

Cabinet



Title:	Agenda																						
Date:	Tuesday 14 January 2020																						
Time:	6.00 pm																						
Venue:	Conference Chamber West (F1R09) West Suffolk House Western Way Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU																						
Membership:	<p style="text-align: center;">Leader John Griffiths</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Deputy Leader Sara Mildmay-White</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><u>Councillor</u></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><u>Portfolio</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Sarah Broughton</td> <td>Resources and Performance</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Carol Bull</td> <td>Governance</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Andy Drummond</td> <td>Regulatory</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Robert Everitt</td> <td>Families and Communities</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Susan Glossop</td> <td>Growth</td> </tr> <tr> <td>John Griffiths</td> <td>Leader</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sara Mildmay-White</td> <td>Housing</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Joanna Rayner</td> <td>Leisure, Culture and Community Hubs</td> </tr> <tr> <td>David Roach</td> <td>Local Plan Development and Delivery</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Peter Stevens</td> <td>Operations</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Portfolio</u>	Sarah Broughton	Resources and Performance	Carol Bull	Governance	Andy Drummond	Regulatory	Robert Everitt	Families and Communities	Susan Glossop	Growth	John Griffiths	Leader	Sara Mildmay-White	Housing	Joanna Rayner	Leisure, Culture and Community Hubs	David Roach	Local Plan Development and Delivery	Peter Stevens	Operations
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Interests – Declaration and Restriction on Participation:	Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest not entered in the Authority's register or local non pecuniary interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda (subject to the exception for sensitive information) and to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on an item in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest.																						
Quorum:	Three Members																						
Committee administrator:	Claire Skoyles Democratic Services Officer Tel: 01284 757176 Email: claire.skoyles@westsuffolk.gov.uk																						

Public Information



Venue:	West Suffolk House Western Way Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP33 3YU	T: 01284 757176 E: democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk W: www.westsuffolk.gov.uk
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Public participation:	Members of the public who live or work in the District are welcome to speak and may ask one question or make a 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. 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 Chair's discretion.	
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Agenda

Procedural Matters

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Minutes

1 - 10

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2019 (copy attached).

Part 1 - Public

3. Open Forum

At each Cabinet meeting, up to 15 minutes shall be allocated for questions from and discussion with, non-Cabinet members. Members wishing to speak during this session should if possible, give notice in advance. Who speaks and for how long will be at the complete discretion of the person presiding.

4. Public Participation

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.

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.

5. Report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 28 November 2019

11 - 14

Report No: **CAB/WS/20/001**

Chairman of the Committee: Cllr Ian Houlder

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Sarah Broughton

Lead Officer: Christine Brain

6. Report of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee: 17 September and 17 December 2019

15 - 30

Report No: **CAB/WS/20/002**

Chair of the Joint Committee: Cllr Sarah Broughton

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Sarah Broughton Lead Officer: Rachael Mann

	<i>Page No</i>
<p>7. Recommendations of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee: 17 December 2019 - Review of the Anglia Revenues Partnership Constitution</p> <p>Report No: CAB/WS/20/003 Portfolio Holder: Cllr Sarah Broughton Lead Officer: Rachael Mann</p>	31 - 90
<p>8. Recommendation of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 28 November 2019 - Delivering a Sustainable Medium Term Budget 2020/2021</p> <p>Report No: CAB/WS/20/004 Portfolio Holder: Cllr Sarah Broughton Lead Officer: Rachael Mann</p>	91 - 98
<p>9. Recommendation of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 28 November 2019 - Treasury Management Report September 2019</p> <p>Report No: CAB/WS/20/005 Portfolio Holder: Cllr Sarah Broughton Lead Officer: Rachael Mann</p>	99 - 102
<p>10. Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document - Adoption</p> <p>Report No: CAB/WS/20/006 Portfolio Holder: Cllr Sara Mildmay-White Lead Officer: Julie Baird</p>	103 - 184
<p>11. Recommendations of the Grant Working Party: November 2019 - Community Chest 2020/21</p> <p>Report No: CAB/WS/20/007 Portfolio Holder: Cllr Robert Everitt Lead Officer: Davina Howes</p>	185 - 202
<p>12. West Suffolk Rural Taskforce - Final Recommendations</p> <p>Report No: CAB/WS/20/008 Portfolio Holder: Cllr John Griffiths Lead Officer: David Collinson</p>	203 - 230
<p>13. Update on the Work of the West Suffolk Environmental and Climate Change Taskforce</p> <p>Report No: CAB/WS/20/009 Portfolio Holder: Cllr John Griffiths Lead Officer: Jill Korwin</p>	231 - 268
<p>14. Draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2020-2024</p> <p>Report No: CAB/WS/20/010 Portfolio Holder: Cllr John Griffiths Lead Officer: Ian Gallin</p>	269 - 300

(Note: This item was deferred by Cabinet on 26 November 2019.)

15. Decisions Plan: 1 January 2020 to 31 May 2020 301 - 318

To consider the most recently published version of the Cabinet's Decisions Plan

Report No: **CAB/WS/20/011**

Portfolio Holder: Cllr John Griffiths

Lead Officer: Ian Gallin

16. Revenues Collection Performance and Write-Offs 319 - 322

Report No: **CAB/WS/20/012**

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Sarah Broughton

Lead Officer: Rachael Mann

17. Western Way Development, Bury St Edmunds 323 - 334

Report No: **CAB/WS/20/013**

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Joanna Rayner

Lead Officer: Alex Wilson

Part 2 - Exempt

18. Exclusion of Press and Public

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

19. Exempt Appendix: Western Way Development, Bury St Edmunds (para 3) 335 - 364

Exempt Appendix 2 to Report No:

CAB/WS/20/013

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Joanna Rayner

Lead Officer: Alex Wilson

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

20. Exempt Appendices: Revenues Collection Performance and Write-Offs (paras 1 and 2) 365 - 370

Exempt Appendices 1 and 2 to Report No:

CAB/WS/20/012

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Sarah Broughton

Lead Officer: Rachael Mann

(These exempt appendices are to be considered in private under paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as they contain information relating to an individual and information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.)

(No representations have been received from members of the public regarding this item being held in private.)

Cabinet

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cabinet** held on
Tuesday 26 November 2019 at 6.15 pm in the **Council Chamber,**
District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall, IP28 7EY

Present: **Councillors**

Chair John Griffiths (Leader of the Council)

Vice Chair Sara Mildmay-White (Deputy Leader of the Council)

Sarah Broughton

Carol Bull

Andy Drummond

Robert Everitt

Susan Glossop

Joanna Rayner

David Roach

Peter Stevens

By invitation

David Nettleton (Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

Jim Thorndyke (Chair of the Grants to External Organisations
Review Group)

In attendance:

Mike Chester

Brian Harvey

Andy Neal

Marion Rushbrook

Ian Shipp

59. **Apologies for Absence**

No apologies for absence were received.

60. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 10 September 2019 and 8 October 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

61. **Open Forum**

No non-Cabinet Members in attendance wished to speak under this item.

62. **Public Participation**

There were no members of the public in attendance on this occasion.

63. **Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 14 November 2019 (Report No: CAB/WS/19/039)**

The Cabinet received and noted this report, which informed Members of the following substantive items discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting held on 14 November 2019:

- (1) Draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2020-2024
- (2) Cross Authority Task and Finish Group – Citizens Advice
- (3) Suffolk County Council: Health Scrutiny Committee – 10 October 2019
- (4) Cabinet Decisions Plan (1 November 2019 to 31 May 2020)
- (5) Work Programme Update

Councillor David Nettleton, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that a separate report containing the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was contained elsewhere on the Cabinet agenda in respect of Item (1) above.

64. **Draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2020 - 2024 (Report No: CAB/WS/19/040)**

The Cabinet received this report which was recommending to Council, the approval and adoption of the draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework.

At their meeting on 14 November 2019, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had made a number of suggested amendments to the draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework and these were set out within paragraph 3.1 of Report No: CAB/WS/19/040.

However, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had not had the opportunity to fully consider all of the amendments proposed by Members. The Cabinet was of the opinion that these required further consideration before a decision was made on whether to refer the Strategic Framework to Council for adoption.

RESOLVED:

The Cabinet agreed to defer the consideration of the draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2020-2024 to 14 January 2020, to allow for further consideration of amendments proposed during the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 14 November 2019.

65. **Investing in Housing Development Sites and Approval of the Barley Homes Business Plan 2019 (Report No: CAB/WS/19/041)**

The Cabinet considered this report which set out:

- the current development proposals being put forward for Barley Homes;
- the longer-term approach to developing a 'pipeline' of developments for Barley Homes; and
- the seeking of Council's endorsement to the funding necessary to deliver these proposals.

In order to support the development of the Business Plan, the Cabinet noted that Officers had undertaken a wide range of work to evaluate potential development sites, considered the financial implications arising from the sites and considered the governance arrangements in place. This work had been set in the context of the Council's emerging Strategic Framework and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Whilst the proposed Business Plan focused on bringing forward two new sites (in addition to the two sites currently under development), work had been undertaken to assess other future development opportunities for Barley Homes, referred to as the 'pipeline'.

The details of the sites were included in the Business Plan (Exempt Appendix A to Report No: CAB/WS/19/041) and were forecasted to deliver an additional (over and above the existing two Haverhill sites) 118 homes, 30% of which would be affordable, and all built to the Government's minimum size standard. These were to be delivered across two sites, one in Mildenhall and the other near Bury St Edmunds. In recommending these sites, the Cabinet noted that this would contribute to the geographical reach of Barley Homes, adding to the committed two sites in Haverhill. Combined, these would generate a steady build out rate, delivering 181 homes over a five year period, starting in Autumn 2019.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: (17 December 2019)

That:-

1. Taking into account the financial and risk implications set out in Report No: CAB/WS/19/041 and Exempt Appendix A, the Barley Homes Business Plan 2019 be agreed.
2. In order to bring the Barley Homes Business Plan 2019 into effect:
 - (a) A revenue budget of £350,000 be established to fund the Council's share of costs to progress planning applications for the Mildenhall site and also the development of future pipeline sites;
 - (b) A capital budget of £5m be established, funded from the Investing in our Growth Agenda, to support the issuing of equity and loan financing (to increase the existing £7.5m facility) to facilitate the development of the two additional sites identified in the Business Plan;
 - (c) It is noted that in order to facilitate the developments within the Business Plan, the Council will be required to acquire sites from partners and subsequently dispose of these to Barley Homes.

66. **Recommendations of the Grants to External Organisations Review Group (Report No: CAB/WS/19/042)**

Councillor Jim Thorndyke, Chair of the Grants to External Organisations Review Group, was in attendance to present this report to Cabinet. It was explained that in June 2019, the Cabinet had agreed to establish a group (titled the West Suffolk Grants to External Organisations Review Group) to carry out a review of West Suffolk Council's Grants to External Organisations. The aim of the review was to ensure that locality budgets and grants made from 1 April 2020 and reliefs made from 1 April 2021 were aligned to the Council's strategic objectives and offered value for money.

The Review Group had agreed that a framework setting out West Suffolk's approach to grant funding and rate reliefs should be developed. The aim of the framework was to make clear what the Council sought to achieve by awarding grant funding and rate reliefs and to establish a set of principles that would guide the Council's approach to offering financial support. Therefore, this proposed framework was attached at Appendix A to Report No: CAB/WS/19/042.

The Review Group had also considered the effectiveness of grant schemes and had agreed changes to future criteria and applications to each of the funds within the scope of the review, as set out in paragraph 2.6 and in Appendices B and C to the report. The changes considered were informed by previous discussions held by the Review Group, feedback from the survey of applicants and recipients of grant funding and reliefs and feedback from the Councillor survey relating to Locality Budgets.

The Cabinet then considered each of the recommendations from the Review Group, as set out within Section 2 of the report.

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. A framework setting out West Suffolk's approach to grant funding and rate reliefs, attached as Appendix A to Report No: CAB/WS/19/042, be approved;
2. The changes to future criteria and applications to grant funding and rate reliefs, as set out at paragraphs 2.4 to 2.6 of Report No: CAB/WS/19/042 and at Appendices B and C, be approved; and
3. The changes made to the allocation of funding to each grant, as set out at paragraphs 2.7 to 2.8 of Report No: CAB/WS/19/042 be approved.

67. **Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) for 2020-2021 (Report No: CAB/WS/19/043)**

The Cabinet considered this report which explained that each year the Council was required to consider whether to review its Local Council Tax Reduction

Scheme (LCTRS). This report advised Cabinet on the conclusion of the 2019 annual review of, and the resultant proposed changes, which had been consulted on, to the LCTRS to take effect from 1 April 2020.

Section 3 of Report No: CAB/WS/19/043 was recommending that a tolerance rule of +/-£15 be introduced into the West Suffolk Council scheme. This would have the effect of freezing a customer's assessment when a revised Universal Credit Data Sharing hub (UCDS) notification would otherwise trigger a reassessment. Changes in a customer's financial position of more than +/-£15 would be processed as usual, whereas changes within the tolerance level would not be updated, no correspondence issued to the customer and without amendment to Council Tax repayments.

The Cabinet noted that where customer's circumstances noticeably changed, the tolerance rule would not apply, given the change would be greater than £15 per week. In these circumstances, the customer's Council Tax Support would be immediately adjusted to provide extra benefit.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: (17 December 2019)

The West Suffolk Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2020-2021, as attached at Appendix A to Report No: CAB/WS/19/043, be approved, taking into account the proposed changes outlined within the report and the consultation undertaken.

68. Council Tax Technical Changes - Including Empty Property Reliefs and Premiums Changes (Report No: CAB/WS/19/044)

The Cabinet considered this report which provided an overview of the current Council Tax technical changes for continuation from April 2020, alongside proposed changes to the long term empty property premium scheme from April 2020, in line with recent changes in legislation.

New legislation had come into effect from 1 April 2019 that provided local authorities with the ability to implement a scheme that enabled a 200% Council Tax charge on properties that had been empty for longer than two years. The charge rose to 400% Council Tax on properties that had been empty longer than 10 years from 1 April 2021.

Paragraph 2.1 of Report No: CAB/WS/19/044 set out the current scheme proposals for the Council Tax Technical Changes for West Suffolk Council for continuation from April 2020. Paragraphs 2.2 to 2.4 set out the proposals for the Long Term Empty Property Premium and paragraph 3 set out the classes of properties/exemptions that would not attract the Premium.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: (17 December 2019)

That:-

- (a) The continuation of the West Suffolk Council Tax Technical Changes set out in Section 2 of Report No: CAB/WS/19/044, be approved;

- (b) A Council Tax premium of 200% for properties that have been long term empty and unfurnished for five years and over from 1 April 2020, be approved;
- (c) A Council Tax premium of 300% for properties that have been long term empty and unfurnished 10 years and over from 1 April 2021, be approved; and
- (d) Properties that fall into the classes, set out in Section 3 of Report No: CAB/WS/19/044, will not attract the Long Term Empty Premium for the period(s) detailed.

69. **Council Tax Base for Tax Setting Purposes 2020/2021 (Report No: CAB/WS/19/045)**

The Cabinet considered this report which explained that the Council Tax base was the total taxable value, at a point in time, of all the domestic properties in the Council's area. It was a yearly calculation and represented the estimated number of chargeable dwellings after allowing for exemptions and discounts, projected changes in the property base and after applying an estimated collection rate.

The Council Tax base was used in the calculation of Council Tax. Orders had been laid allowing West Suffolk to harmonise the Council Tax of Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury over a period not exceeding seven years. Because of this, it was necessary to calculate tax base figures for the areas formerly covered by Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council (the "predecessor areas").

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: (17 December 2019)

That:-

1. The tax base for 2020/2021, for the whole of West Suffolk is 56,138.14 equivalent Band D dwellings and for each of the predecessor areas is: Forest Heath 18,879.62 and St Edmundsbury 37,258.52, as detailed in paragraph 4.3 of Report No: CAB/WS/19/045; and
2. The tax base for 2020/2021 for the different parts of its area, as defined by parish or special expense area boundaries, are as shown in Appendix 2 to Report No: CAB/WS/19/045.

70. **West Suffolk Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-2024 (Report No: CAB/WS/19/046)**

The Cabinet considered this report which set out the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) context against which the 2020-2021 budget and medium term financial plans 2020-2024 were proposed to be developed between now and the formal Council Tax and budget adoption meeting of the Council in February 2020.

The MTFS 2020-2024 assessed and evaluated the final resources expected to have and the expenditure in order to deliver the Council's strategic priorities as set out in the Council's West Suffolk Strategic Framework (which would now be due for adoption in January/February 2020).

As part of good financial planning the West Suffolk Council in February 2020, would be asked to set a balanced budget for 2020-21 (its statutory obligation) alongside a medium term financial plan for the period 2021-2024.

Officers explained that this report had made reference to the West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2020-2024 (Report No: CAB/WS/19/040), which had been deferred earlier in the Cabinet meeting. However, the Cabinet noted that this deferral did not impinge on the approval of the West Suffolk Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-2024 document.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: (17 December 2019)

That the West Suffolk Medium Term Financial Strategy, contained at Appendix A to Report No: CAB/WS/19/046, as its strategic financial framework from 1 April 2020, be adopted.

