Delivered by	Target Completion Date	Resource Required	Output
	<b>3. Monitor site features and recreational use to determine the effects of site management.</b>				
3a	Develop a monitoring scheme for key species and designations within the Park, through developing links with partner organisations and local communities.	WS Parks & Open Spaces Manager & Senior Ranger	Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) to be commissioned in 2018 to undertake an audit to establish a more up to date benchmark. Audit to be completed in financial year 2018-19	Officer time + Cost of commissioning SWT	SWT will be commissioned to undertake an audit of the site (as WS Parks have done for all their other significant venues). The output will be an updated appendix 3.
3b	Monitor key species and designations within the park.	Senior Ranger with help from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers</li> </ul>	Monitoring regime in place for financial year 2019-20	Officer time & Volunteers time	An Annual Site Audit
3c	Review site work plan on an annual basis following the annual audit of the sites facilities and information from surveys.	WS Parks & Open Spaces Manager & Senior Ranger	Audits conducted in February of each year. Work plan prepared in time for each new financial year.	Officer time	Annual work plan review.
3d	Monitor and evaluate visitor numbers and carry out a series of visitor surveys. Use this data to steer future management initiatives.	Senior Ranger	Numbers monitored quarterly. Survey every 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	Officer time.	Quarterly report. Visitor survey every 3 <sup>rd</sup> year.

## 7.0 Work Plan – Brandon Country Park – 2018-2028 (Continued)

	Work Plan Item	Delivered by	Target Completion Date	Resource Required	Output
	<b>4. Promote the benefits of visiting the Country Park to the local community and provide visitors with information and events to enhance their enjoyment of the site.</b>				
4a	Develop and implement a year round events programme for the park.	Senior Ranger & WS Event Officer	Ongoing (Review 6 monthly)	Officer time + Cost of any commissioned events	A series of events will be held each year which are marketed and attended well.
4b	Develop a strategy to promote BCP through interpretation either fixed or information leaflets.	WS Marketing & Sales Manager	Ongoing (Initial review in first 3 months of taking on site, annually thereafter)	Officer time + Cost of any material produced.	That the park continues to be well marketed and visited.
4c	Promote BCP through electronic media such as web site Trip Advisor and Facebook.	Senior Ranger with help from WS Marketing & Sales Manager	Ongoing	Officer time	That the park continues to be well marketed and visited.
4d	Provide a first class venue in the Café and integrate that experience with the wider Park.	Verse – Contract monitored by WS Parks & Open Spaces Manager	Ongoing	Officer time	The café remains popular and footfall increases.
4e	Diversify activities that take place in the park to encourage a wider user group and develop activities such as 'Farmers markets' and music events.	Senior Ranger	Ongoing	Officer time	The series of events which the park hosts will be diverse in nature.
4f	Promote the park as an educational resource for local schools through activities such as 'Forest schools'	Senior Ranger	Contact schools in 2018 to gauge their appetite.	Officer time	The market for this activity will be tested.

## 7.0 Work Plan – Brandon Country Park – 2018-2028 (Continued)

	Work Plan Item	Delivered by	Target Completion Date	Resource Required	Output
	<b>5. Check and manage the site to ensure that it is safe for public access and informal recreation.</b>				
5a	Cary out safety checks of physical and natural infrastructure of the park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Trees</b> WS Tree Officer</li> <li>• <b>Play area</b> WS Play area inspector.</li> <li>• <b>Public Toilets</b> Verse Contract</li> <li>• <b>Café</b> Verse Contract</li> <li>• <b>Other Parks Infrastructure</b> Senior Parks Ranger</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Officer time + Costs associated with rectifying defects.	West Suffolk Parks Service fulfills its duty of care obligation to its visitors
5b	Review risk assessments on an annual basis.	WS Parks & Open Spaces Manager & Senior Ranger	Ongoing Annually or as and when things change.	Officer time	West Suffolk Parks Service fulfills its duty of care obligation to both its visitors & staff
5c	Ensure staff & volunteers remain suitably trained and equipped to do the jobs expected of them.	WS Parks & Open Spaces Manager & Senior Ranger	Ongoing Reviewed annually at appraisal.	Officer time + costs associated with training.	West Suffolk Parks Service fulfills its duty of care obligation to both its visitors & staff

## 7.0 Work Plan – Brandon Country Park – 2018-2028 (Continued)

	Work Plan Item	Delivered by	Target Completion Date	Resource Required	Output
	<b>6. Reduce the overall cost of maintaining the park by increasing income whilst maintaining service standards.</b>				
6a	Monitor and review performance of the Catering contract with Verse	WS Parks & Open Spaces Manager	Ongoing (7 Year contract commencing April 2018)	Officer time	Regular contract review meetings held. Any shortcomings in service delivery are quickly resolved
6b	Make the car-park a licensed car-park and enforce non-payment of car-parking levy	WS Car-Parks Service	Car-park will be licensed in April 2018. Enforcement will be ongoing thereafter.	Officer time + Costs associated with getting a licence.	Licensed Car-park Income is maximised for the benefit of the park.
6c	Promote greater uptake of the annual Car permit scheme	WS Marketing & Sales Manager	Ongoing	Officer time	10 % Increase in the sale of Permits by 2020.
6d	Promote greater use and a source of income from the Engine house	Senior Ranger with help from WS Marketing & Sales Manager	Ongoing	Officer time	10% increase in its use each year.
6e	Meet the annual target set for income from externally managed events.	WS Events Officer & Senior Ranger	Ongoing (reviewed monthly)	Officer time	Income Target achieved.
6f	Investigate the merits of investing in renewable energy sources on site e.g. solar photovoltaics (PV) and solar thermal.	WS Environmental Management Team	During financial year 2018-19	Officer time	Receipt of a report which sets out a series of recommendations which the Parks Service and Verse can consider.





### **Visitor's needs**

There should be at least one visitor survey every third year that asks how visitors rate the quality of the site how satisfied they are and what improvements they would like to see. Consultation should also be undertaken when any significant changes to facilities are being considered.

### **Work plan delivery**

Site staff and managers will meet monthly to discuss progress on the work plan and adherence to financial requirements. Every six months, through staff development review, adjustments can be made if revised targets are required.

### **Stakeholder liaison**

All stakeholders should be given at least an annual opportunity to meet with site staff to comment on progress.

### **Overview**

West Suffolk's Parks & Open Spaces Manager and the sites Senior Ranger will appraise the whole plan each February prior to the commencement of the new financial year to ensure that the aims and objectives are relevant and appropriate.



### Bibliography

---

HLF, Brandon Country Park Conservation Management Plan (2005) Historic Landscape Management, Lyng Easthaugh, Norfolk

Langton, T.E.S., Beckett, C.L., Foster, J.P. The Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook (2001) Froglife, Halesworth, Suffolk

Natural England, Higher Level Stewardship: farm Environment Plan, guidance handbook (2005) Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, London

Phillip Parker, Brandon Country Park Ecological Conservation Plan (2005) Phillip Parker Associates, Kings Lynn, Norfolk

Suffolk scarce Plant Register (2005) [www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~sbrc/RPR.htm](http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~sbrc/RPR.htm)

UK BAP (2008) [www.ukbap.org.uk](http://www.ukbap.org.uk)

Butterfly Conservation (2008) [www.butterfly-conservation.org](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org)



## Appendix 1 Site Management Budget

A/C Code	Description	Budget £
	<b>Employees</b>	
R1000	Salaries - Basic Pay	47,235
R1001	Salaries - Employers National Insurance	3,399
R1002	Salaries - Other Pay	464
R1003	Salaries - Overtime	2,976
R1006	Salaries - Employers Superannuation	14,343
R1010	Salaries - Vacancy Savings	-1,710
R1500	Staff Advertising Costs	500
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>67,207</b>
	<b>Premises</b>	
R2002	R & M of Buildings	15,000
R2006	Grounds Maintenance - Additional Works	7,500
R2100	Electricity	7,295
R2300	Business Rates	1,037
R2400	Water Services	2,104
R2700	Contract Cleaning	7,100
R2725	Waste & St. Cleansing - Operational Charge	3,407
R2750	Grounds Maintenance - Operational Charge	4,000
R2800	Insurance - Premises	295
R2900	Annual Contribution to Premises Reserves	13,500
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>61,238</b>
	Transport	
R3000	Vehicle Fuel	1,141
R3026	Vehicle Telematics Charge	29
R3050	Vehicle workshop - operational charge	1,445
R3500	Insurance - Vehicles	282
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>2,897</b>
	Supplies & Services	
R4000	Tools & Equipment - Purchase	800
R4003	Tools & Equipment - R & M	500
R4010	Materials - General	1,358
R4880	Miscellaneous Expenses	2,000
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>4,658</b>
	<b>Income</b>	
R9100	Contributions - Suffolk County Council	-25,000
R9173	Reimbursement - Utility & Other Costs	-7,000
R9220	Sales - Commission (Income from café concession)	-10,000
R9304	Fees - Car Parking	-48,000
R9308	Fees - Leisure Services (Events)	-6,000
R9404	Rents - Other Property	-3,000
R9890	Financed from Reserves	-15,000
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>-114,000</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>22,000</b>