71. Use of Chief Executive Urgency Powers: Polling Place Outside of Polling District

The Cabinet noted that under Part 3; Section 5 - Scheme of Delegation to Officers, paragraph 14 of the Council's Constitution stated that:

Where, in the opinion of the Chief Executive, by reason of limitation of time or urgency, a decision is required on any matter, after such consultation as they consider necessary (or as is required by the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules in Part of the Constitution), they shall have power to make a decision provided that any such decision shall be reported to the next meeting of the Cabinet, appropriate Committee or Council.....

On 31 October 2019, the Chief Executive exercised his urgency powers and made a decision to move Newmarket East 1 Polling District to poll at King Edward VII Memorial Hall (in Newmarket West 1 Polling District) for the Parliamentary General Election on Thursday 12 December 2019. The reason for this was because the ordinary polling place at The Palace House Mews was not available and no other suitable alternative venues were available within the Polling District.

Alternative options considered were Palace House Cottage and The Palace House Coach Room. However these had been discounted due to ongoing construction. All Saints Church had also been discounted as Officers had been unable to make contact with the booking agent and the building had not previously been used as a polling station. This would, therefore, require inspections prior to agreement being made for it to be used as a polling station. Unfortunately, insufficient time was available to progress this option.

S18B(4)(d) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 provided that the polling place for a polling district must be an area in the district, unless

special circumstances made it desirable to designate an area wholly or partly outside the district. The decision to move a polling place must be made by the Council unless specific delegations were in place. The term 'special circumstances' was not defined but there was evidence of other councils using this provision when planning for the snap General Election in 2017.

The Assistant Director (HR, Legal and Democratic Services), Service Manager (Shared Legal), the Deputy Returning Officer and the Monitoring Officer were consulted on this matter prior to the decision being made.

Therefore, the Cabinet **NOTED** the use of the Chief Executive's Urgency Powers in respect of making the decision outlined above.

72. **Decisions Plan: 1 November 2019 to 31 May 2020 (Report No: Cab/WS/19/047)**

The Cabinet considered this report which was the Cabinet Decisions Plan covering the period 1 November 2019 to 31 May 2020.

Members took the opportunity to review the intended forthcoming decisions of the Cabinet. However, no further information or amendments were requested on this occasion.

73. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED:

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

74. **Investing in Housing Development Sites and Approval of the Barley Homes Business Plan: Appendix A (para 3) (Report No: CAB/WS/19/041)**

The Cabinet considered Exempt Appendix A to this report. However, no reference was made to specific detail and, therefore, this item was not held in private session.

75. **Investing in our Commercial Asset Portfolio (para 3) (Report No: CAB/WS/19/048)**

In private session, the Cabinet were informed of the reasons as to why this item had now been **withdrawn** from the agenda.

The meeting concluded at 7.05 pm

Signed by:

Chair

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Report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 28 November 2019

Report No:	CAB/WS/20/001	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	14 January 2020
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Sarah Broughton Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance Tel: 01284 787327 Email: sarah.broughton@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Chair of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Ian Houlder Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee Tel: 07597 961069 Email: ian.houlder@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Christine Brain Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) Tel: 01638 719729 Email: Christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk	

Decisions Plan: This item is not required to be included on the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: All wards

Recommendation: **It is recommended that Report No: CAB/WS/20/001, being the report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, be noted.**

1. Background / Context

1.1 On 28 November 2019, the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee considered the following items:

1. Internal Audit Mid-Year Progress Report 2019-2020;
2. 2019-2020 Performance Report (Quarter 2);
3. Delivering a Sustainable Medium Term Budget 2020-2021;
4. Mid-Year Treasury Management Report and Investment Activity (April – September 2019);
5. Health and Safety Sub-Committee (Verbal Report); and
6. Work Programme 2020.

Separate reports are included on this Cabinet agenda for Items **3.** and **4.** above.

1.2. Internal Audit Mid-Year Progress Report 2019-2020 (Report No: PAS/WS/19/017)

1.2.1 The Committee received and **noted** the report, which advised members of the work of Internal Audit for the first half of 2019-2020 and gave members a flavour of the variety of activities which were supported through the work of the team. Attached at Appendix A to the report was the Mid-year Internal Audit Progress Report 2019-2020.

1.2.2 The report also provided an update on progress made against the 2019-2020 Internal Audit Plan, previously approved by the Committee.

1.3 2019-2020 Performance Report (Quarter 2) (Report No: PAS/WS/19/018)

1.3.1 The Committee received and **noted** the report, which set out the current performance for the second quarter and forecasted financial outturn position for 2019-2020.

1.3.2 The report showed the current performance indicators for the second quarter, as set out in the following appendices attached to the report:

- Appendix A: Performance Indicators - Commentary
- Appendix C: Performance Indicators – Families and Communities
- Appendix D: Performance Indicators – Housing
- Appendix E: Performance Indicators – Day to Day
- Appendix F: Income and Expenditure Report
- Appendix G: Capital Programme
- Appendix H: Earmarked Reserves

1.3.3 Members considered the report in detail and asked questions of the Assistant Directors/Service Managers, to which responses were provided.

In particular, discussions were held on:

- Appendix A: Debt over 90 days.
- Appendix A: Fly-tipping

Appendix C: F4 – Number of households prevented from being homeless

Appendix E: D30 - % of customers satisfied with the overall journey

Appendix F: Income and Expenditure – Supplies and Services Costs

1.4 **Health and Safety Sub-Committee (Verbal Report)**

1.4.1 The Committee was informed that the Health and Safety Sub-Committee had met on two occasions. At its first meeting the Sub-Committee received a detailed presentation on corporate health and safety responsibilities. At its second meeting, the Sub-Committee received an update on corporate health and safety across the authority, incident statistics and the Christmas Fayre 2019 Event Safety Plan. In future the Committee would receive an annual report in May from the Sub-Committee.

1.4.2 The Committee **noted** the contents of the update.

1.5 **Work Programme Update (Report No: PAS/WS/19/020)**

1.5.1 The Committee received Report No: PAS/WS/19/020, which provided information on the current status of its forward work programme for 2020.

1.5.2 The Committee **noted** the contents of its forward work programme for 2020.

3. **Alternative Options**

3.1 Please see background papers.

4. **Consultation and engagement**

4.1 Please see background papers.

5. **Risks**

5.1 Please see background papers.

6. **Implications arising from the proposal**

6.1 Financial - please see background papers.

6.2 Equalities - please see background papers.

7. **Appendices**

7.1 Please see background papers.

8. Background documents

- 8.1 Report No: [PAS/WS/19/017](#) and [Appendix A](#) to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: Internal Audit Mid-Year Progress Report 2019-2020
- 8.2 Report No: [PAS/WS/19/018](#), [Appendix A1](#), [Appendix A2](#), [Appendix C](#), [Appendix D](#), [Appendix E](#), [Appendix F](#), [Appendix G](#) and [Appendix H](#) to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 2019-2020 Performance Report (Quarter 2)
- 8.3 Report No: [PAS/WS/19/020](#) and [Appendix 1](#) to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: Work Programme Update 2020

Report of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee: 17 September 2019 and 17 December 2019

Report No:	CAB/WS/20/002	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	14 January 2020
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Sarah Broughton Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance Tel: 07929 305787 Email: sarah.broughton@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Rachael Mann Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) Tel: 01638 719245 Email: rachael.mann@westsuffolk.gov.uk	

Decisions Plan: This item is not required to be included on the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: All wards

Recommendation: **The Cabinet is requested to note the content of Report No: CAB/WS/20/002, being the report of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee.**

1. Purpose of the report

Meeting: 17 September 2019

1.1 On 17 September 2019, the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership (ARP) Joint Committee was inquorate therefore, during an informal meeting, it discussed and noted a few items of business only. All other items of substantive business were deferred until its next meeting on 17 December 2019, as indicated below:

1. Governance and Reporting Arrangements relating to Internal Audit (*Item deferred to 17 December 2019*);
2. Joint Committee ARP Brochure (*Item deferred to 17 December 2019*);
3. Performance Report and Service Updates – July 2019:
 - a. Joint Committee Performance Report July 2019;
 - b. Service Updates;
4. ARP Financial Performance;
5. Welfare Reform Update;
6. Review of the Anglia Revenues Partnership Constitution (*Item deferred to 17 December 2019*);
and
7. Forthcoming Issues.

This report is for information only. No decisions are required by the Cabinet.

2. Key Issues

2.1 Joint Committee ARP Brochure (Agenda Item 6)

2.1.1 As a decision was required on this item, it was deferred to the next meeting held on 17 December 2019; however, a brief discussion was held.

2.1.2 The proposed brochure is designed to be an internal document, and not as a sales brochure. It is designed mainly to be viewed electronically and therefore few paper copies would be printed.

2.1.3 The main purpose of the document is to:

- provide new Members of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee with a copy as part of their induction;
- increase awareness to all Members of each partner authority in respect of how the Revenues and Benefits Service is delivered by ARP for their own authority;
- increase awareness to all staff who either worked as part of ARP or other services within each partner authority in respect of how the Revenues and Benefits Service is delivered by ARP;
- include it within material for ongoing recruitment to ARP; and
- increase external councils' awareness of the successful services available from ARP, such as the ARP Enforcement Agency.

2.2 **Performance Report and Service Updates: July 2019 (Agenda Item 7)**

2.2.1 a. Joint Committee Performance Report July 2019

The Joint Committee received and **noted** an update on performance. This report provides relevant information relating to the performance of ARP as a whole and that of the individual partners. This detailed report can be viewed on Breckland Council's website at the following link:

<https://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/documents/s53917/Performance%20Report%20July%202019%20V1.pdf>

The report indicated that when considering performance as a whole for all partner councils, all targets as at July 2019 were currently being met in respect of the following categories:

- Business rates collection
- Council tax collection
- Number of electronic forms received
- Fraud and compliance

2.2.2 In respect of West Suffolk Council's individual performance, all targets as at July 2019 were currently being met in respect of the following categories:

- Business rates collection
- Council tax collection
- Local council tax reduction
- Housing benefit
- Fraud and compliance

The Joint Committee had previously noted that, although the indicators for Local Council Tax Reduction and Housing Benefit being shown as having been met for April, due to the three week downtime in April associated with the merging of the former Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury systems, the target was thought not to be met for the first quarter of the year. However, in respect of both of these targets, they are now being achieved and are on track to achieve the annual target at the end of the year.

2.2.3 Attention was drawn to the service updates as at 31 July 2019:

- i. **Enforcement:** The Enforcement Team continue to perform well, having collected £18 million since the team started of which £1.838 million has been since the start of this financial year. With effect from July 2019, cases have been started to be taken from Norwich City Council. Caseload has currently been low but performance has been good. An increase in cases is expected in forthcoming months.
- ii. **Further recovery:** The Further Recovery Team had their best year for collection in 2018/19 collecting £1,111,595 exceeding the amount collected in 2017/18 by £203k. This financial year, the team has again exceeded the amount collected in the same period during the last financial year and has collected £416k since April 2019. In addition to

the monies collected by the Further Recovery Team, a further £1.776 million is in secured debt by way of Charging Orders on property owned by the debtor.

- iii. Non-Domestic Rates: The Government has introduced a Bill to Parliament to introduce 100% rate relief for public lavatories with effect from 1 April 2020. Local Authorities are expected to be compensated for any loss of income resulting from the relief.

The Government has also introduced measures to support progress towards linking local authority business rates systems to HMRC digital accounts. The legislation allows HMRC to undertake planning, consultation and testing toward developing a digital system, but it does not make any changes to the current billing and collection system. Further legislation would be required to bring in any subsequent reforms and there would be engagement with local authorities in developing further proposals.

Legislation is progressing to bring forward the date of the next revaluation to 1 April 2021 and every three years thereafter.

- iv. Council Tax: In order to maximise the New Homes Bonus, which is based on the number of new properties in the year plus a reduction in empty homes at October every year, an annual review of empty properties is being undertaken with follow-ups on non-responses.
- v. Benefits: Benefits performance was affected by the merging of systems for East Suffolk Council and West Suffolk Council in April 2019, as explained in 2.2.2 above; however, work has been undertaken to recover this position for both councils and end of year targets are aimed to be achieved.

The DWP have been satisfied with the handling of the two councils' mergers and other work that has been undertaken, particularly around the processing of Housing Benefit and Universal Credit claims. In August 2019, the DWP recognised ARP as a top performer for all partner councils actioning DWP data to identify, prevent and process benefit error notifications. ARP has been invited to share best practice as an exemplar for other local authorities.

- vi. Fraud and Compliance: Whilst Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils currently continue to support the review of Single Persons Discounts, Cambridgeshire CC (CCC) had ceased providing further funding from April 2019. ARP had provided a briefing note to East Cambs and Fenland District Councils to aid discussions with CCC regarding the implications of this.

DWP have published latest data for the number of fraud referrals made by a local authority to the DWP – all partner councils have again exceeded the national average by up to 200% or more, demonstrating the excellent success of the fraud and compliance team.

- vii. ARP Website and Online Self Service: The website has been enhanced to try and make it as straight forward as possible for customer use. This approach has been implemented for requests associated with council tax, business rates and housing benefit. Analysis has demonstrated that this has been particularly effective for customers utilising the self-serve facilities, which has seen a 10% increase in usage in the first four months of the 2019/20 financial year compared to the same period in 2018/19.
- viii. Better Customer Services Journey: A partnership wide programme of enhancements for the customer is being initiated, with the aim of improving the customer experience with improved access and quality of service. A separate element of the project includes using recognised project management tools and processes to implement a change delivery programme. A third element will look at opportunities for ARP to continue an ongoing transformation programme with aim of achieving better outcomes for residents and businesses.
- ix. External Mailing Contractor: A re-tendering exercise to award a further contract of up to five years has been completed. It is worth noting however, that the move towards electronic mailing is being increasingly encouraged.

2.2.4 Discussion was specifically held at the meeting on the Better Customer Services Journey, with particular emphasis placed on making improvements to the online forms required to be completed by customers, which appeared to presently be a relatively complicated process.

2.3 **ARP Financial Performance (Agenda Item 8)**

2.3.1 The Joint Committee **noted** the financial performance report as at 31 July 2019, which currently showed a small overspend against budget of £19k (0.2%) for the whole of ARP. Appendix A attached to that report provided further details, together with details and reasons for the specific variances. Risks were also highlighted to Members.

2.3.2 An update had also been provided on the remaining transformation funding which was set aside in previous years. £57k is earmarked for projects in progress this year and there is a further £93k available for future transformation projects.

2.3.3 Details of the funding held in the ARP ICT reserve, which had been approved as part of the budget setting process, was also contained in Appendix A. This reserve has been established to cover costs of ICT replacement in future years.

2.3.4 The reasons for other specific variances, together with other details, are contained in the report at:

<https://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/documents/s53911/ARP%20Financial%20Performance.pdf>

<https://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/documents/s53912/Appendix%20A%20for%20ARP%20Financial%20Performance.pdf>

2.4 **Welfare Reform Update (Agenda Item 9)**

2.4.1 The Joint Committee received and **noted** an update on welfare reform, which included:

a. **Universal Credit (UC):**

From 1 April 2019, the DWP awarded a 12 month funding contract to Citizens' Advice to provide help to new Universal Credit customers to make a claim (Assisted Digital Support) and to help customers with budget monthly payments (Personal Budgeting Support). Having met with various Citizens' Advice branches across Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, ARP has established that the following arrangements are being implemented:

- Local advisors will dial into a national call centre.
- Web chat will be provided.
- Face to face arrangements will be in place – some on an appointment basis, others on a drop in basis or a mixture of the two. Rural provision may be patchy.
- Thetford and Diss Citizens' Advice are trialling the new service from January 2020.
- The help to claim service is funded to the point of first payment only.

ARP has raised concerns that Citizens' Advice are only funded to help to the first UC payment received; however, Citizens' Advice have said they will continue to help vulnerable customers, drawing on their usual funding streams. Through regular liaison meetings ARP will monitor this.

A detailed discussion was held at the meeting regarding the implications of Citizens Advice being responsible for the above service and the impact on council services. The Joint Committee looked forward to the findings of the six-month review.

The summary of the latest position on the expansion of UC and concerns raised by officers regarding specific issues in respect of the expansion on a national level were contained in sections 2.1.8 and 2.1.9 of the report, and which were duly noted by the Joint Committee. New matters arising via the DWP in respect of UC were provided in Section 2.2.

- b. **Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP):** Spend continues to be within the grant provided by the DWP, and is forecast to be closer to the limit, but within the grant. This grant is designed to help customers remain in their homes or to move to affordable and sustainable accommodation. The main area of expenditure continues

to be to assist customers with rent shortfalls, in particular due to restrictions on Housing Benefit rent levels.

- c. **Benefit Cap:** In November 2016, the maximum family income before the Benefit Cap applies reduced from £26,000 to £20,000 (£13,400 for single adults with no children). The Benefit Service continues to work with colleagues in Customer Service and Housing Options teams to seek to avoid homelessness and the cost of temporary housing.