## Appendix 2: SPECIES Data

	Status	date last recorded	Site Compartments
<b>Birds</b>			
<b>uK BAP (2008) JnCC (2008) Schedule 1</b>			
Cross Bill ( <i>Loxia curvirostra</i> )	Schedule 1	2009	3, 2
Cuckoo ( <i>Cuculus canorus</i> )	Amber (JNCC)	2008	11
Most of the Bird species records for BCP are now considered to old (Natural England 2005) to be used. Listed below are the species seen in the park in the 1990's. Further surveying would need to be carried out in order to establish if species are still present			
Turtle Dove ( <i>Streptopelia turtur</i> )	UK BAP	1997	Unknown
Song Thrush ( <i>Turdus philomelos</i> )	UK BAP	1999	Unknown
Redstart ( <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i> )	Schedule 1, Amber	1994	Unknown
Kingfisher ( <i>Alcedo atthis</i> )	Schedule 1	1997	Unknown
Yellowhammer ( <i>Emberiza citrinella</i> )	Red	1999	Unknown
Starling ( <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> )	Red	1999	Unknown
Green Woodpecker ( <i>Picus viridis</i> )	Amber	1999	Unknown
Meadow Pipit ( <i>Anthus pratensis</i> )	Amber	1997	Unknown
Mistle Thrush ( <i>Turdus viscivorus</i> )	Amber	1999	Unknown
Wood Warbler ( <i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i> )	Amber	1997	Unknown
Goldcrest ( <i>Regulus regulus</i> )	Amber	1999	Unknown
<b>Amphibians &amp; reptiles</b>			
<b>uK BAP (2008)</b>			
Great Crested Newt ( <i>Triturus cristatus</i> )	UK BAP	2007	6,3
Common Toad ( <i>Bufo bufo</i> )	UK BAP	2008	6, 5, 9, 3
Grass Snake ( <i>Natrix natrix</i> )	UK BAP	2008	2,3,4,6
Adder ( <i>Vipera borus</i> )	UK BAP	2008	1, 10
<b>Vascular Plants</b>			
<b>uK BAP (2008), Suffolk Scarce Plant register (2005)</b>			
Barberry ( <i>Berberis vulgaris</i> )	SSPR	2008	9
Pheasants eye ( <i>Adonis annua</i> )	SSPR	1990	Unknown
Shepherds needle ( <i>Scandix pecten-veneris</i> )	SSPR	1990	Unknown
Henbane ( <i>Hyoscyamus niger</i> )	SSPR	1990	Unknown
Small scabious ( <i>Scabiosa columberia</i> )	SSPR	1990	Unknown
<b>Fungi - uK BAP, Jonathon revett (2008)</b>			
Earth Star ( <i>Geastrum coronillum</i> )	UK BAP	2002	4, 8, 9
745 species of fungi		2009	whole of site

	Status	date last recorded	Site Compartments
<b>Bats</b>			
Soprano Pipistrelle bat ( <i>Pipistrellus pygmas</i> )		2008	1
Brown Long eared bat ( <i>Plecotus auritus</i> )		2005	9
Noctule bat ( <i>Nyctalus noctula</i> )		2008	4, 6
Pipistrelle ( <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> )		2005	4, 6
Daubentons ( <i>Myotis daubentonii</i> )		2005	Unknown
Barbastelle ( <i>Barbastella barbastellus</i> )		2007	9
<b>Butterflies</b>			
<b>regional Action Plan For Anglia (Butterfly Conservation) 2008, uK BAP (2008)</b>			
White-Letter Hairstreak ( <i>Satyrrium w-album</i> )	UK BAP, BC at Risk: High	1998	Unknown
Grayling ( <i>Hipparchia semele</i> )	UK BAP, BC at Risk: High	1998	Unknown
Green hairstreak ( <i>Callophrys rubi</i> )	UK BAP, BC at Risk: Medium	1998	Unknown
Small heath ( <i>Coenonympha pamphilous</i> ) *UK BAP Research only	UK BAP*, BC at Risk: Medium	1998	Unknown
<b>Moths</b>			
<b>uK BAP, Mike Hall (2009)</b>			
Lunar Yellow Underwing ( <i>Noctuna orbona</i> )	UK BAP, MH: High	1992	Unknown
False Mocha ( <i>Cyclophora punctana</i> )	UK BAP, MH: High	1992	Unknown
Square-spotted Clay ( <i>Xestia rhpamboidea</i> )	MH: High	1998	Unknown
Broom tip ( <i>Chesias rufata</i> )	UK BAP	1992	Unknown
Small Square-spot ( <i>Diarsia rubi</i> )	UK BAP	1992	Unknown
Powdered Quaker ( <i>Orthosia gracillia</i> )	UK BAP	1992	Unknown
Shoulder-striped Wainscot ( <i>Mythimna comma</i> )	UK BAP	1992	Unknown
The Sallow ( <i>Xantia iactertia check spelling!</i> )	UK BAP	1992	Unknown
Mouse Moth ( <i>Amphipyra tragopogonis</i> )	UK BAP	1992	Unknown
Rosy Minor ( <i>Mesoligia literosa</i> )	UK BAP	1992	Unknown
Ear Moth ( <i>Amphipoea oculea</i> )	UK BAP	1990	Unknown
The Rustic ( <i>Hoplorina blanda</i> )	UK BAP	1992	Unknown
Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet ( <i>Xanthorhoe ferrugata</i> )	UK BAP	1998	Unknown
Small Phoenix ( <i>Ecliptopera silaceata</i> )	UK BAP	1992	Unknown
The Streak ( <i>Chesias legatella</i> )	UK BAP	1992	Unknown
White Ermine ( <i>Spilosoma lubricipeda</i> )	UK BAP	1992	Unknown
Buff Ermine ( <i>Spilosoma luteum</i> )	UK BAP	1992	Unknown

	Status	date last recorded	Site Compartments
Cinnabar ( <i>Tyria jacobaea</i> )	UK BAP	1992	Unknown
Green-brindled Crescent ( <i>Allophyes oxyacanthae</i> )	UK BAP	1992	Unknown
Royal Mantle ( <i>Catarhoe cuculata</i> )	MH: medium	1992	Unknown
Wood Carpet ( <i>Epirrhoe eivata</i> )	MH: medium	1992	Unknown
Scarce Tissue ( <i>Rheumaptera cervinalis</i> )	MH: medium	1992	Unknown
Scallop Shell ( <i>Rheumaptera undulata</i> )	MH: medium	1992	Unknown
Clouded Magpie ( <i>Abraxas sylvata</i> )	MH: medium	1992	Unknown
Speckled Yellow ( <i>Pseudopanthera macularia</i> )	MH: medium	1992	Unknown
Rosy Footman ( <i>Miltochrista miniata</i> )	MH: medium	1992	Unknown
Cream-spot Tiger ( <i>Artica villica</i> )	MH: medium	1992	Unknown
Tripe-spotted Clay ( <i>Xestia ditrapezium</i> )	MH: medium	1992	Unknown
Dotted Clay ( <i>Xestia baja</i> )	MH: medium	1992	Unknown

Wider Context - Policy Statements/Aims and Objectives of Strategic Documents

### **1.1 Transforming Suffolk – Suffolk’s Community Strategy 2008-2028**

The Suffolk Strategic Partnership agreed four fundamental themes upon which the strategy is based, and identified a strategic priority for each of them:

1. A Prosperous and Vibrant Economy – to become the most innovative and diverse economy in the East of England
2. Learning and Skills for the Future – to have learning and skills in the top quartile in the country
3. Creating the Greenest County – to be the county with the greatest reduction in carbon emissions
4. Safe, Healthy and Inclusive Communities – to create a place where everyone is safe, healthy and involved, no matter who they are, or where in the county they live.

### **1.2 West Suffolk Strategic Plan 2014 - 2016**

The Council has three key priorities. Priority 2 in particular, and elements of priority 3, have relevance for open space:-

Priority 1: Increased opportunities for economic growth

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

Priority 3: Homes for our communities.

The current strategic plan will be reviewed after the decisions process for devolution in Suffolk and Norfolk is complete.

### **1.3 West Suffolk Sustainability Strategy 2013 – 2018**

This document has strategic aims for open spaces and a quote from the document is provided below.

*West Suffolk is fortunate to contain some internationally important natural landscapes such as the Brecks to the north, the Stour and Dedham Vale to the south and high quality river valleys. There are also a wide range of semi-natural areas both in towns and countryside that form important links to these key habitats. These are regarded as some of the most important natural habitats in the country.*

*Both the landscapes and the wildlife that they contain are important for their own sake. In addition, local biodiversity provides us with services which are vital to our wellbeing and local prosperity. The links between health and the environment are recognised in Suffolk and the need to empower communities to utilise, encourage and expand their activity to meet needs that have been locally identified, have been incorporated into the Suffolk Joint Health and Wellbeing*

*strategy. This social and economic value is also recognised nationally<sup>12</sup>. Our challenge is to prevent a decline in this natural capital for the benefit of current and future generations.*

*A significant contribution to the protection and enhancement of local landscapes and environmental assets is made by local planning policies covering West Suffolk.*

*Our countryside services work hard to conserve and enhance West Suffolk's special landscape and wildlife, managing our own assets along with working closely with land owners, local communities and partner organisations, to manage a number of important local sites, provide advice on countryside issues and to develop opportunities for access and enjoyment of the area. Separate arrangements are in place to manage the parks and other open spaces under the control of the councils; these include specific management plans for key parks along with a more general Tree and Woodland Strategy covering St Edmundsbury.*

#### **1.4 West Suffolk Tree Management Policy (2014)**

The West Suffolk tree management strategy has policies regarding:-

- Conservation and management of the Councils' own trees
- Regular health and safety inspections and remedial safety work.

#### **1.5 West Suffolk Families and Communities Strategy, November 2013**

**1.6** The strategy includes a number of measures to support families and community, including empowering communities and providing opportunities for community participation.-

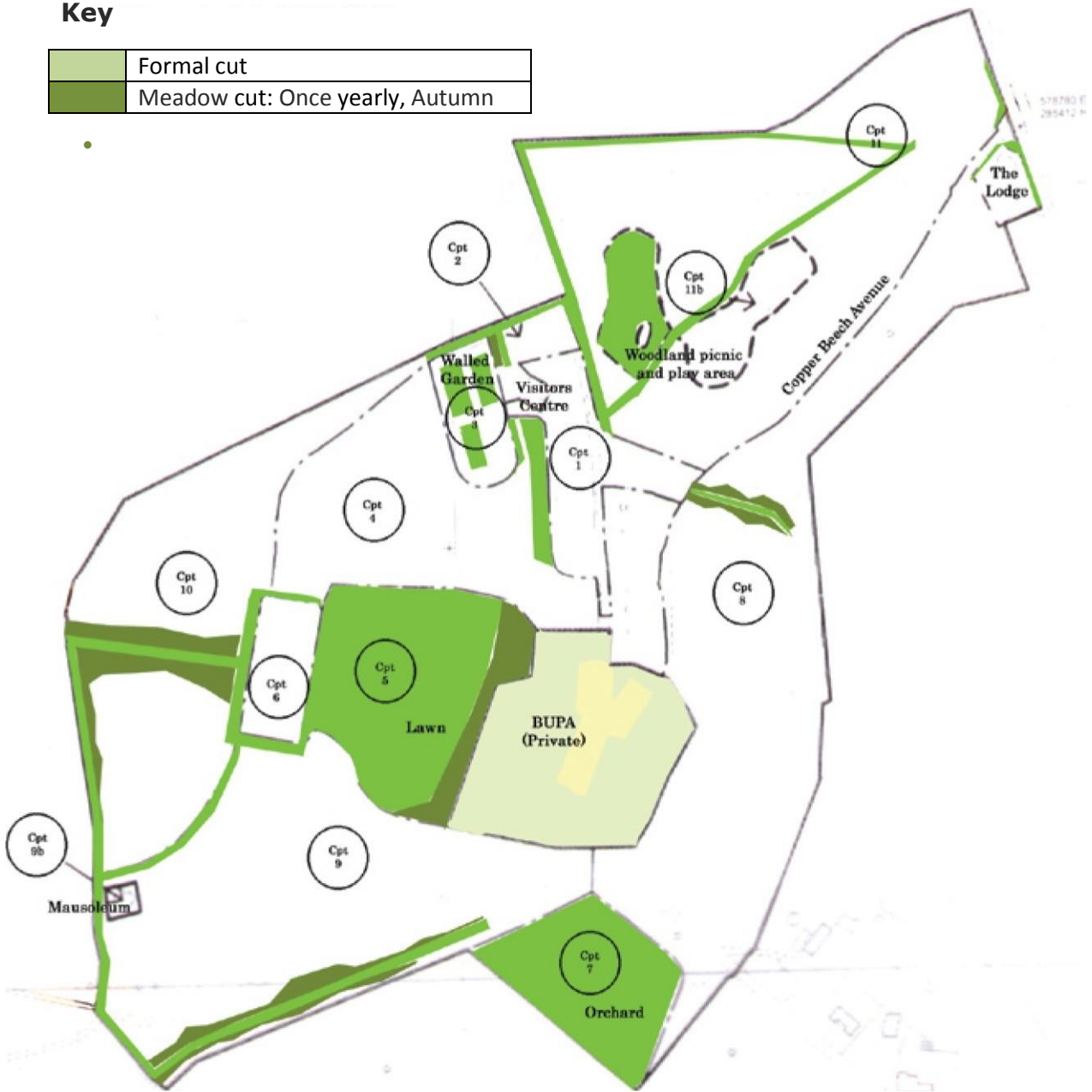
#### **1.7 The Forest Heath Local Plan Core Strategy.**

Numerous vision statements and policies relate to healthy environment, management of the environment and open spaces for community benefit:

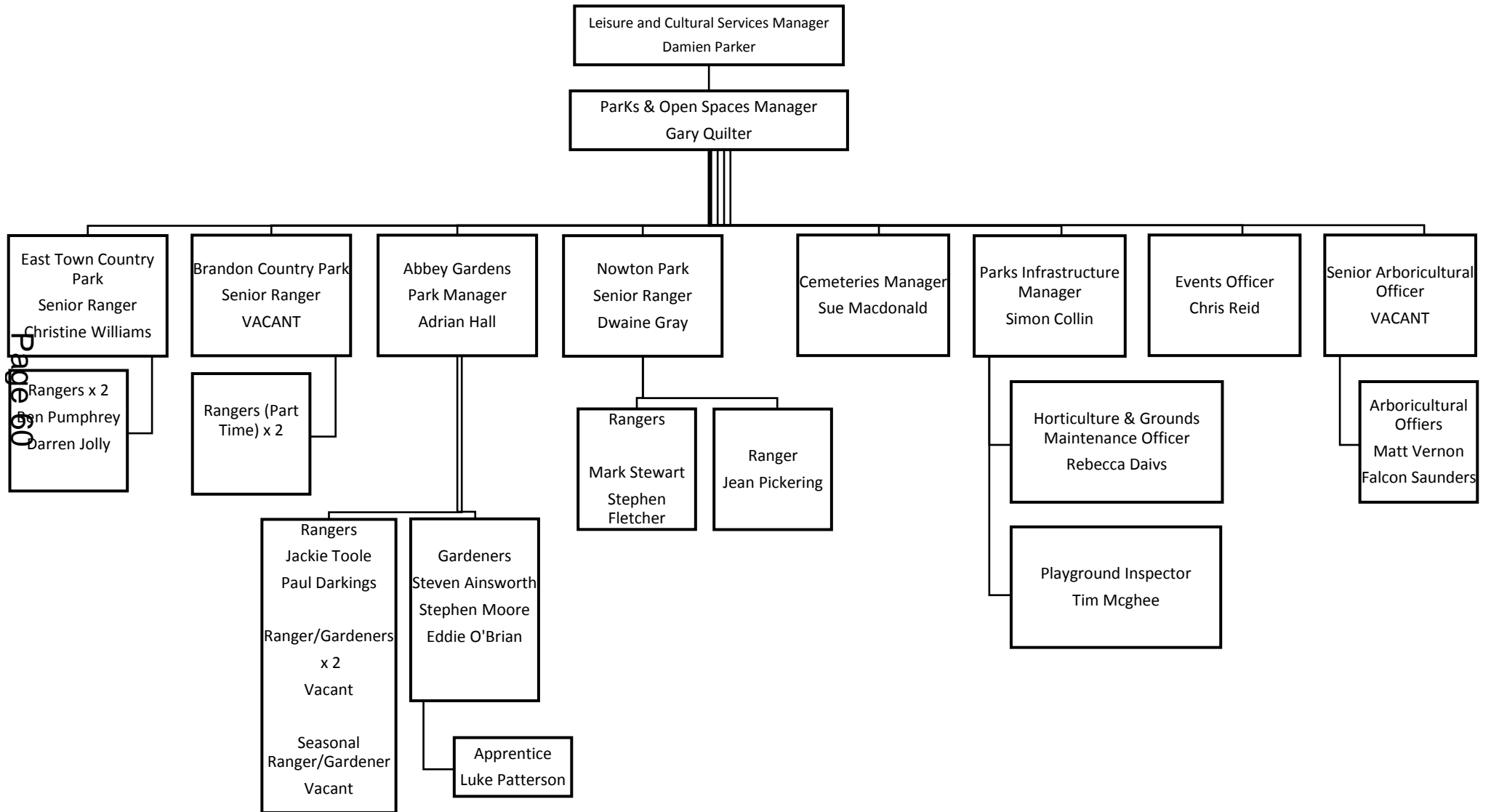
# Appendix 4 – Grass cutting Regimes

## Key

	Formal cut
	Meadow cut: Once yearly, Autumn



# Appendix 5 Staff Structure





## Appendix 6 Risk assessment

### RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

Department:	Operations Leisure & Cultural Services	Section:	Parks Service	Location:	Brandon Country Park
-------------	---	----------	---------------	-----------	----------------------

Activity/Process	Location of Activity/Process		Number of persons at risk			
			1	2 to 5	6 to 10	10 Plus
Formal and informal recreation	Throughout the park	Employees		X		
		Others				X

Hazards involved with Activity/Process	Existing Safety measures / controls	Score	Additional controls required	Responsibility (Name)	Signature on Completion
<b>Slips, trips and falls: uneven surfaces, protruding path edges, roots, steps, slopes, holes and mounds, long grass</b>	The park is patrolled at least once a week. Necessary repairs are communicated to the relevant member of staff or carried out ASAP.	2 x 1 = 2			
				Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	
	Footpaths, service roads, car park and furniture maintained to standards applicable to outdoor environment.	2 x 1 = 2			
				Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	
<b>Unsafe behaviour by members of the public</b>	Signage is used to inform site visitors of park regulations and to exclude certain users from certain areas (e.g. dogs in the play area).	1 x 2 = 2			
				Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	
<b>Vandalism - damages to features rendering them unsafe</b>	The park is patrolled at least once a week. Necessary repairs are communicated to the relevant member of staff or carried out ASAP.	1 x 2 = 2			
				Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	

<b>Dangerous litter (e.g. broken glass, sharps, contaminated materials)</b>	The park is patrolled at least once a week. Any sharps found are removed immediately.	2 x 1 = 2		Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	
<b>Food litter: contamination from vermin (disease), ingestion of unsafe foodstuff.</b>	The park is patrolled at least once a week. Litter bins are emptied on contract.	1 x 2 = 2		Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	
<b>Toxocariasis</b>	"No fouling" notices displayed and regulation enforced as much as practicable. Public education via Park Rangers.	1 x 2 = 2		Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	
	Dog bins provided. Dogs excluded from play area.	1 x 2 = 2		Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	
<b>Traffic accidents</b>	5mph speed limit throughout park.	1 x 2 = 2		Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	
	Barriers and gates installed to prevent access by unauthorised vehicles. Gates kept locked wherever practical.	1 x 2 = 2		Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	
	Pedestrian exits: pavement barriers and/or gates installed wherever practical.	1 x 2 = 2		Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	
	Contractors notified of duty of care and 5mph speed limit. Marshalling required when the park is open to traffic as part of an event.	1 x 2 = 2		Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	
<b>Cycling accidents</b>	Cyclists deemed unsafe are approached, informed of duty of	1 x 2 = 2		Target date	Completion Date

	care asked to show consideration to other users			New Score	
	5mph speed limit throughout park.	1 x 2 = 2		Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	
<b>Impact with footballs: damage to people and property</b>	Football pitches sited on large areas of grass clearly visible from a distance.	1 x 2 = 2		Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	
<b>Sporting injuries on pitches</b>	Pitches maintained to required standards by club. Pitch users required to make their own provisions for health and safety.	1 x 2 = 2		Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	
<b>Impact with hard balls (e.g. golf, cricket)</b>	Regulations enforced as practicable during patrols and whenever a breach is reported.	1 x 2 = 2		Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	
<b>Personal attack</b>	Generally an open aspect site.	1 x 3 = 3		Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	
<b>Trees: falling tree limbs</b>	Regular inspections from Park Rangers. Annual tree inspections by Arboricultural Officer.	1 x 3 = 3		Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	
	Tree surgery carried out as appropriate by approved contractors under the guidance of the Arboricultural Officer.	1 x 3 = 3		Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	
<b>Trees – climbing: falling</b>	Individual cases treated separately. Branches raised where appropriate, in consultation with Arboricultural Officer.	1 x 3 = 3		Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	
	Individual cases treated separately. Branches raised	1 x 2 = 2		Target date	Completion Date