DWP has provided New Burdens funding to assist councils with extra administrative costs and have increased Discretionary Housing Payment grants to help customers with the reduction; however, it should be noted that the increase does not cover all reductions.

- d. **Social Rented Sector Rent Restrictions:** The Government has responded to consultation on funding for supported housing and it has indicated it will not implement Local Housing Allowance rates in social housing. Supported accommodation, including hostel tenancies will remain in Housing Benefit and will not therefore move to Universal Credit.

2.5 **Review of the Anglia Revenues Partnership Constitution (Agenda Item 10)**

- 2.5.1 As the meeting was inquorate, this item was deferred to 17 December 2019. See paragraph 6.2.1 below for further details.

2.6 **Forthcoming Issues (Agenda Item 11)**

- 2.6.1 No forthcoming issues were discussed on this occasion

3. **Notes**

- 3.1 For further information on the informal discussions held at the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee meeting on 17 September 2019, the notes of the meeting may be viewed on Breckland District Council's website at the following link:

<https://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/documents/s55053/Minutes%20Public%20Pack%2017092019%20Anglia%20Revenues%20and%20Benefits%20Partnership%20Joint%20Committee.pdf>

4. **Background papers**

Breckland DC Website:

[17 September 2019](#)

5. Purpose of the report

Meeting: 17 December 2019

5.1 On 17 December 2019, the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership (ARP) Joint Committee considered the following items of substantive business:

1. Governance and Reporting Arrangements relating to Internal Audit;
2. Review of the Anglia Revenues Partnership Constitution;
3. Performance Report and Service Updates:
 - a. Joint Committee Performance Report – October 2019;
 - b. Service Updates;
4. ARP Financial Performance;
5. Welfare Reform Update;
6. ARP Strategy Refresh;
7. The Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) Service Delivery Plan;
8. ARP Joint Committee Partnership Budget;
9. Joint Committee ARP Brochure;
and
10. Forthcoming Issues.

The majority of this report is for information only; however, a decision is required on the item listed in (2) above and a separate report relating to this is contained elsewhere on this Cabinet agenda.

6. Key Issues

6.1 Governance and Reporting Arrangements relating to Internal Audit (Agenda Item 5)

- 6.1.1 The Joint Committee noted that a new Service Level Agreement for the provision of internal audit services of the revenue and benefits service delivered by the Anglia Revenues Partnership has been agreed.
- 6.1.2 The agreement commenced on 1 September 2019 for a term of three financial years expiring on 31 August 2022.
- 6.1.3 The Heads of Internal Audit at East Suffolk, Fenland and West Suffolk jointly provide the internal audit service to the five partner councils in relation to the ARP.
- 6.1.4 A brief discussion was held at the meeting regarding external audit arrangements.

6.2 Review of the Anglia Revenues Partnership Constitution (Agenda Item 6)

- 6.2.1 See Report No: CAB/WS/19/003 for this item and the recommendation.

6.3 Performance Report and Service Updates: October 2019 (Agenda Item 7)

6.3.1 a. Joint Committee Performance Report October 2019

The Joint Committee received and noted an update on performance. This report provides relevant information relating to the performance of ARP as a whole and that of the individual partners. This detailed report can be viewed on Breckland Council's website at the following link:

<https://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/documents/s55098/Performance%20Report%20Oct%202019.pdf>

The report indicated that when considering performance as a whole for all partner councils, all targets as at July 2019 were currently being met in respect of the following categories:

- Business rates collection
- Council tax collection
- Number of electronic forms received
- Fraud and compliance

6.3.2 In respect of West Suffolk Council's individual performance, all targets as at October 2019 were currently being met in respect of the following categories:

- Business rates collection
- Council tax collection
- Local council tax reduction
- Housing benefit
- Fraud and compliance

The Joint Committee noted that in respect of the Business Rates collection target, there had previously been claims made by NHS Trusts for charitable rate relief and these were currently subject to a High Court appeal. If successful, this could result in a backdated refund of £4.605 million.

6.3.3 Attention was drawn to the service updates as at 31 October 2019 (*information provided where different to that in 2.2.3 above*):

- Enforcement. The Enforcement Team continue to perform well, having collected £18.995 million since the team started of which £3.576 million has been since the start of this financial year. With effect from July 2019, cases have been started to be taken from Norwich City Council. Caseload has now increased since last reported with good results recorded.
- Further recovery. The Further Recovery Team had their best year for collection in 2018/19 collecting £1,111,595 exceeding the amount collected in 2017/18 by £203k. This financial year, the team has again exceeded the amount collected in the same period during the last financial year and has collected £791k since April 2019 compared to £689k during the same period last year. In addition to the monies collected by the Further Recovery Team, a further £1.856 million is in secured debt by way of Charging Orders on property owned by the debtor.

- iii. Council Tax. In order to maximise the New Homes Bonus, which is based on the number of new properties in the year plus a reduction in empty homes at October every year, an annual review of empty properties has been undertaken with follow-ups on non-responses. The report provided a breakdown of the reasons for properties being empty.
- iv. Fraud and Compliance. There is continued success for the ARP Fraud and Compliance team who continue to work closely with local DWP Fraud Teams in a joint working initiative.

6.4 **ARP Financial Performance (Agenda Item 8)**

- 6.4.1 The Joint Committee noted the financial performance report as at 31 October 2019, which currently showed a small overspend against budget of £34k (0.4%) for the whole of ARP. Appendix A attached to that report provided further details, together with details and reasons for the specific variances. Risks were also highlighted to Members.

An update had also been provided on the remaining transformation funding which was set aside in previous years. £57k is earmarked for projects in progress this year and there is a further £93k available for future transformation projects.

Details of the funding held in the ARP ICT reserve, which had been approved as part of the budget setting process, was also contained in Appendix A. This reserve has been established to cover costs of ICT replacement in future years.

The reasons for other specific variances, together with other details, are contained in the report at:

<https://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/documents/s55041/ARP%20Financial%20Performance.pdf>

Appendix A:

<https://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/documents/s55042/Appendix%201%20for%20ARP%20Financial%20Performance.pdf>

- 6.4.2 The Joint Committee also considered whether the end of year variance should be distributed between the partner authorities, in accordance with their previously approved share, as set out in the table below, which was based on the current forecast and was unlikely to materially change significantly between now and year end:

Breckland	£7,107
East Cambs	£2,311
East Suffolk	£12,989
Fenland	£4,458
West Suffolk	£7,458
Total	£34,323

This was agreed.

6.4.3 The Joint Committee **RESOLVED: That**

- 1. The report and appendix, be noted; and**
- 2. the final full year variance at 31 March 2020 be shared between the partner authorities in the approved shares.**

6.5 **Welfare Reform Update (Agenda Item 9)**

6.5.1 The Joint Committee received and **noted** an [update](#) on welfare reform, which included (information provided where different to that in 2.4.1 above):

- a. **Universal Credit (UC):**
The summary of the latest position on the expansion of UC and concerns raised by officers regarding specific issues in respect of the expansion on a national level were contained in sections 2.1.8 and 2.1.9 of the report, and which were duly noted by the Joint Committee. New matters arising via the DWP in respect of UC were provided in Section 2.2, including that DWP had announced a £10 million Universal Credit Transition Fund for outreach programmes, which are designed to help those in specific need with their UC claims. The fund will be available to partner organisations across the UK, including charities from April 2020.
- b. **Welfare Benefit Uprating April 2020:**
The Government has confirmed an end to the four year benefit uprating freeze. From April 2020 all benefits will increase by CPI, which as of September 2019 was 1.7%. The state pension will rise by 3.9% due to the 'triple lock'.

6.5.2 At the meeting, a discussion was held on the application process for the £10m Universal Credit Transition Fund and examples of organisations that could apply for a share, including local authorities.

6.6 **ARP Strategy Refresh (Agenda Item 10)**

6.6.1 The Joint Committee considered this [report](#) which sought approval for the mission, strategic themes and vision for the future of ARP.

6.6.2 A new mission statement, revised priorities now stated as strategic themes, and a new vision for the ARP service offer were considered.

6.6.3 Background and the process undertaken to develop the above was set out in the report and appendices, which culminated in a refreshed strategy, as summarised below:

6.6.4 a. Mission

Currently, the 2017 strategic priority 1 sets out ARP's core purpose. This has been augmented and turned into a draft high-level Mission statement, as follows:

"To share resources to provide fair and accessible revenues and benefits services to our communities. To maximise benefit entitlement and engage in ethical revenue collection, treating our colleagues and customers with courtesy, understanding and respect."

b. Values

ARP developed and adopted its corporate values in 2018. These remain unchanged, and were presented to elevate them alongside the Mission, Strategic Themes, and Vision.

c. Strategic Themes

Informed by the 2017 strategic priorities, partner strategy analysis, management discussions and feedback from the ARP and customer services teams, five themes were recommended for adoption. These would update and revise the existing priorities; they are of equal status and were not presented to the Joint Committee in order of priority.

Colleagues: Our operations rely on the people who make up our team, both directly within the partnership and in partner service areas. We will develop our people professionally and pursue a comprehensive organisational development plan.

Customers: We focus all of our work on supporting the families, communities, individuals and businesses located in our partnership area. We will continue to make our services as convenient and as accessible as possible.

Digital: We will aim to increase our 'digital by default' service including full, partner integrated self-service. We will use automation to speed processing and release our teams to provide face-time for the customers who need it.

Relationships: We are a partnership of five district councils, pooling resources to share the provision of revenues and benefits services, offering greater returns on investment in change and innovation projects.

Sustainability: We are organisationally designed to improve the financial and environmental sustainability of our partners, through efficient collection, revenue generation and fulfilment of our partners' climate change imperatives.

d. Vision

This describes ARP's aspirational, future state in a number of respects, and should provide a framework for its target operating model and the forward development of the partnership. These are of equal status and were not presented to the Joint Committee in order of priority.

- **An engaged, highly skilled team**
- **Satisfied customers**
- **Integrated self-service across all functions**
- **Excellent, harmonised services**
- **Balanced budget and sustainable revenue**

6.6.5 The Joint Committee considered the above in detail and held a discussion on the DWP's role within the Strategy (which would fall within the 'relationships' theme); and also on the 'customers', 'colleagues' and 'digital' themes.

A discussion was also held on the automation of Universal Credit, which was presently on track to be delivered by April/May 2020.

The Appendices attached to the report are as follows, including the detailed refreshed Strategy that was recommended for approval:

[Appendix A](#) – 2017 Strategic Priorities

[Appendix B](#) – Partner Frameworks

[Appendix C](#) – Refresh Process

[Appendix D](#) – Refreshed ARP Strategy

6.6.6 The Joint Committee **RESOLVED: That the mission, strategic themes and vision set out in the report and Appendix D, be approved.**

6.7 **Anglia Revenues Partnership Service Delivery Plan (Agenda Item 11)**

6.7.1 The Joint Committee considered a report, which sought approval for the revised Service Delivery Plan and Risk Register, as set out in the appendices attached to that report at:

<https://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/documents/s55107/Joint%20Committee%20Service%20Plan%20Report.pdf>

[Appendix A](#)

6.7.2 The Joint Committee noted that ARP had seen significant success in 2019/20, including (briefly):

- Housing benefit new claims and changes are meeting targets despite the creation of East and West Suffolk Councils affecting early performance.
- The ongoing design of processes on the document management system continues to automate the harmonisation of work distribution for all partners. The EDMS drip feed has also been rolled out to Business Rates too.

- All customer teams are able to use customer contact software to sign customers up to e-services upon contact and the number of those using e-services continues to rise.
- The further recovery work jointly funded by County Councils secured recovery of over £1.1 million last year and is already on target to secure similar/higher recovery in 2019/20.
- The Fraud teams work also jointly funded by the County Councils identified £3.2 million in fraud and error (£600k more than last year).
- The East and West Suffolk merged databases were in place from April 2019 and the project to merge them has been a great success.

Other achievements relating to the Transformation Programme are detailed in the report presented to the Joint Committee, which related to:

- the progression of the Digital Transformation work stream;
- the project to automate Universal Credit records is progressing well;
- the introduction of new telephone technology, which allows ARP to manage calls to that less onerous calls are answered by less experienced staff and customers are offered online services as an alternative;
- a number of temporary posts have been made permanent and appointments made;
- the Service Delivery Plan sought to deliver efficiencies to the partner councils of more than £1 million in 2018/19, which was achieved.

- 6.7.3 The Joint Committee has reconsidered the strategic direction for the ARP (as set out in Section 6.6 above) and the Service Delivery Plan seeks to detail actions to achieve the visioning detailed in the report. In 2020/21, emphasis will be placed on developing digital online solutions; driving customer cultural change through digital transformation; continuing to invest time and resource into developing automated processes; continuing to influence national initiatives such as Universal Credit; continuing to maintain a flexible workforce, including having resilience in key areas; and ensuring appropriate actions continue to be put in place to enable the challenges and financial impact of the fundamental changes regarding welfare reform to be suitably handled and monitored.
- 6.7.4 The Joint Committee also considered the Partnership's Risk Register, which includes items relating to the risk surrounding income from business rates, which presently remains red because there remains a risk in relation to subsequent appeals (see 6.3.2 above) that may be received and reduce rates payable. The Register also continues to highlight the need to monitor the impact of Universal Credit on customers and grant income.
- 6.7.5 Discussion was held at the meeting on historical outstanding appeals and staff turnover, which had previously been relatively high due to the previously high number of temporary posts. Training was also discussed which had been modified to enable staff to become fully operational much sooner.

6.7.6 The Joint Committee **RESOLVED** that:

1. **The progress in respect of the December 2018 Service Delivery Plan, be noted; and**
2. **the revised Service Delivery Plan and Risk Register at Appendix A of the report, be approved.**

6.8 **ARP Joint Committee Partnership Budget (Agenda Item 12)**

6.8.1 The Joint Committee considered a [report](#) which sought approval for the partnership budget for 2020/2021.

6.8.2 Whilst the majority of budgets have been set in the same way as previous years, there are some key changes for the 2020/21 budget. These had been considered by the Joint Committee, as follows:

- Proposals to make temporary fixed term contract roles permanent;
- In setting the budget the following key assumptions have been made:
 - A pay award of 2% each year;
 - A vacancy factor of 2.5% in all years;
 - No inflation of general non contracted supplies and services
 - An efficiency target of £120k to be achieved from 2021/22 onwards.

Largely as a consequence of the above assumptions, the overall budget had been recommended to be increased by £450,000 when compared to 2019/20. The majority of the increase relates to salary costs (£334k) as a result of pay pressures. Alongside these increases are contractual inflationary increases on items such as software maintenance (£65k) and business rates (£10k), a small reduction in Government grants (£10k) plus other small value changes. Costs of Enforcement within Supplies and Services have increased due to additional work but these are fully offset by additional income.

6.8.3 [Appendix A](#) sets out the proposed budget for 2020/2021 compared to the budget for 2019/2020, with indicative budgets for the following two years, as illustrated in the table below:

Description	2019/20 Budget £	2020/21 Budget £	2021/22 indicative £	2022/23 Indicative £
Employee costs	9,150,882	9,485,073	9,674,920	9,996,070
Premises costs	272,822	285,440	293,976	303,072
Transport costs	154,129	149,856	151,306	152,781
Supplies & Services	1,586,221	1,742,120	1,740,706	1,770,966
Support Services	531,162	555,000	560,960	567,099
Income	(2,337,027)	(2,408,696)	(2,402,416)	(2,396,591)
TOTAL PARTNERSHIP COSTS	9,359,189	9,808,793	10,019,452	10,393,397

Further tables show the share of costs for each authority and the proportion that any additional costs or savings against the budget will be shared.

6.8.4 West Suffolk Council's current and future contribution to the total budget is set out below:

	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	2021/22 indicative £	2022/23 indicative £
West Suffolk	2,238,330	2,238,288	2,428,672	2,516,420

6.8.5 The Joint Committee thoroughly considered the budget for 2020/21 and asked several questions of officers, particularly in relation to proposed budget increases and the rationale for this.

6.8.6 The Joint Committee **RESOLVED: That the Partnership Budget at Appendix A for 2020/2021, be approved.**

6.9 **Joint Committee ARP Brochure (Agenda Item 13)**

6.9.1 This item was deferred from the meeting held on 17 September 2019.

6.9.2 See section 2.1 above for a summary of the background and purpose of the brochure.

6.9.3 The Joint Committee **RESOLVED: That**

- 1. The new ARP brochure be adopted for use by the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership to provide information to Members, new Joint Committee Members and new staff working as part of the ARP; and**
- 2. the December version of the ARP brochure be approved.**

6.10 **Forthcoming Issues (Agenda Item 14)**

6.10.1 No forthcoming issues were discussed on this occasion.

7. Minutes

7.1 For further information on the discussions held at the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee meeting on 17 December 2019, the draft minutes of the meeting may be viewed on Breckland District Council's website at the following link:

<https://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/documents/g4496/Printed%20minutes%2017th-Dec-2019%2011.00%20Anglia%20Revenues%20and%20Benefits%20Partnership%20Joint%20Committee.pdf?T=1>

8. Background papers

Breckland DC Website:

[17 December 2019](#)

Recommendations of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee: 17 December 2019 - Review of the Anglia Revenues Partnership Constitution

Report No:	CAB/WS/20/003	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	14 January 2020
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Sarah Broughton Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance Tel: 07929 305787 Email: sarah.broughton@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Chair of the Joint Committee:	Councillor Sarah Broughton Tel: 07929 305787 Email: sarah.broughton@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Rachael Mann Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) Tel: 01638 719245 Email: rachael.mann@westsuffolk.gov.uk	

Decisions Plan: The decision made as a result of this report will usually be published within 48 hours and cannot be actioned until five clear working days of the publication of the decision have elapsed. This item is included on the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: All wards

Recommendations:	<p>It is recommended that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the revised Partnership Agreement attached as Appendix 1 to Report No: CAB/WS/20/003, be approved to have effect from 1 April 2019; and 2. subject to approval by each partner authority, the revised agreement be signed and sealed by the Council (and each other partner authority).
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 4 December 2018, the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee considered an initial report to consider revisions to its Anglia Revenue Partnership (ARP) Agreement.
- 1.2 On 17 December 2019, the Joint Committee considered a report, the majority of which is reproduced below, which proposes the revision of that Agreement, as contained in Appendix 1 attached. The revision to the terms of reference have been produced by the Operational Improvement Board (OIB) as previously discussed by the Joint Committee, which were as a result of the creation of the new councils in East and West Suffolk. The Joint Committee has recommended to all the partner authorities, approval of the revised Partnership Agreement.

2. Statutory Arrangements

- 2.1 Seven councils formed a joint committee pursuant to Section 101 (5) and Section 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 20 of the Local Government Act 2000 for the purpose of jointly managing the administration and performance of their respective statutory functions. These functions are the collection of council tax and non-domestic rates and the payment of housing and other relevant benefits. The joint operational unit known as the Anglia Revenues Partnership ("ARP") operates under the control and management of the 2015 Joint Committee to provide the councils with such services. ARP operates as a single officer core providing equal service provision for all partners across these functions.
- 2.2 On 24 May 2018 the Secretary of State, in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 10, 11, 12 and 13 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007(1) made The East Suffolk (Local Government Changes) Order 2018 and The West Suffolk (Local Government Changes) Order 2018. These orders took effect on 1 April 2019 to create two new non-metropolitan districts and councils for East and West Suffolk respectively and abolished Suffolk Coastal District, Waveney District, Forest Heath District and St Edmundsbury Borough Councils, four Councils who are members of the ARP.
- 2.3 In addition to the Orders referred to above, Regulations followed. The Local Government (Boundary Changes) (General) Regulations 2018 sets out the arrangements following the abolishment of the four councils and Regulation 7(3) provides that anything done by, or in relation to [any of the Four Councils] in the exercise of, or in connection with, a function that is to be exercised on and after the reorganisation date by the successor council shall have effect as if done by, or in relation to that council. Regulation 7(4) confirms that this applies in particular to any agreement or decision. This means that in terms of the ARP Reconstitution Agreement any obligations on or rights held by any one of the four councils is automatically held by the relevant successor council (i.e. East or West Suffolk Councils).

- 2.4 Whilst these provisions mean that the partnership could continue under the existing agreement, there are other issues that have been discussed during the lifetime of this agreement that mean a review is timely to ensure that the agreement is fit for purpose moving forward.

3. The Current Agreement

- 3.1 The 2015 Anglia Revenues Partnership Reconstitution Agreement, as amended by the Joint Committee, sets out the role, membership, meetings and officers of the Joint Committee and provides at clause 3.1 that each of the seven councils shall appoint one of its members (and one substitute) for the time being to be members of the Joint Committee.
- 3.2 The role of the Joint Committee (JC) is set out in clause 3.26 of the Agreement and is mainly to discharge the seven councils' statutory functions in respect of the JC services as defined in Schedule 1 to the Agreement. The JC services relate to the collection of council tax and business rates and administration of relevant benefits e.g. council tax (calculation, billing, recovery, enforcement) business rates (billing, recovery, enforcement), Benefits administration (incl. overpayments) and anti-fraud measures.
- 3.3 The Joint Committee may also approve the service delivery plan for each year to include staffing requirements; approve the annual budget; approve the annual report; monitor expenditure and income against the agreed budget; set progress and performance targets for the JC Services; recommend any amendment of the terms of reference of the Joint Committee or Reconstitution Agreement; review audits and policies and appoint sub-committees as may be required and to delegate specific functions to those committees.
- 3.4 Any decisions which fall outside the remit of the Joint Committee (as set out in clause 3.24 of the Agreement referred to above) would need to be referred back to each of the member Councils.

4. Review of the Partnership

- 4.1 Clause 11 of the Reconstitution Agreement provides that at any time any one or more of the seven councils may seek a review of the Agreement and the operation of the ARP and its performance of the JC services by giving notice to that effect ("Review Notice") to the other or others of the seven councils.
- 4.2 In accordance with this process, Ian Gallin, Chief Executive of the former Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council, served a review notice to the other partner authorities on 18 October 2018. All Chief Executives agreed to the review, tasking their members of the Operational Improvement Board to make recommendations in respect of proposed changes to the terms of reference.
- 4.3 On 4 December 2018, the Joint Committee agreed to the following scope for the review of the agreement:

Key issues

- **Membership and representation:** ensure the agreement reflects the membership from 1 April 2019, with each authority having one member and one vote. Review notice required for withdrawal. Update quoracy and proxy arrangements as agreed by the Joint Committee in September 2017, reflecting too, the fact that there will now be five partners. (also see point 4.4 below)
- **Powers of JC and delegations to OIB:** ensure that the agreement reflects the delegations that have been agreed by Joint Committee.
- **Decision making:** no change to be made to the decision making provisions that are by majority vote with Chair holding casting vote.

Administrative issues

- **Review process:** update the review process to remove need for all Chief Executives to agree to review;
- **Financial provisions and budget shares:** ensure that the agreement reflects current accounting practice and new partnership arrangements;
- **Audit:** be clear on provisions for audit and the roles of the Joint Committee and OIB in the audit process;
- **Anglia Revenues Partnership Trading (ARPT):** review all references and ensure that it is up to date
- **Data Sharing:** update to incorporate any changes in line with recent legislation (GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018)
- **Variation:** how the partnership approaches variation on minor changes and what constitutes a minor change
- **List of legislation forming JC services:** ensure up to date
- **ARP Enforcement Agency:** ensure agreement reflects provision of this service

4.4 A further update to the agreement was requested at the 17 September 2019 Joint Committee meeting in relation to the quoracy of the Joint Committee to four members unless the Chair in consultation with the Joint Committee felt it would be appropriate for all five Joint Committee Members (or their substitute) to be present and in that case the item shall be deferred until the next meeting – 3.10 of the agreement attached refers.

4.5 The revised agreement has been considered by each partner's legal, financial and Audit teams in the light of the scope agreed above and all partners' teams are satisfied that it be recommended for approval.

5. Alternative options

5.1 The Council could choose not to approve the revised agreement; however, should it not be agreed by all partner authorities the partnership agreement will not be up to date. This therefore would mean that the requirements of all partner councils would not have created a new equitable partnership.

6. Risks

6.1 If there is not agreement between all partners as to the proposed course of action, this could undermine the wider performance and decision making of

the partnership. Ultimately, any partner could terminate its membership of the partnership.

7. Other implications arising from the proposal

7.1 Financial:

The new agreement ensures that the share of cost remains equitable after the merger of the new Councils.

7.2 Legal:

A revised Partnership agreement clarifies the continuation of arrangements now that the new Councils mergers are complete.

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1 – Agreement for the Reconstitution of the Anglia Revenues Partnership.

9. Background documents

9.1 Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee Reports:

Breckland Council's Website:

[4 December 2018: Appendix 1:](#) Review of the Anglia Revenues Partnership Constitution

[17 December 2019:](#) Review of the Anglia Revenues Partnership Constitution

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Appendix 1

DATED _____ 2019

BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

and

EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

and

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

and

WEST SUFFOLK COUNCIL

and

EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL

**AGREEMENT FOR THE RECONSTITUTION
OF THE ANGLIA REVENUES PARTNERSHIP**

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THIS AGREEMENT is made the day of 2019

BETWEEN

- (1) **BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL** of Elizabeth House Walpole Loke Dereham Norfolk NR19 1EE ("**Breckland**") of the first part
- (2) **EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL** of The Grange Nutholt Lane Ely Cambridgeshire CB7 4EE ("**East Cambridgeshire**") of the second part and
- (3) **FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL** of Fenland Hall County Road March PE15 8NQ ("**Fenland**") of the third part
- (4) **WEST SUFFOLK COUNCIL** of West Suffolk House Western Way Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP33 3YU ("**West Suffolk** of the fourth part
- (5) **EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL** of East Suffolk House, Station Road, Melton, Woodbridge Suffolk IP12 1RTU ("**East Suffolk**") of the fifth part

Together referred to as the 'Five Councils'

RECITALS

- (i) The parties hereto have entered into this Agreement having recognised that significant efficiency and financial gains can be made by working together to deliver revenues and benefits services in partnership thereby enabling them to secure administrative advantages and economies of scale and to provide a robust and flexible service to their councils.
- (ii) On the 01 April 2015 Breckland District Council, Fenland District Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Forest Heath District Council, St Edmundsbury Borough Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council (then referred to as the Seven Authorities) being duly empowered to do so under their constitutional arrangements and by law in force at the time agreed to form a joint committee ("**the 2015 Joint Committee**") pursuant to Section 101 (5) and Section 102 of the LGA 1972, Section 20 of the LGA 2000 and the 2000 Regulations and 2012 Regulations.

- (iii) On the 01 April 2019 Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council were abolished and a new non-metropolitan district council, West Suffolk Council, was created by virtue of the West Suffolk (Local Government Changes) Order 2018.
- (iv) On the 01 April 2019 Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council were abolished and a new non-metropolitan district council, East Suffolk Council, was created by virtue of the East Suffolk (Local Government Changes) Order 2018.
- (v) On the 01 April 2019 the functions of the abolished councils referred to in recitals (iii) and (iv) above became the functions of the new district councils by virtue of the Local Government (Boundary Changes) Regulations 2018 and the Seven Councils referred to in all arrangements for the creation of the 2015 Joint Committee will mean the Five Councils referred to in this Agreement.
- (vi) The 2015 Joint Committee was created for the purpose of:
 - (a) Jointly managing the administration and performance of the Five Councils' respective statutory functions relating to the collection of council tax and non-domestic rates and the payment of housing and other relevant benefits;
 - (b) To establish a joint operational unit known as the Anglia Revenues Partnership ("ARP") under the control and management of the 2015 Joint Committee to provide the Five Councils with such services ("the JC Services);
 - (c) To enter into a Reconstitution Agreement to regulate the constitution and proceedings of the 2015 Joint Committee and the relationships between the Five Councils and between each of the Five Councils and the 2015 Joint Committee and the future operation and funding of the ARP and making provision for:-
 1. the constitution, meetings, officers and funding of the 2015 Joint Committee;
 2. the transfer to the control and management of the 2015 Joint Committee the existing ARP.

- (vii) This Reconstitution Agreement will for all intents and purposes replace the Reconstitution Agreement made between the Seven Councils on the 10 September 2015 subject to the 2015 Joint Committee which will continue to remain in effect from 00.01 hours on the 01 April 2015.
- (viii) The Five Councils have pursuant to Section 95 of the LGA 2003 formed a wholly owned company limited by shares registered under the Companies Acts (“ARP Trading Limited”) for the purpose of them being in a position to jointly trade commercially in their functional activities in respect of the JC Services.
- (ix) The Five Councils have mutually exchanged information concerning their performance of their statutory functions within the definition of the JC Services (including financial reports and audit reports in respect of the previous two Financial Years together with other independent reports and assessments relevant to such performance).

NOW THIS AGREEMENT WITNESSES:

1. INTERPRETATION

1.1 In this Agreement:

“Accountancy Protocol”

means the Budget Policies and Procedures at Schedule 3 of this Agreement

“Action Plan”

means a written plan agreed by the Five Councils under Clause 10.3;

“ADR Notice”

means a notice given pursuant to Clause 22.2;

“Alternative Business Structure”

means for the purposes of this Agreement, further Joint Committee partnership; limited company; **Arms Length Management Organisations; or such business vehicles that may be available for the running and management of local authority services.**

“ARP”

means the operational unit entitled the Anglia Revenues Partnership controlled and managed by the 2015 Joint Committee pursuant to this Agreement;

“ARP Management Team”

means the working group of senior employees of the ARP established by the 2015 Joint Committee pursuant to Clause 5.1;

“ARP Trading Limited”

means the company limited by shares of which the Five Councils are equal shareholders pursuant to Section 95 of the LGA 2003;

“The Chair”

means the person who is the Chair of the 2015 Joint Committee from time to time elected under Clause 3.13;

“Commencement Date”

means the 1st April 2019 when West Suffolk and East Suffolk Councils were created;

“DPA and GDPR”

means the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation;

“DWP”

means the Department of Works and Pensions

“Employment Costs”

means all salaries, wages, sick pay, holiday pay, pension contributions, bonuses, commission, maternity, paternity and adoption pay, redundancy pay, expenses (including, but not limited to travel and subsistence allowances and disturbance pay), **tribunal awards or pre dispute resolution settlements** income and other taxes, national insurance contributions and levies of any kind for which an employer is accountable and all other normal employment costs;

“Financial Year”

means a period of one year commencing on 1st April in any year and ending on 31st March in the next following year;

“FOIA”

means the Freedom of Information Act 2000

“Five Councils”

means together the parties hereto;

“JC Member”

means a member of the 2015 Joint Committee appointed in accordance with Clause 3.1;

“JC Services”

means the functions and services listed respectively in Part I and Part II of Schedule 1 of this Agreement;

“LGA 1972”

means the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended);

“LGA 2000”

means the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended);

“LGA 2003”

means the Local Government Act 2003 (as amended);

“2015 Joint Committee”

means the joint committee formed by the Seven Councils and now the Five Councils pursuant to the resolutions of the Five Councils to that effect pursuant to the terms of this Agreement;

“Operational Improvement Board”

means the working group of senior employees from ARP and the Five Councils established by the 2015 Joint Committee pursuant to Clause 5.4;

“Review Report”

means a report referred to in Clause 11.1;

“Secretary”

means the Secretary of the 2015 Joint Committee for the time being appointed pursuant to Clause 3.21;

“Service Delivery Plan”

means the document agreed by the 2015 Joint Committee on an annual basis regarding service standards;

“Statement of Intent”

means the Statement produced under Clause 10.4.1 setting out the reasons of the Council producing it for intending to serve a notice of withdrawal under Clause 10.3;

“Support Services”

means any service required to support the operations of the ARP including but not limited to human resources finance ICT internal audit procurement and legal;

“2000 Regulations”

means the Local Authorities (Arrangement for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2000 (S.I. 2000 No. 2851) as amended by the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2001 (S.I. 2001 No.3961);

“2012 Regulations”

means the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions (England) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012 No. 1019);

“Treasurer”

means the officer appointed as the Chief Financial Officer of the 2015 Joint Committee pursuant to Clause 3.22;

“TUPE”

means the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 as amended;

“Value for Money Objectives”

means the responsibility incumbent upon all councils to ensure that taxpayers’ money is spent responsibly balancing the need for high quality service delivery with the need to reduce costs;

“Vice-Chair”

means the person who is the Vice-Chair of the 2015 Joint Committee elected from time to time under Clause 3.13;

“Working Days”

means Monday to Friday (9am – 5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am to 4.30pm Friday), with the exception of public holidays in England.

- 1.2 In this Agreement (unless the context requires otherwise):
 - 1.2.1 references to Clauses Schedules and Paragraphs are to the clauses Schedules and paragraphs of this Agreement. Any reference to a sub-clause or a sub-paragraph is to the relevant sub-clause or sub-paragraph of the Clause or Schedule in which it appears;
 - 1.2.2 the table of contents and headings are not part of this Agreement and are not to be taken into account in the interpretation of this Agreement;
 - 1.2.3 the use of the masculine gender alone includes the feminine and neuter genders and the singular includes the plural and vice versa;
 - 1.2.4 references to legislation (including subsidiary legislation) determinations and directions include all amendments replacements or re-enactments thereof and all regulations determinations directions and statutory guidance made or given under them save that the treatment under this Agreement of any such amendment or modification that imposes any new or extended obligation or liability adversely affecting the parties or any of them shall be determined by the 2015 Joint Committee after consultation with the Five Councils;
 - 1.2.5 any reference to a requirement for “consent” or “approval” shall be taken to be the prior written consent or approval of the relevant person or body;
 - 1.2.6 the terms “including” and “in particular” are illustrative only and are not intended and shall not limit the meaning of the relevant words that precede them;
 - 1.2.7 the term “persons” means individuals, companies, industrial and provident societies, limited liability partnerships, statutory bodies, or other bodies with a legal personality and includes H.M. Government, Government Departments, and the European Union and its constituent parts.
- 1.3 The Schedules to this Agreement are to have effect as if set out in full in the body of this Agreement and references to this Agreement include the Schedules.