<b>Trees – low branches: walking, running into obstacles</b>	where appropriate, in consultation with Arboricultural Officer.			New Score	
				Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	
<b>Injuries from dogs</b>	"Dogs under control" notices displayed and regulation enforced as much practicable.	1 x 2 = 2		Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	
	Any instances of unsafe behaviour by dogs reported to police as appropriate.	1 x 2 = 2		Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	
<b>Illness or accident: delays in obtaining medical help</b>	First Aid Box available in Ranger vehicle and in the Rangers Office. Park Ranger trained in First Aid.	1 x 2 = 2		Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	
	Mobile phones carried by Wardens.	1 x 2 = 2		Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	
				Target date	Completion Date
<b>Management / maintenance work carried out by staff, contractors or volunteers: accidents</b>	Members of staff trained and provided with PPE. Equipment inspected prior to use and regularly maintained and serviced.	1 x 2 = 2		Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	
	Public excluded from working area with signs or barriers when required.	1 x 2 = 2		Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	
	Contractors informed of duty of care, required to follow safe working procedures and obtain suitable PLI.	1 x 2 = 2		Target date	Completion Date
				New Score	

	See separate Risk Assessments for individual tasks and specific equipment.				Target date	Completion Date
					New Score	
<b>Hazardous plants: irritation, poisoning, thorns</b>	Hazardous plants (e.g. hogweed) controlled to prevent spread.	1 x 2 = 2			Target date	Completion Date
					New Score	
<b>Fires in buildings</b>	Fire extinguishers provided in all building on site.	1 x 3 = 3			Target date	Completion Date
					New Score	
	Extinguishers are regularly monitored by staff, refilled as necessary and checked by contractor annually.	1 x 3 = 3			Target date	Completion Date
					New Score	
	Fires are not allowed in the park unless supervised by Park Ranger or as part of booked activities following park guidelines.	1 x 2 = 2			Target date	Completion Date
					New Score	
	Barbeques are only allowed by prior consent in the designated area and follow the guidelines of the Barbeque and Cookout Policy.	1 x 2 = 2			Target date	Completion Date
					New Score	
	All unauthorised fires are reported to the Fire Brigade immediately.	1 x 2 = 2			Target date	Completion Date
					New Score	
<b>Stings and bites, Weil's disease, Lyme disease, Tetanus</b>	Site Ranger can advise on as required	1 x 3 = 3			Target date	Completion Date
					New Score	
	Wasp nests in sensitive areas are destroyed by contractors ASAP.	1 x 3 = 3			Target date	Completion Date
					New Score	

<b>Heat exhaustion / sunburn / skin melanomas / hypothermia</b>	Site Warden can advise on as required	$1 \times 2 = 2$				
				Target date	Completion Date	
				New Score		
				Target date	Completion Date	
				New Score		
				Target date	Completion Date	
<b>Falling in water body or water courses: drowning</b>	The Lake are maintained to best possible standards given ground conditions and changing water levels.	$1 \times 3 = 3$				
				Target date	Completion Date	
				New Score		
	The lake is clearly visible from a distance, with shallow banks on the front side and vegetation to prevent access on the other sides.	$1 \times 3 = 3$				
				Target date	Completion Date	
				New Score		
	There are two Lifebuoys and Lifebuoy Housings by the lake which are checked weekly	$1 \times 3 = 3$				
				Target date	Completion Date	
				New Score		
Throw rope available when working near water and during pond-dipping activities.	$1 \times 3 = 3$					
			Target date	Completion Date		
			New Score			

Date Implemented	28-02-2018	Controls effective	YES /NO	Assessor	Gary Quilter	Signature		Date	28-02-2018
Comments:  Assessment review date (1 Year from last review date unless process changes or otherwise stated) (PTO)  Senior Manager Signature _____ Name Damien Parker Date 28-02-2018									

Risk Rating		Action Bands	
Likelihood	Severity of Injury	Rating Band	Action Band
1 = Most unlikely	1 = Trivial injury	1 - 2 = Minimal Risk	Maintain Control Measures
2 = Unlikely	2 = Slight injury	3 - 4 = Low Risk	Review Control measures
3 = Likely	3 = Serious injury	6 - 8 = Medium Risk	Improve Control Measures
4 = Most likely	4 = Major injury or Death	9 - 12 - 16 = High Risk	Improve Control Measures immediately / <b>Consider stopping work</b>

Additional Remarks:
---------------------

Review Date	Assessor	Signature	Date	Remarks
28-02-2019	Damien Parker	Damien Parker	28-02-2018	

This page is intentionally left blank



# Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath  
District Council

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Customer Access Strategy 2019-2022</b>	
<b>Report No:</b>	<b>OAS/FH/19/002</b>	
<b>Report to and dates:</b>	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	10 January 2019
	<b>Shadow Executive (Cabinet)</b>	5 February 2019
<b>Portfolio holder:</b>	Councillor Robin Millar Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities <b>Tel:</b> 07545 423782 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:robin.millar@forestheath.gov.uk">robin.millar@forestheath.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Lead officer:</b>	Davina Howes Assistant Director Families and Communities <b>Tel:</b> 01284 757070 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:davina.howes@westsuffolk.gov.uk">davina.howes@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To present the revised Customer Access Strategy to Committee.	
<b>Recommendation:</b>	<p><b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee:</b></p> <p><b>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that:</b></p> <p><b>(1) Members review the contents of the Customer Access Strategy 2019-2022; and</b></p> <p><b>(2) Makes any amendments, and recommends the Customer Access Strategy 2019-2022 to the Shadow Executive (Cabinet), for approval.</b></p>	

<b>Key Decision:</b> <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that <b>do not</b> 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"/>	
<b>Consultation:</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Portfolio Holders and Leadership Team</li> <li></li> </ul>	
<b>Alternative option(s):</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council could decide not to have a Customer Access Strategy.</li> </ul>	
<b>Implications:</b>			
<i>Are there any <b>financial</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whilst there will be efficiencies gained from continues improvement in the delivery of customer service, it is not possible to quantify these in financial terms. Significant financial savings were achieved as a result of the previous Customer Access Strategy in 2014.</li> </ul>	
<i>Are there any <b>staffing</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	
<i>Are there any <b>ICT</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The support and application of ICT is a key enabler for the delivery of customer access. At this point, no decisions need to be made in relation to the ICT required to delivery this strategy. Any future decisions needed will be subject to a business case and democratic approval as appropriate.</li> </ul>	
<i>Are there any <b>legal and/or policy</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	
<i>Are there any <b>equality</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An Equality Assessment has been conducted and there are no significant implications identified as a result of adopting the Customer Access Strategy</li> </ul>	
<b>Risk/opportunity assessment:</b>		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
<b>Risk area</b>	<b>Inherent level of risk</b> (before controls)	<b>Controls</b>	<b>Residual risk</b> (after controls)

Customer expectations and demands are greater than capacity levels within the team	Low	Weekly monitoring and monthly reporting of call volumes (including call waiting and call abandoned times) are captured and shared with the Customer Service Team and with Leadership Team and PASC via the Balanced Scorecard	Low*
Changes in technology means the best solutions are unaffordable	Medium	The Service Managers for Customer Services and for ICT have worked closely on this issue and will continue to do so with the CS/IT project team. Regular monitoring of the market and new technologies will be helpful when it comes to specifying a future Customer Access Platform	Low
The website does not provide customers with the best experience in terms of self service	Medium	There is an action within the proposed CAS to implement a a User Experience test on any front-end systems that have a self-serve function. The purpose of this test would be to maximise the ease of use for the customer when transacting online with the council.	Low
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>		All wards	
<b>Background papers:</b> <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		The Customer Service Standards and the Corporate Complaints Policy (including persistent and unreasonable behaviour policy) <b>will be available to view on the website from 7 January 2019.</b>	
<b>Documents attached:</b>		<b>Appendix A</b> – Customer Access Strategy 2019-2022	

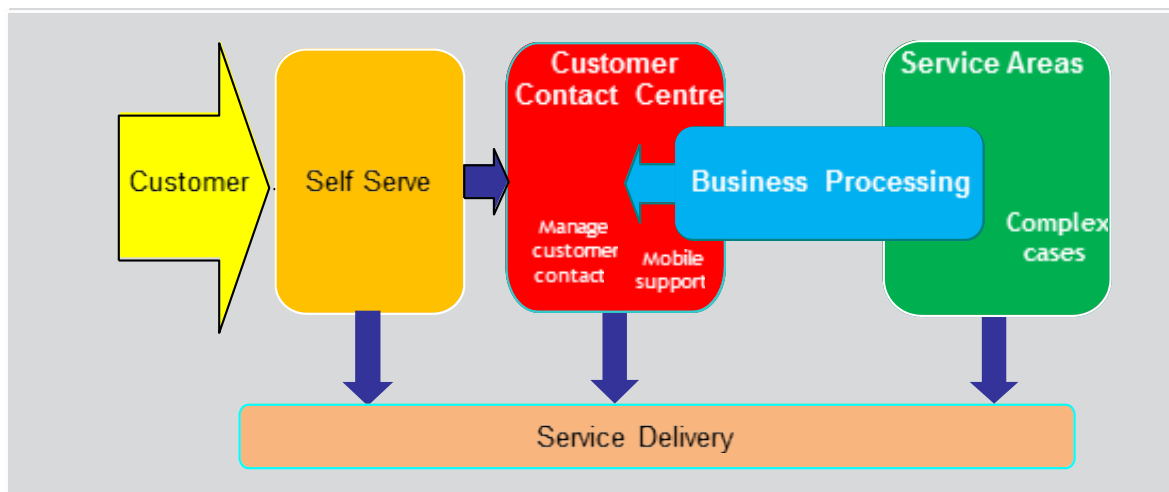
## 1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

### 1 Background

- 1.1 The councils adopted the Target Operating Model (TOM) for Customer Services (see Diagram 1 below) in 2014, marking a fundamental change to the delivery of the Customer Services function across both Councils. The motivation at the time of the implementation was to reflect the ambition to move to a single council in structure terms and to acknowledge the requirements associated with the public sector digital transformation agenda.

The general focus at the time of the implementation was to understand which of the Councils' services could be drawn into the TOM and how best to deliver those against the backdrop of efficiency improvements aimed at releasing financial savings associated with the changes (£125,579 per annum). Note that these financial savings were achieved.

**Diagram 1: Customer access target operating model**



## 2. Headlines from the post-implementation review

- 2.1 In April 2018, a review of the initial strategy objectives was conducted. Given that the purpose of the TOM was to create a system which would provide clear, accurate, timely, accessible and targeted information to customers across a range of service disciplines and across the two councils, the review considered how successful the channel shift work has been since starting to implement the change. The aim of the TOM is to ensure that customers can self-serve as much as possible with customer service staff providing assisted self-serve, further supported by service areas dealing with the more complex issues.
- 2.2 A key driver to achieve the Strategy was the ambition to achieve a 20% channel shift to move customers from a direct contact method to online and self-serve. In November 2012 a data capture exercise conducted at the time showed that the main methods of contact were telephone and face-to-face, accounting for around 369,000 customer contacts. A key part of the delivery of the TOM was to transfer staff into one Customer Service team. This team now consists of 34 staff (26.97FTE) and works across Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill, Mildenhall and

Newmarket. Suffolk Library Services provide the support from the Brandon Office

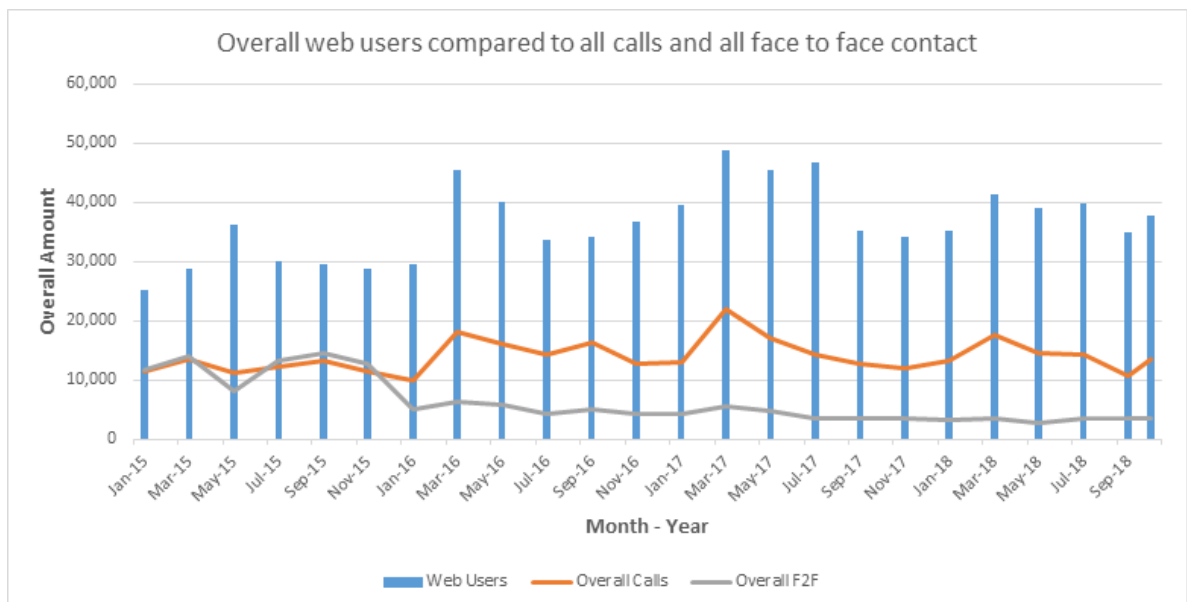
**3. Review of achievement of project objectives**

3.1 With an objective to achieve a 20% channel shift from direct contact to online channels and self-serve methods (amounting to around 85,000 contacts), the data captured has been used to provide the baseline in table one below. Note that the customer service team has taken on more services than originally anticipated hence the number of calls had increased, but reduced again in 2017/18. As an example, Apex calls are taken by the team and these were not included in the baseline, nor were election telephone calls.

**Table 1: channel shift statistics**

Year	Telephones	Face to Face	Online Forms	Email to CS	Totals
2013/14	225,694	143,578	-	-	369,272
2014/15	145,311	132,363	-	8,675	286,349
2015/16	154,915	69,170	36,844	15,930	276,859
2016/17	186,884	58,028	39,230	27,892	312,034
2017/18	164,284	42,684	38,138	30,753	275,859

**Graph 1. Website analysis to September 2018 – online vs phone and face-to-face contacts for Customer Service Team**



- 3.2 The figures in table one show a considerable shift in customer contact methods, with online and self-serve methods representing 21.5% of the total customer contacts for 16/17, increasing to 25% in 17/18. With total customer contacts having reduced between the baseline year and 2015/16, totals from 2016/17 showed a slight rise in customer contact levels which is attributable to the referendum, a change to the garden waste collection scheme and the implementation of a new housing system (including a few weeks where the online system was not live). From October 2017, these figures include the planning portal, elections and housing applications data which was not previously captured as part of this data suite, but the inclusion of this additional data represents the totality of the online customer access. Figures recorded for 2017/18 show a return to similar levels in previous years.
- 3.3 Between 2013/14 and 2017/18 phone calls to the customer service team have reduced by 27.2% (61,410 calls) and face to face volumes have reduced by 70% (100,894 visits) as online options increase. The face to face statistics from the earlier periods were not recorded in exactly the same way as the data is collected now; so whilst the last three years of data is very robust, it is perhaps prudent to reflect that the recording mechanism changed during the reported period. The 2015/16 figures will also reflect the move of the Brandon office to the library during that period and the concerted move to online content for self-serve purposes.
- 3.4 There is further evidence of channel shift in the most recent website analysis, providing information about the number of online users in comparison to telephone and face to face contact with the Councils. The analysis highlights that since January 2015 there are an increasing number of web users compared with an overall decreasing number of face-to-face contacts. Analysis from 2017/18 is showing a stabilisation of face-to-face contact levels with phone call levels remaining at a similar level over the graph period. The spike in the data in March 2017 was a direct result of garden waste renewals and the introduction of the Direct Debit payment facility for this service.
- 3.5 Generally speaking face to face contact has diminished considerably over the recorded period, with a general decline in the number of calls being made to the Customer Services team. Website use, having initially increased in the period between March 2016 - July 2017 is now settling into a more consistent level of attracting between 30,000-40,000 web users per month (having peaked at almost 50,000 in March 2017).

#### **4. Future Customer Access Strategy**

- 4.1 It is with this review that it is evident there is much to celebrate in terms of the ongoing success of the TOM and equally work that needs to be continued in order to unlock the full potential of the model, given the technological advances since the TOM was first construed in 2012.
- 4.2 The work carried out to review the 2015-2018 Customer Access Strategy has considered technology as a key element of the future provision of customer access for West Suffolk Council customers. The practical day-to-day improvements will continue to deliver the now well-tested model for managing customer contact, whilst being careful to allow the future technological environment to shape the way in which the council manages customer demands

in the future. Important in this iteration of the strategy is the clarity that there is no set pathway being followed at this time in terms of what the future will look like, instead recognising that with the market changing so rapidly, it is better to understand fully our emerging needs (based on an assessment of future opportunity and previous learning).

## **5. Consideration for West Suffolk Council**

- 5.1 In producing the 2019-2022 Strategy, a focus has been placed on ensuring that the approach is flexible enough to deliver against the ambition and any emerging priorities of the new Council. There is of course going to be a period of transition post April 2019 and the Strategy needs to be able to accommodate changes required by the new Council members. This Strategy does this and, more importantly, provides stability; the stability being provided by the commitment to deliver more of the same and to take time to reflect the requirements for the customers and the service areas before making a decision about system updates or changes.
- 5.2 Alongside the strategy document, staff have reviewed the existing Service Standards document and also updated the existing Complaints Policy which now also includes a section on the management of persistent complainants and/or those complainants who demonstrate unreasonable behaviour as defined by the Social Care and Local Government Ombudsman. Both of these documents will be available to view on the website from 7 January 2019
- 5.3 The Strategy is accompanied by an action plan which sets out the specific activities associated with the strategy, who owns the actions and anticipated timescales. Members are asked to approve the Customer Access Strategy 2019-2022 and adopt it in readiness for the move to a single council in April 2019.

This page is intentionally left blank





# Customer Access Strategy 2019-2022

# 1 | Introduction

In 2017-2018 the Customer Service Team received around 165,000 calls, supported 43,000 visitors and responded to approximately 31,000 emails.

For a number of years, the Council has been making it easier for our customers to get in touch with us. With more people than ever accessing online services, the Council has committed to investing in ways to improve the services our customers receive, whether that's an application for a parking permit or support with their business, we want to make the process better.

In our strategy we recognise that not everyone will want to use online or telephone services and we have a team of staff to help people when they need it. One size definitely doesn't fit all but no matter how our customers get in touch with us, or which service they use, they should expect the same standards every time.

We are very excited at what the future holds. 2019 marks the start of our history as a West Suffolk Council. With this comes an opportunity to set out our plan for the next few years and our ambition to keep improving the customer experience and using new technology to make things easier and better for all. Crucial to this is to understand more about customer demand and expectation as well as appreciating how technology can be used to integrate services within the council and with our partners.

## 2 | The strategy and how it supports the Council's ambitions

This strategy outlines how we will provide access to our services. This strategy supports the delivery of the Council's Strategic Framework and in particular, the 'ways of working' that, when taken together, represent a set of distinctive features of our organisation. These ways of working govern the way in which we carry out our business and choose to progress which opportunities are important to pursue.

### **"The West Suffolk Way"**

Empowering families and communities to create positive and healthy futures. Working in a way which helps to create safe places, recognises individuals and their needs and strengths, understands relationships and connects people. Finding out what communities care about and supporting them to achieve their goals.

### **Place focus and subsidiarity**

Distinctively local, not generic solutions that are shaped and delivered locally and reflect the different challenges and opportunities of West Suffolk's towns, villages and countryside areas.

### **Collaboration and integration**

Ambitious and comprehensive cross-system partnerships that join up resources around communities and individuals.

### **Inclusive growth**

Encouraging and investing in ambitious growth and good quality housing that all can access and benefit from, and that is good for local people and the environment.