2. THE 2015 JOINT COMMITTEE

- 2.1 Each of the Five Councils agree that the 2015 Joint Committee shall have all the powers of Breckland, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, West Suffolk and East Suffolk (with effect from the Commencement Date) over the finances made available by Her Majesty's Government the European Union and other sources of finance to each of the Five Councils in relation to or in respect of the establishment, maintenance and development of the JC Services.
- 2.2 Each of the Five Councils hereby warrants that it shall not do nor omit to neither do nor permit to be done anything that prevents or inhibits or seeks to prevent or inhibit the 2015 Joint Committee from carrying out all or any of the JC Services.
- 2.3 Each of the Five Councils shall at all times co-operate with each other and shall work within the spirit of openness, honesty, trust, and with a co-operative approach in respect of each of the others of the Five Councils and with the 2015 Joint Committee.
- 2.4 Each of the Five Councils hereby agrees that it will make to the Treasurer of the 2015 Joint Committee such payments as are provided by this Agreement in full in accordance with the terms of this Agreement and shall meet such liabilities and carry out such obligations in respect of the establishment, maintenance and proceedings of the 2015 Joint Committee and of the operation of the ARP as may be provided by this Agreement or may be determined in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.
- 2.5 The 2015 Joint Committee and the Five Councils shall keep under review (having regard to each of the Five Councils' Value for Money Objectives) whether the performance of the JC Services should continue to be managed through the 2015 Joint Committee and may decide to consider and agree alternative mechanisms for the performance of the JC Services.
- 2.6 Where any of the Five Councils considers that its Value for Money Objectives require it to do so it shall have the right (after consultation with the others of the Five Councils and the 2015 Joint Committee) to make other arrangements for the performance of any of its statutory functions within the JC Services provided that to do so shall not be inconsistent with its obligations under this Agreement.

3. THE 2015 JOINT COMMITTEE, ITS ROLE, MEMBERSHIP, MEETINGS AND OFFICERS

Joint Committee Members

- 3.1 Subject to Clause 3.2 each of the Five Councils shall appoint one of its members for the time being to be a member of the 2015 Joint Committee. In addition each of the Five Councils shall appoint two substitutes, who may attend meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee in the absence of their Council's JC Members.
- 3.2 All such appointments (whether made under Clause 3.1 or 3.4) shall be made in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions of Sections 101 and 102 of the LGA 1972 and of the 2000 Regulations or 2012 Regulations, as they may from time to time be applicable to each of the Five Councils.
- 3.3 Each JC Member shall remain in office until removed or replaced by his or her appointing Council or until ceasing to be a member of his or her appointing Council (or of the executive if Regulation 12 of the 2012 Regulations is applicable to his or her appointment).
- 3.4 Each of the Five Councils may remove and replace its JC Members at any time by giving notice of such removal or replacement to the 2015 Joint Committee by sending such notice to the Secretary within 5 days of effecting such removal or replacement.
- 3.5 The proceedings of the 2015 Joint Committee shall not be invalidated by any vacancy or by any defect or purported defect in the appointment of any JC Member.

Meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee

- 3.6 Part I of Schedule 12 of the LGA 1972 and the provisions of Clauses 3.7 to 3.17 shall apply to meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee.
- 3.7 Meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee shall normally be held once each quarter, subject to the need exceptionally to call additional meetings. The Chair shall

decide the venue, date and time of all meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee. Wherever practicable, at least ten Working Days notice of such meetings shall be given to each JC Member, the Secretary, the Treasurer, the Monitoring Officer and to each of the Five Councils.

- 3.8 Any JC Member may requisition a meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee by giving notice of such requisition to the Chair and to the Secretary. Immediately upon receipt of such requisition, the Chair shall call a meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee in accordance with Clause 3.7.
- 3.9 The standing orders applicable to council meetings of Breckland shall apply to meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee except in so far as the 2015 Joint Committee may agree amendments thereto or may adopt its own standing orders. All recommendations taken to the 2015 Joint Committee shall be voted upon and the majority shall prevail. Please refer to Clause 3.17 should an equality of votes arise.
- 3.10 No business may be transacted at a meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee unless a quorum is present. The quorum for a meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee shall be four JC Members or their substitute present in person. In the unlikely event that a JC Member or one of their substitutes is unable to attend a meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee a proxy arrangement may be agreed between the affected party and the remaining parties to this Agreement and a named member of the affected party may attend as such proxy. A substitute member or proxy member will count towards a quorum but will be unable to chair the meeting nor to vote on any issues. If the meeting is quorate but, upon considering an item brought to the Joint Committee the Chair determines (in consultation with the other Joint Committee members present) that it would be appropriate for all five JC Members (or their substitute) to be present, the item shall be deferred until the next meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee and a request shall be made for all five JC Members to be present or represented at that meeting.
- 3.11 If a quorum is not present within fifteen minutes of the time set for the commencement of a meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee (or a quorum ceases to be present during a meeting) the meeting shall be adjourned to the same day time

and venue seven days later or to such other date time and venue as the Chair (or other person who is chairing the meeting) shall determine.

- 3.12 One of the meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee referred to in Clause 3.7 shall be held during May or June of each calendar year and shall be the annual meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee at which the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the 2015 Joint Committee shall take place together with such other business as may be appropriate in the opinion of the outgoing Chair.

Chair and Vice-Chair

- 3.13 The 2015 Joint Committee shall at each annual meeting elect a new Chair and a new Vice-Chair to hold office for the next ensuing year. The persons eligible to be elected as Chair shall not be the appointees of a Council whose appointee held that position in any of the four previous years. The persons eligible to be elected as Vice-Chair shall not be the appointees of a Council whose appointee held that position in the previous year. The Chair and Vice-Chair shall not be appointees of the same Council.
- 3.14 The Chair or Vice-Chair may be removed by a majority vote of all JC Members present at a meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee subject to the Chair or the Vice Chair being given the opportunity to address the meeting before the vote is taken to put his or her case why he or she should not be removed.
- 3.15 If the Chair or the Vice-Chair is removed by a vote of the 2015 Joint Committee or resigns or is otherwise unable to continue as Chair or Vice Chair he or she may be replaced by the election of a JC Member as Chair or Vice-Chair as the case may be who is the appointee of the same Council as the outgoing Chair or Vice-Chair.
- 3.16 The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee. If the Chair is not present within five minutes of the time for the commencement of a meeting, or being present does not wish to preside, or is unable to do so then the Vice-Chair shall preside at that meeting. If (in the event of the absence or non-availability of the Chair) the Vice-Chair is not present within five minutes of the time for the commencement of the meeting or does not wish to preside or is unable to do so, the meeting shall appoint a JC Member to chair the meeting.

- 3.17 In the event of an equality of votes the person chairing a meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee shall have a second or casting vote.

Responsibilities of the Chair and Vice-Chair

- 3.18 The responsibilities of the Chair are as follows: -
- 3.18.1 to act as an ambassador for the 2015 Joint Committee and to represent the views of the 2015 Joint Committee to the general public and other organisations;
 - 3.18.2 to seek to ensure that the meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee are conducted efficiently;
 - 3.18.3 to give all JC Members and/or their substitutes/proxy an opportunity to express their views;
 - 3.18.4 to establish a constructive working relationship with, and to provide support for, any sub-committees or officers of the 2015 Joint Committee or of the ARP to whom the 2015 Joint Committee have delegated any of its powers and functions;
 - 3.18.5 to encourage the 2015 Joint Committee to delegate sufficient authority to officers of the 2015 Joint Committee or of the ARP to enable the statutory functions within the provision of the JC Services to be carried out efficiently between meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee;
 - 3.18.6 to ensure that the 2015 Joint Committee monitors and controls the use of delegated powers.
- 3.19 The role of the Vice-Chair is to deputise for the Chair during any period of the Chair's absence and during that period his or her responsibilities shall be the same as those of the Chair.
- 3.20 Except as provided by this Agreement neither the Chair nor the Vice-Chair has any authority or powers beyond those of any other JC Member.

Officers of the 2015 Joint Committee

(i) Secretary

- 3.21 The Secretary of the 2015 Joint Committee shall be the officer for the time being designated by the 2015 Joint Committee. The Secretary shall be responsible for the recording of the minutes of all meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee and for

the circulation of draft minutes to each JC Member within five days of each meeting and responsible for the sending out of all notices and agendas of meetings. Minutes and records of the meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee shall be maintained by the Secretary in accordance with the requirements of the LGA 1972.

(ii) Treasurer

- 3.22 The Treasurer of the 2015 Joint Committee shall be appointed by the 2015 Joint Committee at each annual meeting for the next ensuing year from the Five Councils. The Treasurer as the Chief Financial Officer of the 2015 Joint Committee shall perform the functions of the relevant officer responsible for the administration of the financial affairs of the 2015 Joint Committee under Section 151 of the LGA 1972, Part VIII of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations 2003.

The Treasurer shall also perform the role of the accounting officer in respect of all funds held on account for or paid to the Five Councils or any of them by Her Majesty's Government the European Union or other sources of finance for any purposes of the JC Services and to make or provide all appropriate banking and accounting arrangements and services required for the due and proper receipt, holding and application of such funds in accordance with the requirements of Her Majesty's Government and in accordance with best practice.

(iv) Legal Advice and Services in Respect of the Constitution and Governance of the 2015 Joint Committee

- 3.23 Legal advice and services as detailed in Schedule 4 of this Agreement should be sought from the Head of Legal Services or equivalent for the time being of one of the Five Councils or, where the ARP Management Team considers it appropriate, and on the advice of a Head of Legal Services or equivalent of the Five Councils, from external legal sources on specialist matters, or in the event that a conflict of interest may arise or has arisen. Where the use of legal advice and services from an external source is required, the 2015 Joint Committee shall be required to approve the use of such external legal sources and their proposed fees for providing such legal advice and services. The precise manner in which such advice and services will be provided shall be the subject of a separate agreement between the Five Councils.

The Role of the 2015 Joint Committee

- 3.24 The Role of the 2015 Joint Committee is to discharge the Five Council's statutory functions in respect of the JC Services including to: -
- 3.24.1 approve the Service Delivery Plan for each Financial Year including the approval of staffing requirements to be met by the Five Councils;
 - 3.24.2 approve the annual budget for the 2015 Joint Committee and the ARP;
 - 3.24.3 approve the annual report of the 2015 Joint Committee and the ARP;
 - 3.24.4 monitor expenditure and income of the 2015 Joint Committee and the ARP against the agreed annual budget;
 - 3.24.5 set progress and performance targets for the JC Services, approve the Service Delivery Plan for the performance of such Services and monitor and review the performance of such Services against such targets and delivery plan;
 - 3.24.6 recommend to the Five Councils any amendment of the terms of reference of the 2015 Joint Committee or of this Agreement;
 - 3.24.7 regularly review and update the ARP Health and Safety Policy having particular regard to any amendments required by reason of a change of law which Policy the Five Councils shall have developed as soon as is practicable following the entering into of this Agreement;
 - 3.24.8 appoint one or more sub-committees of the 2015 Joint Committee (in accordance with Regulation 11(4) of the 2000 Regulations) as it may consider to be required and to delegate specific functions to such sub-committees. Any sub-committee shall comprise a majority of JC Members (one of whom shall chair the sub-committee) but may include non-JC Members (namely from the membership of the Five Councils) and the 2015 Joint Committee shall determine terms of reference of each sub-committee the term of office of each sub-committee member and the quorum for meetings of each sub-committee and the financial limits within which it shall operate;
 - 3.24.9 delegate specific functions to officers of the 2015 Joint Committee or of the ARP in accordance with the provisions of Section 101 of the LGA 1972 and Regulation 11(4) of the 2000 Regulations.

4. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

- 4.1 The Five Councils shall through the 2015 Joint Committee regularly review and update an ARP Health and Safety Policy having particular regard to any amendments required by reason of a change of law.

5. ARP MANAGEMENT TEAM AND OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENT BOARD

ARP Management Team

- 5.1 The 2015 Joint Committee has established a working group of ARP senior employees to be known as the ARP Management Team.

- 5.2 The members of the ARP Management Team shall continue to comprise the following officers of the ARP: -

The Head of ARP

The Strategic Manager (Billing and Benefits)

The Strategic Manager (Revenues)

The Strategic Manager (Support)

and such other officers of ARP as the 2015 Joint Committee may decide.

- 5.3 The responsibilities of the ARP Management Team shall be to: -

- 5.3.1 manage the performance of the JC Services so as to ensure, so far as is possible and practicable, the delivery of such Services in accordance with the Service Delivery Plan and the progress and performance targets for the JC Services set by the 2015 Joint Committee pursuant to Clause 3.25.5;

- 5.3.2 review the JC Services following a subsidy reclaim made by the DWP and in the event of such reclaim from the DWP or equivalent body to review the matter to which the reclaim relates and determine whether in the circumstances of the case the payment of the reclaimed amount shall be shared in accordance with the agreed percentages payable by the Five Councils for the period of subsidy reclaim;

- 5.3.3 report to the 2015 Joint Committee meetings on the progress and performance of the services provided by the ARP in connection with the provision of the JC

Services against the Service Delivery Plan and the progress and performance targets set by the 2015 Joint Committee pursuant to Clause 3.25.5;

- 5.3.4 strive to ensure that the services provided by the ARP are delivered equitably between the Five Councils, so far as may be practicable;
- 5.3.5 prepare and submit to the 2015 Joint Committee for its approval on or before 31st December in each year an annual budget, and annual Service Delivery Plan for the next Financial Year;
- 5.3.6 report to the 2015 Joint Committee on the income and expenditure of the ARP against the approved budget;
- 5.3.7 seek to ensure so far as is practicable that the JC Services are provided within the budget (to include the allocation of new burdens funding) approved by the 2015 Joint Committee and to notify the 2015 Joint Committee of any material divergence from the annual budget and the reasons therefore;
- 5.3.8 recommend to the 2015 Joint Committee the resources (including staffing resources) required to provide the JC Services to the requisite performance standards and any changes required in such resources to maintain such performance standards;
- 5.3.9 make appropriate recommendations to the 2015 Joint Committee on any matter of relevance to the business of the 2015 Joint Committee and of the ARP.

Operational Improvement Board

- 5.4 The 2015 Joint Committee has established an Operational Improvement Board.
- 5.5 The members of the Operational Improvement Board shall continue to be a working group of senior employees from ARP and the Five Councils as established by the 2015 Joint Committee.
- 5.6 The Operational Improvement Board shall meet monthly and report to the 2015 Joint Committee.
- 5.7 The responsibilities of the Operational Improvement Board shall be to:-
 - 5.7.1 clarify service standards/levels provided by the ARP on behalf of each of the Five Councils in particular:-
 - 5.7.1.1 interface with client services;

- 5.7.1.2 performance management requirements;
and ensure a clear relationship between the ARP and client services in terms of areas of responsibility and fairness of cost/benefit arising;
- 5.7.2 shape future services both for each of the Five Councils and the ARP by identifying issues and prioritisation of them by the ARP management;
- 5.7.3 provide a basis to resolve problems and improve service incrementally over time;
- 5.7.4 where no Support Service arrangements have been agreed, or where it is deemed time to review the existing Support Service arrangements, decide how on going Support Service arrangement should be provided for ARP and
- 5.7.5 receive reports on specific employee Employments Costs.
- 5.7.6 consider and agree any future spending in respect of additional funding

6. FINANCE, BUDGETING AND AUDIT

Finance – Budgets

- 6.1 The budget for the provision of the JC Services on behalf of the Five Councils for the Financial Year 2019/20 set out in Schedule 2 has been approved by the Five Councils.
- 6.2 A draft budget for each Financial Year subsequent to 2019/20 shall be prepared by the ARP Management Team in collaboration with the Heads of Finance and Chief Finance Officers (or equivalent) of the Five Councils respectively and submitted to the Treasurer for consideration. The draft budget shall be based upon the budget for the previous Financial Year updated for any anticipated changes considered necessary and shall take account of the information in Schedule 3, paragraph 2.1
- 6.3 The draft budget shall also have appended to it a Schedule detailing the payments estimated to be required to be made by each of the Five Councils during the relevant Financial Year.
- 6.4 After being considered by the Treasurer, the draft budget shall be submitted to the 2015 Joint Committee for approval and thereafter submitted to each of the Five Councils so as to be received by them by no later than 31st December in each year.