## Financial self-sufficiency

A shift from reliance on grants to self-generated income, returns on investment, and business rates growth.

## Behaving more commercially

Taking a business approach to our operations, within our public service remit.

## Digitally enabled

Maximising the potential of data and technology to transform decisions and transactions

This strategy is also linked to the themes contained within the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy:

**1** | Aligning resources to the West Suffolk strategic plan and essential services;

**2** | Continuation of the shared service agenda and transformation of service delivery;

**3** | Behaving more commercially;

**4** | Considering new funding models (eg acting as an investor);

**5** | Encouraging the use of digital forms for customer access; and

**6** | Taking advantage of new forms of local government finance (eg business rate retention).

All the while supporting our ambition under the 'Improving how we work' principle within the Strategic Framework:

## Improving how we work

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

How we work with our colleagues to support our customers is integral to the way we have designed the council's structure and the delivery of our Target Operating Model.

## 3 | Target operating model

In 2014, the adoption of the Councils' Target Operating Model (TOM) for Customer Services (see Diagram 1 overleaf), marked a fundamental change to the delivery of the Customer Services function across both Councils. It was designed to ensure that we simplify our processes and ensure that customers could find the information they needed quickly and easily. The TOM's simplicity of approach has stood the test of time; technology and customer expectations have changed but the TOM has kept pace and continues to be the model of choice for the next three years.

### **Providing information**

We will ensure that information is provided online and that the customer knows where and how they can access this information at a time which suits them. We will continue with our ongoing improvement work to ensure that our systems and processes are as simple and easy to understand as possible.

### **Self-serve**

We will provide self-serve options for customers where possible, to make it even easier for customers to report or resolve their issue or pay for a service online.

### **Triage (understand, resolve or refer)**

For those customers who are unable to self-serve, or who would prefer to speak to someone about their issue, we have in place knowledgeable customer service staff who have the skills to answer all but the most complex enquiries. This is commonly referred to as 'triage' as staff will be trained to understand the best and quickest route to ensure that customers' queries are dealt with effectively. On many occasions

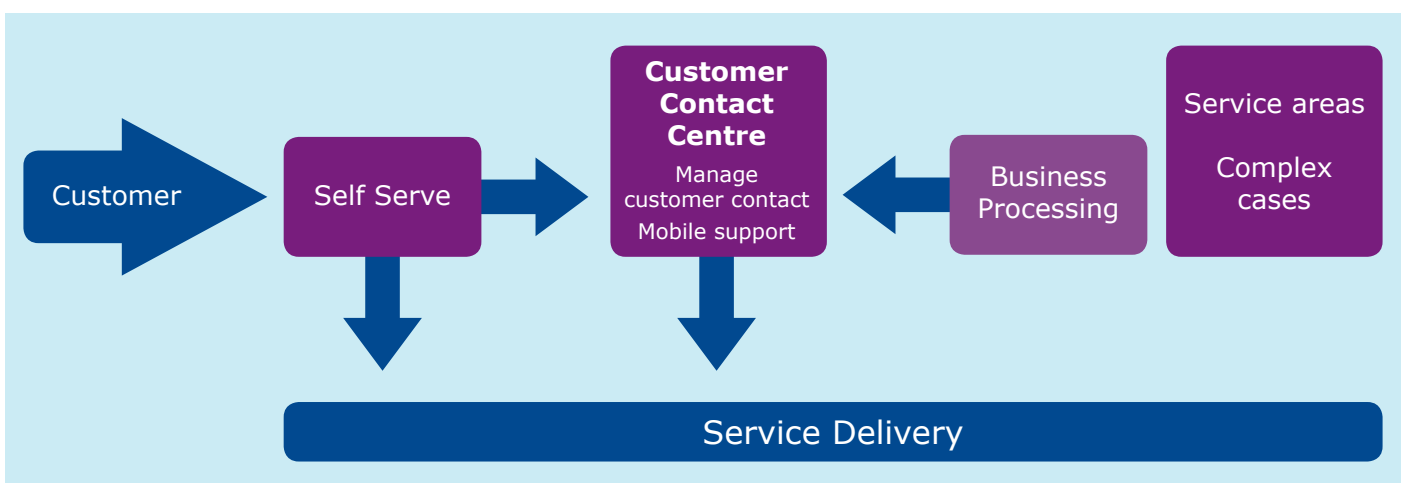
customers may make contact with a council with more than one enquiry, in these circumstances the customer service staff should be able to answer as many of these as possible at the first point of contact. Complex and/or crisis management issues are passed quickly to staff with the relevant expertise

### Service processing

The customer service team includes staff who are trained to give advice on technical enquiries and/or process applications or paperwork for that service area e.g. building control or licensing.

**Crisis or complex case management**  
If the customer enquiry is too complex for the customer services team to answer, then the enquiry would be quickly passed onto the service area to manage. This includes crisis management which requires expert support, for example, where someone requires help because they have become homeless. The expert staff also provide the specialist support to customer service and administration staff.

**Diagram 1:** Our customer access target operating model



## 4| Changes in customer contact with the Customer Service team since 2012

With the aim of achieving a 20% channel shift from direct contact to online channels and self-serve methods (amounting to around 85,000 contacts), the data captured in November 2012 has been used to provide the baseline in Table 1 below. The figures below only relate to the transactions managed by the Customer Service, for example, they exclude direct dial phone calls. The online forms do not include a number of transactions which move online through the use of 'external' council system, particularly, Planning Portal, Home-Link and electoral registration.

**Table 1:** Customer Service channel shift statistics

Year	CS Telephones	CS Face to Face	CS Online Forms	Email to CS	Totals
2013/14	225,694	143,578	-	-	369,272
2014/15	145,311	132,363	-	8,675	286,349
2015/16	154,915	69,170	36,844	15,930	276,859
2016/17	186,884	58,028	39,230	27,892	312,034
2017/18	164,284	42,684	38,138	30,753	275,859

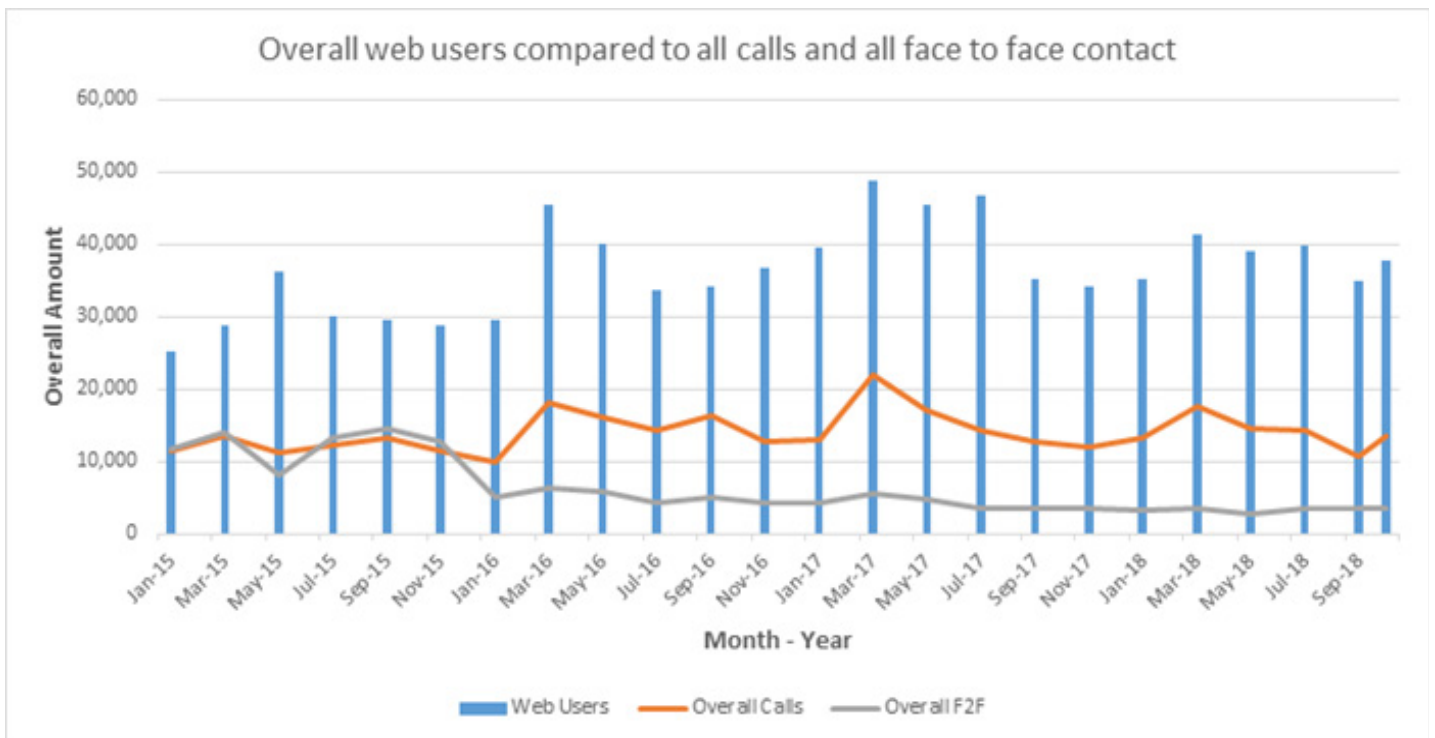
Channel shift is the term to describe customers moving from one method of contact, largely traditional such as face-to-face, to another digital method and preferring to use it, not reverting back to previously used methods.

The figures in Table 1 show a considerable shift in customer contact methods, with online and self-serve methods representing 21.5% of the total customer contacts for 16/17, increasing to 25% in 17/18.

Between 2013/14 and 2017/18 phone calls have reduced by 27.2% (61,410 calls) and face to face volumes have reduced by 70% (100,894 visits) as on-line options increase.

There is further evidence of channel shift in the most recent website analysis, providing information about the number of online users in comparison to telephone and face to face contact with the Council. The analysis highlights that since January 2015 there are an increasing number of web users compared with an overall decreasing number of face-to-face contacts.