- 6.5 Any comments of the Five Councils on the draft budget shall be submitted to the ARP Management Team who shall report to the 2015 Joint Committee the comments of each of the Five Councils and the effect thereof and the 2015 Joint Committee shall, having taken such comments and the report of the ARP Management Team into consideration, decide whether or not to approve the draft budget whether in the original or an amended form.
- 6.6 If the 2015 Joint Committee approves the draft budget (whether or not as amended) it shall become the approved budget for the relevant Financial Year and a copy of the approved budget shall be submitted to each of the Five Councils.
- 6.7 If the 2015 Joint Committee fails to approve a budget for the relevant Financial Year the process referred to in Clauses 6.2 to 6.6 shall be repeated in an attempt to secure an approved budget as soon as possible and in the meantime the JC Services shall be provided on the basis of the approved budget for the previous Financial Year with such amendment as the 2015 Joint Committee may determine.
- 6.8 In the event that the budget for the current Financial Year requires amendment to meet any overspend or increase in the costs of the provision of the JC Services by the ARP for that year, the ARP Management Team shall report thereon to the 2015 Joint Committee. If the 2015 Joint Committee agrees that the budget requires amendment it shall notify the Five Councils thereof and of the proposed amendments to the budget and of any increased payments it proposes that should be required from the Five Councils. The 2015 Joint Committee shall consider any comments on the proposals and determine whether or not and how the budget shall be amended and the amount of any additional payment required to be made by each of the Five Councils to meet the overspend or increase in the ARP's costs.
- 6.9 The ARP Management Team shall report as soon as practicable to the 2015 Joint Committee on any deficit or surplus arising during the current or immediately preceding Financial Year as compared with the approved budget. Any such deficit shall be met or any such surplus shall be dispersed by reference to the Accountancy Protocol.

Payments to be made by the Five Councils

- 6.10 The Five Councils shall in each Financial Year each pay to the funds of the 2015 Joint Committee sums in respect of the expenses of the 2015 Joint Committee and the costs of provision of the JC Services on behalf of each of them by the ARP.
- 6.11 The budget for the Financial Year 2015/16 set out in Schedule 2 and referred to in Schedule 3 formed the baseline position from which all further adjustments to the budget would be calculated. For each Financial Year subsequent to 2015/16 the cost of any increases or savings from any decreases in the ARP budget are allocated to each of the Five Councils in line with the agreed percentages set out in Paragraph 5.1 of the Accountancy Protocol. The agreed ARP percentage figures will be reviewed annually as set out in Paragraph 5.2 of the Accountancy Protocol.

One-off Costs

- 6.12 The One-off Costs shall be paid by each of the Five Councils in accordance with the percentages provided by Clause 6.11 upon receipt of an invoice from the Treasurer.
- 6.13 Each of the Five Councils shall pay the sums and percentages provided by Clauses 6.10 and 6.11 to the Treasurer for the credit of the funds of the 2015 Joint Committee in each Financial Year during which this Agreement remains in force.

Accounts and Audit

- 6.14 The Treasurer shall maintain the accounts of the 2015 Joint Committee and the ARP in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 and the Local Authority Accountancy Act 2014 and with the requirements of the Department of Social Security, H.M. Treasury, H.M. Revenue and Customs, and all other applicable requirements.
- 6.15 Independent and objective internal audits of the JC Services shall be undertaken by the Five Councils either independently or in accordance with the provisions and schedules contained within Service Level Agreements outside this Agreement.

7. EMPLOYEES OF THE ARP

- 7.1 The Five Councils shall ensure that sufficient and appropriate employees shall be made available to undertake and manage the activities necessary or expedient for the proper and adequate provision of the JC Services as approved in the annual staffing establishment by the 2105 Joint Committee on behalf of the Five Councils. A draft staffing establishment for each Financial Year subsequent to the establishment of the ARP shall be prepared by the ARP Management Team in collaboration with the Heads of Human Resources (or equivalent) of the Five Councils respectively and submitted to the Treasurer for consideration. The draft establishment budget shall be based upon the establishment for the previous Financial Year updated for any anticipated changes considered necessary.
- 7.2 Any employee allocated by any of the Five Councils, as the case may be, to carry out any activities necessary or expedient for the provision of the JC Services shall be required to report to the 2015 Joint Committee unless his or her terms of employment require otherwise and subject to the obligations of the council as his or her employer.
- 7.3 Each of the Five Councils warrant and represent that:
- 7.3.1 it shall (subject to Clause 7.5 and without prejudice to the indemnities in Clause 7.3.5) continue to pay all Employment Costs for each of its employees allocated to carry out work in respect of the 2015 Joint Committee and the provision of the JC Services (to be covered by the payment detailed in Clauses 6.10 and 6.11);
- 7.3.2 the allocation of such of its employees to carry out work in respect of the 2015 Joint Committee and the provision of the JC Services does not breach the terms of their contracts of employment;
- 7.3.3 it shall use reasonable endeavours to ensure that its employees so allocated shall perform their duties with the skill care and diligence to be expected of a competent employee engaged in the performance of those duties having regard to the grade and experience of such employees;
- 7.3.4 it shall use reasonable endeavours to ensure that nothing is done by it or by its employees or agents which results in a breach of the contract of employment of

- any member of the ARP employees or of any employee of another council so allocated;
- 7.3.5 it shall indemnify the others of the Five Councils against all claims by or in respect of its employees allocated to the 2015 Joint Committee or the ARP in respect of the delivery of Support Services in the provision of the JC Services caused by the fault negligence or omission of that Council or its employees or agents in respect of the provision of the JC Services and take disciplinary action against such employees, if the employing Council deems appropriate; and
- 7.3.6 (in respect of issues arising under 7.3.5) it shall be responsible for all claims by or in respect of its employees allocated to the 2015 Joint Committee or the ARP in respect of the provision of the JC Services caused by the fault negligence or omission of that Council or its employees or agents towards those employees.
- 7.4 The Five Councils agree to indemnify each other against all costs in relation to pensions and pensions' contributions in respect of any employees transferred/working within ARP in accordance with the percentages in Paragraph 5.1 as may be amended by Paragraph 5.2 of the Accountancy Protocol (Schedule 3).
- 7.5 Each of the Five Councils shall where relevant cooperate and give assistance to and act in good faith towards each other in order to enable each of the others of these Councils to comply with their legal obligations in respect of their own employees.
- 7.6 In the event that an employee of the 2015 Joint Committee is to be offered early retirement, redundancy or termination with associated payments, then such an offer to a specific employee will be reported to the next available Operational Improvement Board meeting.
- 7.7 In the event that: -
- 7.7.1 the 2015 Joint Committee is dissolved pursuant to Clause 10.2 because of a decision by any or all of the Five Councils to withdraw from the 2015 Joint Committee; or
- 7.7.2 such Council no longer requires any part or element of the JC Services to be performed on its behalf by the ARP; and

7.7.3 TUPE does not apply to transfer the contracts of employment of all or any of the relevant employees of the others of the Five Councils carrying out work in connection with the performance of the JC Services on behalf of that Council or to any new contractor engaged by that Council

then that Council shall indemnify the others of the Five Councils against all contractual and statutory redundancy payments and notice payments made to employees dismissed by those others of the Five Councils for the reasons of redundancy arising from such withdrawal of that Council from the 2015 Joint Committee or the cessation of the performance of all or any of the JC Services by ARP on its behalf.

7.8 The Employment Costs incurred by any of the Five Councils in respect of any of its employees allocated to the 2015 Joint Committee or the ARP, other than the costs covered by the indemnities in Clauses 7.3.5, 7.5, and 7.6, shall be a charge against the accounts of the 2015 Joint Committee.

7.9 In the event that all Five Councils wish to consider dissolution and transfer to an Alternative Business Structure, all Five Councils agree:

7.9.1 that all Five Councils shall jointly instruct a pensions expert to undertake an actuarial and valuations assessment of the 2015 Joint Committee employee pensions contributions and liability, being both current and inherited liability ("Pensions Valuation Report") as at an agreed date, prior to dissolution; and

7.9.2 that full disclosure of the information submitted by or on behalf of the Five Councils in respect of Clause 7.9.1 shall be available to all Five Councils, together with any drafts and final copies of the most recent Pensions Valuation Report; and

7.9.3 that upon receipt of the most recent Pensions Valuation Report, each Council shall be liable for a proportion that directly relates to the caseload undertaken at the time of the dissolution, as calculated under Paragraph 5.1 or as may be amended by Paragraph 5.2 of the Accountancy Protocol and to the extent that it is necessary to indemnify the others of the Five Councils of any outstanding liability; and

7.9.4 that all Five Councils must then consider whether to transfer the 2015 Joint Committee employee pensions and liability detailed in the most recent Pensions Valuation Report to the Alternative Business Structure.

8. ARP PREMISES, ASSETS, CONTRACTS AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Premises

8. The costs of the premises at Breckland House, Thetford occupied and used by the 2015 Joint Committee or by the ARP for the provision of the JC Services shall be charged to the accounts of the 2015 Joint Committee in accordance with Clause 2.1 of Schedule 3

Assets

8.1 Any assets allocated for use by the ARP for the provision of the JC Services shall remain the property of the Council who owned it prior to the formation of the 2015 Joint Committee.

8.2 Any jointly used new assets procured by one of the Five Councils (as determined by the 2015 Joint Committee) on behalf of and at the cost of the 2015 Joint Committee (subject to the standing orders of the procuring Council and any applicable procurement legislation) shall be owned by the Five Councils in proportion to the percentages determined under Paragraph 5.1 or as may be amended by Paragraph 5.2 of the Accountancy Protocol.

8.3 The 2015 Joint Committee shall be responsible for the security, maintenance and repair of all assets used by it and the ARP for the provision of the JC Services.

8.4 A register of assets shall be maintained by the Treasurer showing the ownership, the date of its allocation to, or purchase for, the purposes of the 2015 Joint Committee for use by the ARP and the date of disposal of all assets allocated to or used by the 2015 Joint Committee formerly used by the ARP.

Contracts

- 8.5 All contracts (whether for goods, equipment, supplies, services or use of intellectual property rights) entered into on behalf of the 2015 Joint Committee or its predecessor for use by the ARP shall (subject to the provision of any necessary licence or approval of the other contracting party) be continued in effect.
- 8.6 Any new contracts required for the purposes of the 2015 Joint Committee for the benefit of the ARP for the provision of the JC Services shall be procured by one of the Five Councils (as determined by the Operational Improvement Board) on behalf of the 2015 Joint Committee in accordance with the acquiring Council's standing orders and any applicable procurement legislation and the procuring Council shall remain contractually liable for any rights obligations and liabilities arising under the contracts and shall act in that regard in the best interests of the Five Councils and the 2015 Joint Committee and account for any monies received to the 2015 Joint Committee and be entitled to seek recompense from the funds of the 2015 Joint Committee for any expenditure properly and reasonably incurred in that respect.

Intellectual Property

- 8.7 Each of the Five Councils shall grant to each of the others of the Five Councils a royalty free licence to copy and use through the 2015 Joint Committee all materials relevant to the JC Services in which it has intellectual property rights for use by or for the 2015 Joint Committee and the ARP only. The Council owning such intellectual property rights shall indemnify the others of the Five Councils in respect of any claim for infringement of the intellectual property rights of a third party and shall notify the others of the Five Councils and the 2015 Joint Committee as soon as it receives notice of any such claim.

9. INDEMNITIES INSURANCE AND LIABILITIES AND CONDUCT OF CLAIMS

Indemnities

- 9.1 Save as provided under Clause 5.3.2 (*subsidy reclaims*) and Clauses 7.3.5 and 7.3.6 (*employee fault negligence or omission*) each of the Five Councils shall indemnify the others of them and their employees and agents against all claims

demands actions costs and expenses (including legal expenses on an indemnity basis) which such other of the Five Councils or its employees or agents may incur as a result of any act omission or default of the others of the Five Councils as the case may be or of their employees or agents in respect of this Agreement and:

- 9.1.1 breach of contract;
 - 9.1.2 damage to real and personal property; or
 - 9.1.3 injury to persons including injury resulting in death.
- 9.2 Save as provided by Clauses 7.3.5 and 7.3.6, (*employee fault negligence or omission*) each of the Five Councils shall indemnify the others of them from and against any damages or awards paid to any of its employees or his or her personal representatives or payment made in settlement of any claims made by an employee or his or her personal representative arising from a breach by that Council of this Agreement or from negligence of that Council or its employees or agents (including legal expenses on an indemnity basis).
- 9.3 Save as provided under Clause 5.3.2 (*subsidy reclaims*) and Clauses 7.3.5 and 7.3.6 (*employee fault negligence or omission*) each of the Five Councils shall release and indemnify the others of the Five Councils and their members and officers from and against all liability for any of the following which arise out of or in consequence of the obligations under this Agreement, including but not limited to:
- 9.3.1 breach by that Council of its supply contracts for goods or materials or equipment made or to be made available to the 2015 Joint Committee for the purposes of the JC Services; or
 - 9.3.2 breach by that Council of the terms of any other of the Five Councils' supply contracts for such goods or materials or equipment.
- 9.4 Where one of the Five Councils enters into such a supply contract as is referred to in Clause 9.3.1 then the others of the Five Councils shall release and indemnify the contracting Council in respect of any breach by those others of the Five Councils (or of their officers or agents) of the obligations under such a supply contract arising from or in consequence of any non-performance or part performance acts defaults omissions breaches and negligence of any obligation under that supply contract.

- 9.5 A Council shall not be responsible or obliged to indemnify any other or others of the Five Councils for:
- 9.5.1 any liability under Clause 9.3 which arises as a direct result of one of the Five Councils acting on the instructions of any other or others of the Five Councils (to the extent that the other Council is or other Councils are entitled to give such instructions); or
- 9.5.2 any injury loss damage cost and expense caused by the negligence wilful misconduct or a breach of this Agreement by any other or others of the Five Councils or an agent contractor or employee of any other or others of the Five Councils.
- 9.6 None of the Five Councils shall be liable in tort to any other or others of the Five Councils for any negligent act or omission of that other Council or those other Councils relating to this Agreement and the only remedy of such other Council or Councils is under this Agreement. Each of the Five Councils shall use reasonable endeavours to procure that no agent, contractor or employee of it brings a claim in tort or otherwise against any of the others of the Five Councils.
- 9.7 Any indemnity under any provision of this Agreement shall be without prejudice to any indemnity by the same Council under any other provision of this Agreement.
- 9.8 None of the indemnities under this Agreement shall apply and there shall be no right to claim damages for breach of this Agreement in tort or on any other basis whatsoever to the extent that any loss claimed is for loss of profits, loss of use, loss of production, loss of business or loss of business opportunity or is a claim for consequential or for indirect loss of any nature allegedly suffered by any Council.

Insurance and Liabilities

- 9.9 Each of the Five Councils shall take out and maintain with a well established insurance provider or underwriter of repute for so long as may be necessary the following insurances in respect of their own employees premises and assets allocated to the 2015 Joint Committee for the use of the ARP: -
- 9.9.1 public liability insurance for a value of not less than £10 million for each and every claim;

- 9.9.2 employer's liability insurance for a value of not less than £10 million for each and every claim;
- 9.9.3 buildings and/or contents insurance;
- 9.9.4 any other insurances required by law or agreed by the 2015 Joint Committee to be appropriate.
- 9.10 In respect of any assets owned by any of the Five Councils and allocated to the 2015 Joint Committee for use by the ARP, the Council nominated by the Joint Committee shall take out and maintain the insurances referred to in Clause 9.9.
- 9.11 Any new assets or any accommodation or premises leased or acquired pursuant to Clauses 8.2 or 8.3 shall be insured by the Council nominated by the 2015 Joint Committee to acquire or lease such assets accommodation or premises on behalf of the 2015 Joint Committee for the purposes of the ARP.
- 9.12 In relation to the insurances referred to in Clauses 9.9, 9.10 and 9.11: -
- 9.12.1 the interests of the others of the Five Councils shall be noted on the policies;
- 9.12.2 none of the Five Councils shall take any action or fail to take any action nor allow anything to occur which would entitle an insurer to refuse a claim under any of the insurance policies or which may render such a claim wholly or partially repayable;
- 9.12.3 each of the Five Councils shall provide to the others of the Five Councils copies of insurance policies referred to in Clauses 9.9, 9.10 and 9.11 and evidence of the payment of the premiums and that the insurances are in full force and effect.
- 9.13 In the event of a default by the responsible Council in taking out and maintaining any requisite insurance one of the others of the Five Councils may pay the premium or take out the requisite insurances and recover its costs from the responsible Council as a debt.
- 9.14 Other than in respect of the insurances referred to in Clauses 9.9.1 and 9.9.2 a Council responsible for taking out or maintaining insurances may (subject to the prior agreement of the 2015 Joint Committee) decide to self insure in respect of any risks or interest as defined and agreed by the 2015 Joint Committee and to accept and meet liability thereof as if it were an insurer of such risks or interest.

Conduct of Claims

- 9.15 The conduct by one of the Five Councils of claims made by a third person against it in relation to a matter related to this Agreement in connection with a potential liability described in Clauses 9.1 to 9.8 shall be dealt with under the procedures set out in Schedule 4 of this Agreement.

10. COMMENCEMENT AND TERMINATION

Commencement of the Agreement

- 10.1 This Agreement shall come into at the date at the beginning of this Agreement and shall replace the Reconstitution Agreement dated 10 September 2015 subject to Clause 2 of that Agreement which shall continue to be in force.

Withdrawal of a Party from this Agreement

- 10.2 Subject to the requirements of Clause 10.3 any of the Five Councils may withdraw from the 2015 Joint Committee on giving two years notice to the others of the Five Councils, in accordance with Clause 25. On the effective date of any such withdrawal, being two years after the date of service of the notice set out in Clause 25, this Agreement shall terminate and the 2015 Joint Committee shall be dissolved (save that any of the remaining Councils may enter into a new joint arrangement on such terms as the remaining Councils may agree).
- 10.3 Before serving a notice under Clause 10.2 the Council wishing to withdraw from the 2015 Joint Committee must have:-
- 10.3.1 served a Statement of Intent on the others of the Five Councils setting out the reasons underlying their intention to leave the 2015 Joint Committee and
- 10.3.2 discussed the Statement of Intent with the others of the Five Councils with a view to agreeing an Action Plan at a meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee that shall be convened to take place within 28 days of the date of service deemed under Clause 25 but
- 10.4 failed to agree an Action Plan to address the concerns expressed or improved outcomes cited following discussion to deal with these.

- 10.5 Where an Action Plan is agreed the Five Councils will ensure that it is carried out.
- 10.6 Where an Action Plan is not agreed, then the Treasurer shall agree the appointment of an independent actuary to value assets, for the purposes of redistribution/sale or repayment to the Council leaving the 2015 Joint Committee, in accordance with the percentages set out in Paragraph 5.1 or as may be amended by Paragraph 5.2 of the Accountancy Protocol, and the Provisions on Termination set out under Clause 10.7 shall be applied.

New Member

- 10.7 If at any time it is agreed by the Five Councils that one or more other local authorities shall join in or benefit from the activities of the 2015 Joint Committee this Agreement shall be terminated and the 2015 Joint Committee shall be dissolved on such date as may be agreed by the Five Councils and a new joint committee arrangement entered into on such terms as the Five Councils and such one or more other local authorities may agree.

Provisions on Termination

- 10.8 From receipt of a notice of withdrawal given under the provisions of Clause 10.2 until the date of termination of this Agreement and without prejudice to any other rights or remedies that the Five Councils have against each other under the terms of this Agreement:
- 10.8.1 each of the Five Councils shall continue to make the payments provided for in this Agreement in respect of the maintenance of the ARP and the costs of the ARP's provision of the JC Services in respect of that Council until date of termination. This shall be subject to any redistribution/sale or repayment to the Council in relation to the ARP assets, in the agreed proportions set out under Paragraph 5.1 as may be amended by Paragraph 5.2 of the Accountancy Protocol, such assets to be valued in accordance with Clause 10.5;
- 10.8.2 each of the Five Councils shall co-operate with each other to ensure a smooth and timely handover of the JC Services to each of those Councils or to any contractor or contractors appointed by them or any of them or to any successor to the ARP and

- 10.8.3 each of the Five Councils shall act in good faith and use reasonable endeavours to minimise loss or harm to the others of the Five Councils arising from such a termination of this Agreement.

Provisions when dissolving ARP and transferring to an Alternative Business Structure

- 10.9 In the event that the Five Councils resolve that they wish to dissolve ARP and move to an Alternative Business Structure, the Treasurer shall agree the appointment of an independent actuary and pensions expert, for the purposes of valuing assets and liabilities, including, although not limited to those detailed under Clause 7.11 and that, subject to Clause 8.5 shall be apportioned in accordance with the percentages calculated under Paragraph 5.2 of the Accountancy Protocol.

11. REVIEW OF AGREEMENT

- 11.1 At any time any one or more of the Five Councils may seek a review of this Agreement and the operation of the ARP and its performance of the JC Services by submitting a report detailing the reason for the review (Review Report) to each of the other of the Five Councils and the 2015 Joint Committee.
- 11.2 Upon receiving the Review Report the 2015 Joint Committee shall advise the OIB and task it with conducting the review.
- 11.3 On production of the Review Report the Five Councils will have 8 weeks in which to submit their comments to the OIB in order to allow time for committee/member briefing cycles.
- 11.4 On receipt of comments from each of the Five Councils within the timescale referred to in Clause 11.3 (or any extension thereof agreed by the OIB) the OIB shall meet to consider the content and recommendations of the Review Report in the light of the comments received from the Five Councils and submit to the Five Councils and the 2015 Joint Committee the revisions and amendments (if any) it proposes be made to this Agreement and this Agreement shall be amended (or if not amended shall be deemed to have been amended) to accord with the proposals of the Review Report (as revised and amended by the OIB) with effect

from such date as determined by the OIB. The outcome of the review shall be reported to the next meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee.

12. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

12.1 The Five Councils shall work together through the 2015 Joint Committee to deliver the provision of the JC Services to a high standard of quality in a manner which is fair and equitable to all sectors of the communities of the Five Councils and their employees allocated to ARP and to this end each of the Five Councils shall agree:

-

12.1.1 to adopt policies to comply with their statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and any modification or re-enactment thereof and will not treat any person less favourably than any others because of that person's gender, sex or sexual orientation, marital or other status, race, nationality, ethnic origin, disability or age and will comply with all relevant codes of practice;

12.1.2 if found guilty of unlawful discrimination which relates to the ARP, to take steps to avoid a repetition of such unlawful discrimination and provide details of such steps to the others of the Five Councils; and

12.1.3 as far as possible to observe all relevant codes of practice for equal opportunities in employment especially in relation to the employees allocated to the ARP.

13. CONFIDENTIALITY

13.1 Each of the Five Councils agrees that (except as required by law) it will:

13.1.1 keep confidential and not divulge to any person any agreed confidential, technical or commercial information concerning the business accounts finance technology expertise contractual arrangements or other dealings transactions or affairs of the others of the Five Councils; and

13.1.2 not use any such information for its own purposes (except as contemplated in this Agreement).

13.2 Each of the Five Councils agrees to use its reasonable endeavours to prevent the publication or disclosure of any such confidential information.

- 13.3 Clauses 13.1 and 13.2 do not apply to any confidential information (as agreed by the Five Councils) used, divulged or communicated:
- 13.3.1 pursuant to a contract for the supply of goods or services;
 - 13.3.2 pursuant to the procurement of goods and services in accordance with Clauses 8.2 and 8.6;
 - 13.3.3 pursuant to this Agreement;
 - 13.3.4 on the instructions of any other or others of the Five Councils;
 - 13.3.5 to its employees and professional advisers on terms that this information is confidential to them; or
 - 13.3.6 under any Court order or where there is statutory obligation to disclose it.
- 13.4 Each of the Five Councils undertake that they will not without the consent of the others of the Five Councils make any press or other announcement concerning any aspect of this Agreement or make any use of the names of the others of the Five Councils in consequence of this Agreement.

14. DATA PROTECTION AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

- 14.1 Each of the Five Councils agrees that in relation to any personal data (as defined in the DPA and GDPR) it holds in relation to this Agreement it will comply as a data controller if necessary with the DPA and GDPR including:
- 14.1.1 the seven data protection principles listed in Article 7 to the GDPR;
 - 14.1.2 (subject to any exemptions) requests from data subjects for access to data held by it; and
 - 14.1.3 the requirements relating to notification to the Information Commissioner by data controllers under Article 33 of the GDPR.
- 14.2 Each of the Five Councils agrees that if it acquires personal data from any other party in connection with this Agreement it will:
- 14.2.1 maintain a valid and up to date registration or notification under the DPA which covers all processing of such data which it undertakes;

- 14.2.2 only undertake processing of such personal data where it is reasonably required in connection with the performance of its obligations under this Agreement;
- 14.2.3 not disclose such personal data to any third party other than:
 - 14.2.3.1 disclosure on terms substantially the same as and no less stringent than those required by this Clause, to its employees agents and contractors to whom such disclosure is reasonably necessary in connection with the performance of its obligations under this Agreement; or
 - 14.2.3.2 as required by court order; or
 - 14.2.3.3 as may be required under relevant exemption under the DPA & GDPR.
- 14.2.4 bring into effect and maintain all technical and organisational measures to prevent unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and accidental loss or destruction of or damage to personal data including taking reasonable steps to ensure the reliability of employees having access to the personal data; and
- 14.2.5 (save as under any relevant exemption, where exemptions under the DPA & GDPR apply to obtaining consent) obtain the consent of data subjects to the disclosure of any personal data disclosed under this Agreement.
- 14.3 Nothing in this Agreement requires any of the Five Councils to disclose any information to another party if that Council considers that to do so would be in breach of the DPA and GDPR.
- 14.4 In the event that any of the Five Councils receives a request for information under the FOIA (relating to the JC Services provided by the ARP to the Council) then the Five Councils agree that the ARP shall provide all the necessary assistance as reasonably requested by the Council to enable the Council to respond to the request for information within the time for compliance set out in Section 10 of the FOIA.
- 14.5 The Council in receipt of the request for information shall be responsible for determining at its absolute discretion whether the information requested is exempt from disclosure in accordance with the provisions of the FOIA or may be disclosed.

15. WAIVER AND SEVERABILITY

- 15.1 A failure or delay by any of the Five Councils in exercising any rights, powers or privileges under this Agreement will not operate as a waiver of them. The single or partial exercise of any right power or privilege does not prevent any other exercise of it or the exercise of any other right power or privilege (whether arising out of the same factual situation or otherwise). Any waiver of a breach of this Agreement is not to be effective unless given in writing signed by the Council waiving its entitlement. No waiver is to be deemed a waiver of any subsequent breach or default nor is it to affect the other terms of this Agreement.
- 15.2 The receipt of money does not prevent the Council receiving it questioning the correctness of the amount or any other statement in respect of money.
- 15.3 If any term of this Agreement is illegal void or unenforceable the remainder of this Agreement will continue in force as though that term had not been included in it.

16. ENTIRE AGREEMENT

- 16.1 This Agreement sets out the whole agreement between the Five Councils in relation to the transaction it provides for.
- 16.2 Each of the Five Councils warrants that it has not entered into this Agreement on the basis of any representation made by any one or more of the others of the Five Councils except to the extent that such representation is expressly included in it (but nothing in this Clause 16 excludes any liability for fraudulent misrepresentation).

17. EXTENT OF OBLIGATIONS AND FURTHER ASSURANCE

- 17.1 Nothing in this Agreement is to require any of the Five Councils to act in any way that is inconsistent with its obligations or duties as a local authority.
- 17.2 Each of the Five Councils undertakes (subject to Clause 17.1) to do all things and execute all further documents that may reasonably be required by one or all of the others of the Five Councils to give effect to this Agreement.

18. NO PARTNERSHIP OR AGENCY

- 18.1 Nothing in this Agreement is to constitute or be deemed a partnership within the meaning of the Partnership Act 1890 the Limited Partnerships Act 1907 the Limited Liability Partnerships Act 2000 or any other legislation concerning partnerships or limited liability partnerships.
- 18.2 None of the Five Councils shall hold itself out as the agent of any one or more of the others of the Five Councils or to have any authority to bind any one or more of the others of the Five Councils except to the extent that this Agreement expressly provides otherwise.

19. CONTRACTS (RIGHTS OF THIRD PARTIES) ACT 1999

No term of this Agreement is enforceable under the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999 by any person who is not a party to this Agreement.

20. VARIATIONS

- 20.1 Except as provided by Clause 11.4 no person has authority on behalf of any of the Five Councils to agree to any variation to this Agreement except where the amendment is agreed to in writing by each of the Five Councils.
- 20.2 No consents to any variation to this Agreement are required from any person other than the 2015 Joint Committee (acting pursuant to Clause 11.4) or all of the Five Councils as detailed under Clause 20.1.

21. PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION/BRIBERY

- 21.1 Where any of the Five Councils or any person employed by or acting on behalf of any of the Five Councils (whether with or without that Council's knowledge) has offered or given or agreed to give to any person or received or agreed to receive from any person any gift or consideration of any kind as an inducement or reward for:

- 21.1.1 doing or not doing or having done or not having done any action in relation to the obtaining or execution of this Agreement or any other contract with that Council; or
- 21.1.2 showing or not showing favour or disfavour to any person in relation to this Agreement or any other contract with that Council; or
- 21.1.3 where in relation to any contract with such a Council the Council or any person employed by that Council or acting on that Council's behalf has:
 - 21.1.3.1 committed any offence under the Bribery Act 2010 or legislation revoking or amending the same; or
 - 21.1.3.2 given any fee or reward the receipt of which is an offence under the LGA 1972 or Bribery Act 2010;

then the others of the Five Councils, if they all agree in writing so to do, may withdraw from this Agreement pursuant to Clauses 10.3. to 10.6 and recover from the aforesaid Council the amount of any loss they may suffer as a result of such termination of this Agreement.

22. MEDIATION AND ARBITRATION

- 22.1 If any dispute arises out of this Agreement the Five Councils shall attempt to settle it by mediation in accordance with the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution (“CEDR”) Model Mediation Procedure (“**the Model Procedure**”).
- 22.2 To initiate mediation, the Chief Executive of any of the Five Councils seeking such mediation shall give notice in writing (“**ADR Notice**”) to the others of the Five Councils requesting mediation in accordance with Clause 22.1 and shall notify CEDR of the dispute.
- 22.3 If the Five Councils cannot agree the identity of the mediator within 10 Working Days of the date of the ADR Notice the mediator is to be appointed by CEDR.
- 22.4 The mediation will start not later than 20 Working Days after the date of the ADR Notice.

- 22.5 None of the Five Councils may commence any court proceedings or arbitration in relation to any dispute arising out of this Agreement until they have attempted to settle it by mediation and that mediation has terminated.
- 22.6 If the dispute has not been settled by the mediation within 35 Working Days from the date of the ADR Notice the dispute shall be referred to arbitration under the Arbitration Acts 1950 to 1996 by a single arbitrator appointed by agreement between the Five Councils. If the Five Councils cannot agree the identity of the arbitrator within 10 Working Days of one or more of the Five Councils proposing at least two possible appropriate arbitrators to the others of the Five Councils the arbitrator is to be appointed by the President or next most senior officer available of the Law Society on the application of one or more of the Five Councils.

23. ASSIGNMENT AND SUBCONTRACTING

- 23.1 None of the Five Councils may transfer assign mortgage or pledge its rights or obligations under this Agreement.
- 23.2 None of the Five Councils may subcontract any of its obligations under this Agreement except with the consent of the others of the Five Councils (such consent not unreasonably to be withheld or delayed) but any Council who so subcontracts is to be liable for the performance of its subcontractors.
- 23.3 No rights under this Agreement are to devolve by operation of the law or otherwise on any receiver administrative receiver liquidator or assignee.

24. GOVERNING LAW AND ENFORCEMENT

- 24.1 The formation construction performance validity and all aspects of this Agreement are to be governed by English law and subject to Clause 22.6 each of the Five Councils agree to submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of England and Wales.
- 24.2 The rights and remedies given by this Agreement are cumulative and do not exclude any other rights or remedies given by law under this Agreement.

25. NOTICES

25.1 Notices or other communications under this Agreement will be duly served if given in writing and sent to the nominated representative of the Five Councils or to JC Members or to officers of the 2015 Joint Committee and shall be deemed to have been served in accordance with the following table with the date of service and method of proof being as set out therein.

Method of service	Date of service	Proof of service
Personal delivery to the nominated representative.	Day of delivery.	Proof of handing to the nominated representative.
Personal delivery of a letter addressed to the nominated representative at the address for service.	Day of delivery if before 16.00 on a Working Day otherwise 10.00 on the next Working Day thereafter.	Proof of delivery.
First class letter addressed to the nominated representative at the address for service.	48 hours after posting if that is a Working Day otherwise 10.00 on the next Working Day thereafter.	Proof of posting unless returned through the Post Office undelivered service within 21 days of posting.
Facsimile addressed to the nominated representative at the address for service.	Day of transmission if before 16.00 on a Working Day otherwise 10.00 on the next Working Day thereafter.	Transmission report showing a successful transmission to the correct number plus proof of posting of a hard copy.
Electronic mail addressed to the	Date of transmission if before 16.00 on a	Delivery receipt

nominated representative's electronic mail address	Working Day otherwise 10.00 on the next Working day thereafter	
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- 25.2 Each of the Five Council's address for service is the address set out at the start of this Agreement or such other address as it may notify to the other of the Five Councils and the Secretary in writing.
- 25.3 The nominated representative for the receipt of notices under this Agreement is the Chief Executive of each of the Five Councils or such other person as the relevant Council may nominate by written notice to the others of the Five Councils and to the Secretary.

26. COSTS

Except in so far as the costs of the preparation negotiation and completion of this Agreement shall be within the One-off Costs each of the Five Councils shall bear their own costs in relation to the negotiation and completion of this Agreement.

IN WITNESS whereof each of the Five Councils have executed and delivered this Agreement as a Deed on the above date.