**Graph 1:** 2017/18 website analysis – online vs phone and face-to-face contacts





## 5 | Context

The Council is ambitious and supports and delivers innovative projects. The realisation of these ambitions allows West Suffolk not only to support the future financial position of the council, but also to ensure that a consistent and excellent service is provided to anyone living, working or visiting the area, with importance placed on the ability of the Council to maintain high levels of customer service across the board

Some of the ambition presents opportunities specific to the customer service team and, in turn, for the customers we serve.

### **Digital by Design**

We know that how we communicate with each other is changing and we need to develop services for our customers who choose online methods to do business.

We aim to make online services an excellent customer experience so that our customers choose it as their first option, where possible.

We will continue to develop our online services so that they are intuitive, easy to use and follow industry guidelines of using image icons to guide users, so that the website remains as accessible as possible.

We know that some customers appreciate being able to talk to a person, either on the phone or face to face, if things are a bit complicated or they are in crisis. We will continue to have support in our office buildings.

With user expectations and requirements changing, it is inevitable that digital literacy will feature in the design of our online service offer in future. In light of

this the council has published its Digital Services Programme which made digital inclusion a priority. It means we will design our online platform to be accessible to as many people as possible, for example making use of audio functions on our website, or providing options to change font colour and size. We will use the potential of technology to make our services more inclusive than ever before.

The Council has benefitted from working with others to deliver services and to share costs. Increasingly, the public and voluntary sector in Suffolk is looking for new opportunities to work together to support its customers whilst maintaining service levels and progressing a range of innovative projects. We will continue to work with partners to improve services, whilst recognising that some people will need support and advice from multiple partners to resolve their particular issue or set of circumstances.

### **Demand management**

We will develop new and assess existing processes that are in place to monitor and track the success of our customer access plan, recognising and adapting to the peaks and troughs in demand we identify through regular monitoring. As part of our commitment to the effective use of data, we will only share information about our systems where it is relevant and appropriate in order to improve services, all the while protecting privacy and adhering to the GDPR principle of 'Privacy by design and default' in everything that we do.

### **Routes to access services**

We will, as part of our action plan to deliver against this strategy, consider all of our contact points with regards to how to improve their use and enhance the customer's experience of contacting us.

Our aim is to share resources and facilities with partners to provide the most effective, and seamless, services as possible.

### **The Mildenhall Hub and Western Way Development**

The Mildenhall Hub and Western Way Development Programme are, at their heart, building projects but they also present an opportunity for the Council to work with partners to design shared public spaces and offices, the aim being to improve the experience of our shared customers, and make accessing service much easier than before.

Both of these building projects have been designed with the user in mind. For visiting customers it will mean access to linked or partner services, such as the NHS or Citizens Advice Bureau. For anyone using the building, it will mean that the experience of visiting the council is improved because the environment is modern and comfortable, designed to be for the customers use as well as the staff. There will be access to digital services, such as public access computers and, importantly, customers will be encouraged to visit if and when they need to.

### **User Experience/ Customer Experience**

User Experience (UX) and Customer Experience (CX) has been used in the private sector for some time now, but is emerging as a hugely insightful tool for the public sector to use.

UX and CX is where studies are carried out by experts in these two fields, and the results of these studies are used to make improvements to things like the reception processes or the website, with the aim of making things easier and better for the customer or user.

## 6 | Customer service values

These values support the Council's approach to customer access and transformation in the wider sense, as well as the Workforce Strategy and overall approach to Organisational Development. The following values are the key elements that define the Customer Access Strategy and drive continuous improvement as part of our regular day to day work. They are considered in the way we manage our Customer Service team, and underpin our Customer Service Standards.

### **Transformation**

At the heart of our plan to help our customers is the development and growth of online services as we continue to see a natural fall in the numbers of face to face and telephone enquiries

### **Understanding**

We will ask our customers what they think of the help they receive and how they would improve the service they experienced. We will use this to change things that aren't working properly and to make improvements.

### **Enhancement**

We have already made progress with putting information online for our customers to access, alongside a number of forms to report, apply and pay for services. Our future includes expanding the online services we offer and improve the self-service element of our current systems so that customers will be able to access information about the services they have requested and paid for from the council.

### **Awareness**

Progression of our channel shift work programme and using opportunities to increase awareness of the digital resources available for customers to use.

### **Inclusion**

We will make sure that no customer feels disadvantaged by changes to the way we have asked them to access information about the services we provide. Customers will be able to easily access information and have their specific needs considered.

## 7 | Key priorities

Taking into account the council's strategic framework and ambition, we have identified six customer service priorities to be delivered. These are:

**1** We will continue to make sure that all of our services are regularly reviewed with a focus on our delivery methods and access to services

**2** Use the Target Operation Model as the method by which we will make decisions about online service provision and customer communication methods

**3** Strive to maintain excellent levels of customer satisfaction through improvements to the way we ask customers to do business with us

**4** Support all council services to encourage channel shift, making efficiencies wherever possible through process and system review

**5** Invite feedback about how we're doing and what we could do better

**6** Continue to work with partners and seek feedback about the way we manage our shared customers.

Details of actions which set out how we will deliver these priorities are included in the Action Plan in Appendix A.

## 8 | Action plan

The action plan in Appendix A sets out how we will deliver the customer service priorities set out in this strategy. It will be monitored by staff and by Portfolio Holders. In addition, the council also monitors customer feedback and performance data on regular intervals to assess the quality of service provided with relevant performance indicators monitored quarterly at Performance and Audit Committee.

## Action plan - Appendix A

Action	Action owner	Primary benefit	Resourcing	Timescale	Key priority
<b>1. Review future customer contacts suitable for migrating to an online contact channel</b>	Customer Service Team	Increasing the number of services providing online access channels for customer use will mean more customers than ever will benefit from being able to resolve their enquiry at first point of contact at a time and place convenient to them	Within existing Customer Service Team resources	Ongoing throughout CAS period	1, 2, 4, 6
<b>2. Increase availability and functionality of online forms as part of the ongoing programme of review</b>	Customer Service Team	Increasing the availability, functionality and overall usability of online forms will mean more customers than ever will benefit from being able to resolve their enquiry at first point of contact at a time and place convenient to them	Within existing Customer Service Team resources (dependent on agreement to proposed restructure)	Ongoing throughout CAS period	1, 3, 4
<b>3. Maximise self-serve options for customers</b>	Customer Service Team	Ensuring the accessibility of online content and transactional effectiveness of self-serve portals will provide customers with further opportunity for the customer to resolve their enquiry at the point of first contact, at a time and place convenient to them	Customer Service Team and ICT	Ongoing throughout CAS period	1, 2, 3, 4

Action	Action owner	Primary benefit	Resourcing	Timescale	Key priority
<b>4. Continue the promotion of online services</b>	Customer Service Team	Making sure customers are aware of the alternative options to conduct council business online will mean that more are encouraged to use digital methods to resolve their enquiry.	Within existing resources with support from Communications Team	Ongoing throughout CAS period	1, 3, 5
<b>5. Exploration of a suitable customer access platform, specifically in relation to defining the user requirements of such a system. Anticipated that that work will provide the basis for a decision about resource requirements ahead of any further decision required in relation to starting any procurement process</b>	Customer Service Team	Integrations with back office systems, seamless automations, increased efficiency of process	Customer Service Team, Programme Office and ICT	2020/21	1, 2, 3, 4
<b>6. Sharing of information across the council</b>	Customer Service Team	Sharing information about service provision and customer insight data provides opportunities to not only provide a better service to the customer but also assists with the identification of any system-wide improvements required.	Customer Service Team with support from the Policy Team	2019/20	1, 2, 3, 4

Action	Action owner	Primary benefit	Resourcing	Timescale	Key priority
<b>7. Continuation of process improvement reviews</b>	Customer Service Team	Ensures that any changes to the service provision since the last review or service take-on are identified and processes redefined to accommodate them, thereby improving the service to the customer	Within existing Customer Service Team resources	Ongoing throughout CAS period	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
<b>8. Continue to work with service areas to increase opportunities to improve customer experience</b>	Customer Service Team	Any customer feedback received will be used to make any identified changes to processes between the front and back office, and processes are changes to reflect these	Within existing Customer Service Team resources	Ongoing throughout CAS period	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
<b>9. Introduce online customer survey forms for all service areas</b>	Customer Service Team	Any customer feedback received will be used to make any identified changes to processes between the front and back office, and processes are changes to reflect these. Customer feedback will also be used to identify any customer service team training gaps or knowledge gaps, which will be factored into the ongoing staff training programme.	Customer Service Team, Strategic Comms Team ICT and Policy Team	2020/21	1, 3, 4



Action	Action owner	Primary benefit	Resourcing	Timescale	Key priority
<b>10. Continue to provide support and training for customer service staff</b>	Customer Service Team	A programme of ongoing training for the team will ensure that the standards of service expected and required will be maintained.	Within existing Customer Service Team Resources	Ongoing throughout CAS period	3, 5
<b>11. Creation of digital champions within the customer service team</b>	Customer Service Team	Use of existing resources to support customers who require extra help with accessing digital only services or information.	Within existing Customer Service Team resources	2019/20	3
<b>12. Review process for tracking customer journey from first point of contact to resolution</b>	Customer Service Team	This will allow us to better understand if customers are retrieving the information they need to resolve their enquiry at the first point of contact. It will also provide the information about how to improve the content and effectiveness of any front end systems of integrations required for the service being accessed.	Within existing Customer Service Team resources	2019/20	1, 2, 4

Action	Action owner	Primary benefit	Resourcing	Timescale	Key priority
<b>13. Develop plans and identify ways to better identify, record and monitor customer insight data, and use this insight to enhance and improve access channels</b>	Customer Service Team	This will allow us to better understand if customers are retrieving the information they need to resolve their enquiry at the first point of contact. It will also provide the information about how to improve the content and effectiveness of any front end systems of integrations required for the service being accessed.	Within existing Customer Service Team resources	Ongoing throughout CAS period	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
<b>14. Prepare for the introduction of new ways of working at Mildenhall Hall and Western Way</b>	Customer Service Team	Setting up a multi-disciplinary project team means that there is time to prepare for any changes required from the move to a new shared reception. It will require the support from partner organisations as well, so will assist in the early building of working relationship in order to understand each other's working practices and requirements.	Customer Service Team, programme office, ICT	2019/20	1, 4, 6

Action	Action owner	Primary benefit	Resourcing	Timescale	Key priority
<b>15. Continue to develop pathways and processes to maximise the integration and automation opportunities from the point of initial customer contact to the point of service delivery.</b>	Leadership Team and Customer Service Team	Transparent and real-time management of customer demands across the organisation, with the aim of reducing the number of steps in the process and quicker resolution(s) for the customer.	Within existing resources of the Customer Service Team, ICT Team and programme office	Ongoing throughout CAS period	1, 2, 3, 4
<b>16. Continue our involvement in county-wide initiatives and discussions about integrated customer access across partner organisations.</b>	Leadership Team and Customer Service Team	Maximises opportunities to improve and enhance the customer journey across different public sector organisations that the customer has reason to access, with the aim of only requiring the customer to tell their story once.	Within existing resources of the Customer Service Team	Ongoing throughout CAS period	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
<b>17. Continue to capture, monitor and report the information provided through the council's existing feedback mechanisms e.g. compliments, complaints and surveys</b>	Customer Service Team	Information provided by service users considered as part of the ongoing process review and improvement programme gives context to the changes being made to systems and online content, as well as creating a better overall experience for the customer.	Within existing resources of the Customer Service Team	Ongoing throughout CAS period	1, 3, 5

This page is intentionally left blank

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath  
District Council

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Car Parking Update</b>	
<b>Report No:</b>	<b>OAS/SE/19/003</b>	
<b>Report to and date/s:</b>	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	10 January 2019
<b>Portfolio holder:</b>	Councillor David Bowman Portfolio Holder for Operations <b>Tel:</b> 07711 593737 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:david.bowman@forest-heath.gov.uk">david.bowman@forest-heath.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Lead officers:</b>	Cameron Findlay Parking Services Manager <b>Tel:</b> 01284 757413 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:Cameron.findlay@westsuffolk.gov.uk">Cameron.findlay@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>  Mark Walsh Assistant Director (Operations) <b>Tel:</b> 01284 757300 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:mark.walsh@westsuffolk.gov.uk">mark.walsh@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To update Members on the current status of the council's off street parking and associated work priorities	
<b>Recommendation:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee:  <b>Members are asked to <u>note</u> the report.</b>	
<b>Key Decision:</b>  <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that <b>do not</b> 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"/>	
<b>Consultation:</b>	Engagement with customers and external partners have taken place across the past year that has informed this report	

<b>Alternative option(s):</b>		N/A	
<b>Implications:</b>			
Are there any <b>financial</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any <b>staffing</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any <b>ICT</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any <b>legal and/or policy</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any <b>equality</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Risk/opportunity assessment:</b>		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
<b>Risk area</b>	<b>Inherent level of risk</b> (before controls)	<b>Controls</b>	<b>Residual risk</b> (after controls)
Car parking tariffs are set incorrectly resulting in sub-optimal performance	Medium	Regular consultation should be carried out to provide clear rationale for proposed changes	Low
Town centres adversely affected by tariff changes	Low	Feedback from customers/ Stakeholders and benchmarking information	Low
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>		All	
<b>Background papers:</b> <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		None	
<b>Documents attached:</b>		None	

## 1. Key issues

1.1 This report provides an update of the car parking service from January to November 2018, identifying use by customers and projects undertaken across the year.

### Usage

1.2 A total of 671,513 car parking events were recorded during this period across all car parks in Newmarket. This figure shows a rise of 1% against the same period in 2017 and represents approximately an additional 6,000 visitors.

1.3 Some car parks have performed better than others in the overall mix of increases and decreases: Rous Road short stay has continued to attract more visitors with a strong increase of 6.7% against the same period last year, again most likely to be the continuing attraction of the adjoining Home Of Horse Racing.

1.4 Other notable increases were seen at St Marys (+5.5%) and Market Square (+7.8%). Market Square usage has benefitted from the relocation of the market from September on Tuesdays and Saturdays which has seen this popular town centre car park available to the customer throughout the week.

1.5 Grosvenor Yard has seen a decrease of 12%. This car park has seen a lot of continuous disruption from construction which has likely proved a deterrent to customers. Planned maintenance at the site has been deferred due to the ongoing building works and planned works by Anglian Water. The car park has also been used to accommodate market trader vehicles since the recent relocation of the market to the High Street.

1.6 Weekly tickets offering discounts in four long stay car parks have continued to attract customers over the period. Grosvenor Yard has seen purchases decrease significantly due to reasons given above whilst the offer has grown at All Saints.

Car Park	2017	2018	%
All Saints	280	386	+38
Grosvenor Yard	1393	602	-57
Guineas	2611	2604	-0.2
St Marys	168	144	-14

### 1.7 Car Park Table

Car Park	2017	2018	%
All Saints	62646	60449	-3.5
Grosvenor Yard	46983	41313	-12
Market Place	73170	78893	+7.8
Guineas MSCP	281121	275801	-1.9
St Marys	20479	21621	+5.5
Rous Road	181269	193436	+6.7

- 1.8 Despite more car parking transactions, income fell by £26,311 (-4.7%) to £529,568 between 1 January 2018 to 30 November 2018 compared to the year previous. This is a trend apparent across all car parks in West Suffolk and nationally, with users choosing to pay a lower shorter stay tariff.

**Issue of Fines**

- 1.9 A total of 1,490 parking fines were issued in the car parks during this period in 2018 which represents a 4.5% reduction against the same period in 2017. The car parking service continues to develop an ambassadorial, customer focused approach to service delivery and these figures indicate that customers are aware of the regulations in car parks and overwhelmingly comply. Members may wish to note that issued fines issued represent only 0.2% of all parking transactions.

**Pocket Car Parks**

- 1.10 The District Council owns six pocket car parks in Newmarket providing 68 spaces which are available for lease to local residents. The number of leased spaces has increased by two spaces compared to last year and are set out below:

<b>Pocket Car Park</b>	<b>Let Spaces</b>
All Saints	16/16 spaces Full
Queen Street	13/13 Full
Queen Street (garage area)	3/3 Full
Granby Street (small)	5/8 spaces let
Granby Street (Friendship House)	14/16 spaces let (1 withdrawn for rubble storage)
Rous Road	7/7 Full

**RingGo and cashless payment**

- 1.11 RingGo cashless payments are available in all car parks as an alternative to using coins in the pay machines. The adoption of this alternative payment method has seen continuous growth since first being introduced in 2016. In the period covered by this report, RingGo payments have increased by 41% to £39,000 compared to the previous period. In July 2018, credit/debit card payments became possible through enabled pay machines for the first time and although comparison periods are not possible, it should be noted that close to 11,000 credit card payments have been accepted since July.

**Park Mark**

- 1.12 As in previous years, the Council’s pay and display car parks have been independently inspected by the police and parking specialists. The inspection considers the level of safety, cleanliness, quality of signage, frequency of patrols by uniformed attendants, and maintenance within our car parks. The council’s car parks have again been recognised for their high quality of management with a Park Mark award. Due to the reported issues at Grosvenor Yard, the award has been suspended until improvements are made.



## **Disabled Parking Accreditation**

- 1.13 This accreditation is a new initiative by the charity Disabled Motoring UK (DMUK) and is managed by the British Parking Association (BPA). Car parks that achieve the DPA demonstrate to their customers that they are committed to creating high quality parking facilities for disabled people. All Newmarket car parks (with the exception of Grosvenor Yard) were assessed in 2017 and do not need to be re-assessed until late 2019.

## **Civil Parking Enforcement**

- 1.14 In February 2017 Cabinet agreed a business model for the potential transition of on-street parking enforcement in Suffolk from the Police to Local Authorities. Such a change is known as Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE). An outline application has been submitted by Suffolk County Council to the Department of Transport with a view to implementing the new enforcement regime from April 2019. We await confirmation from the Department of Transport (DfT) that the processing and legislative timeline is acceptable given the commitment of resources to Brexit. Despite the most recent re-application being made in September 2017 there is still no definitive go-live date indicated by the DfT.

## **2.0 Conclusion, future work streams and recommendation**

- 2.1 The reported period of 2018 has shown a modest increase in transactions which set against last year's rise and in the context of the national trend is very positive. The recovery of Market Square car park has made an additional two days each week of valuable town centre car parking available and has been widely taken-up and contributed to the reported additional parking activity over the period.
- 2.2 Priority work streams for the next 12 months include:
- a) Urgent improvements to Grosvenor Yard (in conjunction with impending planned works by Anglian Water and in liaison with Suffolk County Council who are responsible for the highway dividing the site);
  - b) As a pilot we are supporting Suffolk County Council on the development of a Newmarket Parking Plan that will consider on street parking across the town with a view to identifying further capacity and reviewing parking restrictions. This will be completed in time for strategic review of Off Street parking across the district due to commence in June 2019; and
  - c) New Electric Charging Points under consideration at All Saints car park

## **3. Recommendation**

- 3.1 Members are asked to note the report.

This page is intentionally left blank

# Overview and Scrutiny of Committee



Forest Heath  
District Council

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Work Programme Update</b>	
<b>Report No:</b>	<b>OAS/FH/19/004</b>	
<b>Report to and date:</b>	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	10 January 2019
<b>Chairman of the Committee:</b>	Councillor Simon Cole Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee <b>Tel:</b> 07974 443762 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:simon.cole@forest-heath.gov.uk">simon.cole@forest-heath.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Lead officer:</b>	Christine Brain Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) <b>Tel:</b> 01638 719729 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:Christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk">Christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To update the Committee on the current status of its rolling work programme of annual items for scrutiny during 2019 ( <b>Appendix 1</b> ).	
<b>Recommendation:</b>	<p><b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee:</b></p> <p><b>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1) Members review the current status of its Rolling Work Programme up to March 2019.</b></li> <li><b>2) <u>Identify questions</u> for the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance to cover in his annual report to the Committee in March 2019.</b></li> </ol>	
<b>Key Decision:</b> (Check the appropriate box and delete all those that <b><u>do not</u></b> 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>	
<b>Documents attached:</b>	<b>Appendix 1</b> – 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 **14 March 2019**, the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance 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 Resources and Performance** 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
<b>14 March 2019</b>		
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.
National Horseracing Museum – Project Close Out	Director	To see if there is any learning which can be applied to future council projects
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