SCHEDULE 1

PART I

JC Services

The JC Services shall comprise the statutory functions of each of the Five Councils under each of the following enactments: -

- (a) **Local Government Finance Act 1988** Part III sections 43 to 51 and 62 to 67;
- (b) **Local Government Finance Act 1992** Part I Chapter I sections 43 to 51, sections 62 to 67, section 103 and Schedule IX;
- (c) **Social Services Contributions and Benefits Act 1992** Part VII section 123 and sections 130 to 137;
- (d) **Social Services Administration Act 1992** sections 5, 6, 7, 7A, 16, 75, 76, 110A, 110AA, 111, 112, 113, 139E, 139F, 139G, 139H, 140, 140A, 140B, 140C, 140D, 140E, 140EE, 140F and 140G and Regulations made under sections 7A and 76;
- (e) **Local Government Act 1972** section 111(1) (in so far as it relates to anything done thereunder that is calculated to facilitate or is incidental or conducive to the discharge of any statutory function or functions referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (d) above);
- (f) **Tribunals, Courts & Enforcement Act 2007** in so far as it relates to enforcement of debts for Council Tax, Non Domestic Rates and other debts collected by the ARP
- (g) Any other statutory functions of the Five Councils which relate directly or indirectly to the collection of council tax and non-domestic rates and/or the administration of housing benefit council tax benefit and other relevant benefits.
- (h) The collection and/or enforcement of any other debt as agreed in writing by each of the Five Councils.

SCHEDULE 1

PART II

JC Services

The JC Services of the Five Councils in respect of the collection and administration of council tax and non-domestic rates (business rates) and the payment of housing and other benefits shall comprise the following services:

1. Council Tax including calculation of tax base
 - 1.1 Billing
 - 1.2 Recovery including enforcement
2. Business Rates including granting rate relief
 - 2.1 Billing
 - 2.2 Recovery including enforcement
3. Benefits Administration including recovery of overpayments
4. Anti-Fraud measures

SCHEDULE 2

Baseline Budget – 2015/16

	7(5)Partners 2015-16 £	4 (3) Partners 2015-16 £	Total 2015-16 £
Breckland Council	1,590,842	281,525	1,872,367
East Cambridgeshire Council	923,914	167,441	1,091,355
Fenland Council	1,151,977	0	1,151,977
Forest Heath Council	785,400	136,689	922,089
St Edmundsbury Council	1,121,313	224,491	1,345,804
Suffolk Coastal	1,185,218	0	1,185,218
Waveney Council	1,643,273	0	1,643,273
	8,401,937	810,146	9,212,083

Agreed ARP Budget for the provision of the JC Services on behalf of the Five Councils for the 2019/2020 Financial Year

2019-20 Budget			
	5 Partners	3 Partners	Total
	2019-20 Budget	2019-20 Budget	2019-20 Budget
	£	£	£
Breckland Council	1,624,756	218,377	1,843,134
East Cambridgeshire Council	926,615	130,174	1,056,789
East Suffolk Council	2,985,568	0	2,985,568
Fenland Council	1,235,369	0	1,235,369
West Suffolk Council	1,957,656	280,673	2,238,330
	8,729,965	629,224	9,359,189

SCHEDULE 3

ANGLIA REVENUES PARTNERSHIP

Accountancy Protocol

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The formulation of these budget policies and procedures has been written with reference to details contained within this Agreement.
- 1.2 Any issues resulting from any of the Five Councils not approving the budget approved by the 2015 Joint Committee should be pursued in accordance with the arrangements detailed within this Agreement.

2.0 RECAP OF MAIN BUDGET ISSUES FROM THIS AGREEMENT

- 2.1 The baseline budget was set in 2015/16 and was split between all seven (now Five) Councils for the majority of agreed costs and income, however a small part of the baseline budget was split between Breckland, East Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk Councils only (Three Councils). The agreed items which are charged only to these Three Councils are:
- Rent & Rates at the Thetford Offices
 - Magistrates Court Costs
 - Fax Machines
 - Support service recharges from Breckland & West Suffolk agreed in advance
- 2.2 A draft budget for each Financial Year subsequent to the 2015/16 baseline split is prepared by the ARP Management Team in collaboration with the Heads of Finance and Chief Finance Officers of the Five Councils respectively and submitted to the Treasurer for consideration and thereafter submitted to the Section 151 Officers of each of the Five Councils, by 30th October in each year. The draft budget for the next Financial Year shall be based upon the budget for the previous Financial Year with the agreed Three Councils and Five Councils baseline split, updated for any anticipated changes considered necessary and shall take account of:-
- The cost of employees required to perform the JC Services during the relevant Financial Year
 - The agreed goods, services, plant etc. required to be procured during the Financial Year
 - The share of cost of the accommodation occupied by the employees of the ARP for the Three Councils split only
 - The cost of implementing any change in the legal or other requirements affecting the performance of the JC Services
 - Any capital requirements
 - Any agreed changes to the JC services to be provided in connection with the performance of the JC Services
 - Indexation
 - Support services agreed in advance

- Any projected under spend or over spend for the current Financial Year that may be required to be taken into account in the budget for the next Financial Year.
 - Income receivable in respect of costs that are charged to the partnership
- 2.3 The draft budget shall also have appended to it a Schedule detailing the payments estimated to be required by each of the Five Councils during the relevant Financial Year.
- 2.4 After being considered by the Section 151 Officers the draft budget shall be submitted to the Treasurer for consideration and then to the 2015 Joint Committee for approval and thereafter submitted to each of the Five Councils so as to be received by them no later than 31st December in each year.
- 2.5 In the event that the budget for the current Financial Year requires amendment to meet any over spend or increase in the costs of the performance of the JC Services by the ARP for that year the ARP Management Team shall report thereon to the 2015 Joint Committee.
- 2.6 The ARP Management Team shall report as soon as practicable on any deficit or surplus arising during the current or immediately preceding Financial Year as compared with the approved budget, first to the Section 151 Officers and subsequently to the 2015 Joint Committee. Any such deficit shall be met, or any such surplus shall be dispersed, by reference to this Accountancy Protocol.

3.0 THE BUDGET

3.1 Introduction

The budget must be set in line with the arrangements and timetable detailed in this Agreement.

3.2 The process

- The Five Councils will hold a “Client” account and a “Partnership” account
- Costs chargeable to the “Partnership” account (taking into account the three & Five partner splits detailed in 2.1 above) are:
 - Employee related expenses
 - Transport related expenses
 - Premises related expenses
 - Supplies and services
 - Any Support Service costs agreed in advance by the Five Councils as chargeable to the “Partnership” account because of the obvious service/benefit provided
 - Any income that is received in respect of costs that are chargeable to the “Partnership” account.
- Costs chargeable to the “Client” account are:
 - Support Services not specifically agreed as chargeable to the “Partnership” account

- Income not received in respect of costs that are chargeable to the “Partnership” account
- Corporate costs not directly attributable to the work of the 2015 Joint Committee and the ARP.

3.3 Once all of the costs are identified the Council who will be making the various payments should be clearly identified. This will form the basis of future budget monitoring and control.

3.4 It will be necessary for the OIB to review each budget line each Financial Year to confirm the following:

- the basis of calculation is acceptable to each of the Five Councils and
- the reasonableness of the cost and the benefits to the 2015 Joint Committee and the ARP.

4.0 TREATMENT OF COSTS

4.1 “Partnership” account costs must adhere to the following principles:

- Costs must be based on actual usage/cost
- Costs must be directly attributable to the work of the 2015 Joint Committee and the ARP
- Costs are assessed on an annual basis in accordance with Value for Money Objectives

4.2 The annual budget of the 2015 Joint Committee must not include any corporate or client costs or previously un-agreed costs from any of the Five Councils.

4.3 The annual budget of the 2015 Joint Committee will include the costs chargeable to the “Partnership” account as set out under Paragraph 3.2 of this Accountancy Protocol.

5.0 APPORTIONING THE PARTNERSHIP BUDGET

5.1 The “Partnership” account will be apportioned to each of the Five Councils: by taking the agreed baseline (detailed in Schedule 2) & apportioning any increase or decrease in costs between the councils, in accordance with paragraph 2.1, in the following proportions:

2019-20 Budget apportionment (based on 1 August 2019)			
	5 Partners (Excl Bailiff)	3 Partners	5 Partners Bailiff Only
Breckland Council	17.89%	34.90%	20.60%
East Cambridgeshire Council	10.55%	20.60%	9.81%
East Suffolk Council	35.23%	0.00%	33.22%
Fenland Council	13.53%	0.00%	10.99%
West Suffolk Council	22.80%	44.50%	25.38%

Costs and income from Enforcement Agent activity (Tribunals, Court and Enforcement Act 2007) will be shared in relation to the percentage of liability orders passed, in respect of each of the Five Councils, to an Enforcement Agency Service

- 5.2 These percentages are based on a combination of caseload data, which include the number of hereditaments, the number of businesses chargeable to business rates and the number of benefits claimants (and in the case of the Enforcement Agency liability orders passed for enforcement). This data will be reviewed annually on 1 August, and the new percentage data used with respect to the budget for the following Financial Year.
- 5.3 The Treasurer shall prepare a Schedule setting out the payments due from each of the Five Councils, taking into account each Council's share of the ARP budget and the costs incurred by each Council. This Schedule shall be agreed by the OIB. Amounts due shall be payable in equal instalments on the first Working Day of each month.
- 5.4 Any new capital acquisitions shall be jointly funded by the Five Councils in accordance with the percentages set out in Paragraph 5.1 of this Accountancy Protocol, or amended in accordance with Paragraph 5.2 of this Accountancy Protocol.

6.0 BUDGET MONITORING AND CONTROL

- 6.1 The Treasurer will act as the lead for monitoring and control of the budget which will be undertaken as follows:
- The budget will be set as detailed in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Accountancy Protocol.
 - Payments will be made by the relevant Council as identified when setting the budget (as provided in Paragraph 3.3 of this Accountancy Protocol).
 - Within 7 Working Days of the end of the quarter, each of the Five Councils will provide the Treasurer with a Schedule of payments made against the annual budget of the 2015 Joint Committee.
 - The Treasurer will compile an overall position against budget and raise any queries with the each of the other Councils.
 - The Treasurer will compile a quarterly monitoring report to the OIB and the 2015 Joint Committee, showing actual against budget and a forecast position for the year end.

7.0 BUDGET CHANGES AND AMENDMENTS

- 7.1 Budget changes may result from:
- a) New initiatives
 - b) Additional expenditure not previously identified
 - c) Over spends
 - d) Additional Government funding received during the year
 - e) Under spends

- 7.2 Budget changes a)-d) above should be dealt with as detailed in Paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5 of this Accountancy Protocol.
- 7.3 In these cases each of the Five Councils will share this cost in addition to the fixed fees in the ratio as detailed in Paragraph 5.1 of this Accountancy Protocol.
- 7.4 Budget changes resulting from Paragraph 8.1d) of this Accountancy Protocol should be reported to the 2015 Joint Committee once confirmation of the under spend is confirmed.
- 7.5 In all cases variations to the budget involving changes to or additions to a previously agreed budget will need reporting to the 2015 Joint Committee for approval and thereafter to each of the Five Councils for approval in line with each of the relevant Council's Standing Orders and Terms of Reference regarding budgets.

8.0 ASSETS

- 8.1 Any new assets shall be procured by one of the Five Councils (as determined by the 2015 Joint Committee) on behalf of and at the cost of the 2015 Joint Committee (subject to the standing orders of the procuring Council and any applicable procurement legislation) and shall be owned by the Five Councils jointly in proportion to the percentages set out in Paragraph 5.1 of this Accountancy Protocol for the purposes of the 2015 Joint Committee.
- 8.2 A register of assets shall be maintained by the Treasurer showing the ownership, the date of their allocation to or purchase for the purposes of the 2015 Joint Committee for use by the ARP and the date of disposal of all assets allocated to or used by the 2015 Joint Committee formerly used by the previous Joint Committee.

SCHEDULE 4

General Legal Advice and Services

Subject to the 2015 Joint Committee deciding otherwise the Legal Advice and Services will include and be provided by the following of the Five Councils:-

West Suffolk

- 1.1 Securing outstanding liability orders for unpaid council tax and business rates by obtaining a charging order on the property and registering the same;
- 1.2 Where a charging order has been made by the court, applying for an order for sale when instructed to do so;
- 1.3 Investigating the possibility of collecting outstanding liability orders for both council tax and business rates by way of insolvency proceedings and commencing such proceedings when instructed to do so;
- 1.4 Advising generally on alternative methods of enforcement; and
- 1.5 Advising in connection with the recovery of overpaid housing benefit and other benefits and commencing proceedings when instructed to do so.

Any of the Five Councils

- 2.1 General Constitutional Advice to be the Council whose Monitoring Officer has been appointed
- 2.2 Commencing and conducting fraud prosecutions, although at the Commencement Date this is provided by external Solicitors, as previously arranged through ARP, or in respect of West Suffolk Council - by their Council, and may change at the request of one of the Five Councils to undertake their own prosecutions/or all of the prosecutions on behalf of the Five Councils.

Conduct of Claims

- 3.1 If one of the Five Councils (“**the Notifying Council**”) receives a notice demand letter or other document concerning such a claim for which the Notifying Council may be entitled to be indemnified under this Agreement the Notifying Council shall notify the others of the Five Councils in writing as soon as reasonably practicable and in any event within twenty (20) Working Days of its receipt.
- 3.2 The Notifying Council shall be free at any time to give notice to the others of the Five Councils that it is retaining or taking over conduct of any defence dispute compromise or appeal of any claim made by a third party in connection with any matter described in Paragraph 3.1 or any incidental negotiations. On receipt of such notice the others of the Five Councils shall promptly take all reasonable steps necessary to transfer the conduct of such claim to the Notifying Council and shall provide to the Notifying Council all reasonable co-operation access and assistance for the purposes of considering and resisting such claim. If the Notifying Council gives any notice pursuant to this Clause then the others of the Five Councils shall be released from any future liability under its indemnity in respect of such claim.
- 3.3 If one or more of the others of the Five Councils pays to the Notifying Council an amount in respect of an indemnity and the Notifying Council subsequently recovers (whether by payment discount credit saving relief or other benefit or otherwise) a sum which is directly referable to the fact matter event or circumstances giving rise to the claim under the indemnity the Notifying Council shall immediately repay to the other or others of the Five Councils the lesser of:-
- 3.3.1 the sum recovered (or the value of the saving or benefit obtained) less any out of pocket expenses and costs properly incurred by the Notifying Council in recovering it; and
- 3.3.2 the amount paid to the Notifying Council by the others of the Five Councils in respect of the claim under the relevant indemnity.
- 3.4 There is no obligation on the Notifying Council to pursue a recovery under Paragraph 3.3. The other or others of the Five Councils is to be repaid only to the extent that the amount of recovery aggregated with the amount paid by the other or others of the Five Councils exceeds the Notifying Council’s losses.

3.5 Each of the Five Councils shall comply with the requirements of any insurer who may have an obligation to consider any claim made in respect of any liability arising under this Agreement.

The Common Seal of **BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL** was affixed hereto in
in the presence of)
)
)

The Common Seal of **EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**
was hereto affixed in the presence of)
)
)

Head of Legal and Democratic Services

The Common Seal of **FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL** was hereunto affixed in the
presence of)
)
)

Authorised Signatory

The Common Seal of **WEST SUFFOLK COUNCIL** was affixed hereto in
the presence of)
)
)

Authorised Signatory

The Common Seal of **EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL** was hereunto affixed
in the presence of)
)
)

Authorised Signatory

Recommendation of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 28 November 2019: Delivering a Sustainable Medium Term Budget 2020- 2021

Report No:	CAB/WS/20/004	
Report to and dates:	Cabinet	14 January 2020
	Council	25 February 2020
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Sarah Broughton Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance Tel: 01284 787327 Email: sarah.broughton@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Chair of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Ian Houlder Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee Tel: 07597 961069 Email: ian.houlder@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Rachael Mann Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) Tel: 01638 719245 Email: rachael.mann@westsuffolk.gov.uk	

Decisions Plan: The decision made as a result of this report will usually be published within 48 hours and cannot be actioned until five clear working days of the publication of the decision have elapsed. This item is included on the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: All wards

Recommendation: It is recommended that, subject to the approval of Council as part of the budget setting process, the proposals detailed in Section 2 and Table 1 of Report No: PAS/WS/19/019, be included in securing a balanced budget for 2020/2021 and the medium-term financial plans.

1. Background / Context

1.1 At its meeting on 26 September 2019, the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee (PASC) agreed the principles and approach for delivering a balanced budget in 2020/21 and a medium-term financial plan for the years up to 2023/24. Those principles were:

- The 2020/21 budget and medium-term financial plans will continue to follow the West Suffolk Council Strategic Framework (three priorities) and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (six themes).
- The budget and MTFS will reflect any new initiatives developed as part of the revised Strategic Plan.
- The budget and MTFS will include the forecast impact of initiatives that address our financial challenges and seize opportunities to reduce the existing budget gaps.
- The process will continue to communicate the overall West Suffolk financial challenges and opportunities through the medium-term financial strategy to Leadership Team, staff, cabinet and all councillors.

1.2 The Committee was informed on 28 November 2019, of changes in assumptions and cost and income changes which had been identified through the budget process to date and were set out in Section 2 of the report.

2. Extract from Report No: PAS/WS/19/019: (Section 2 and Table 1)

2.1 2. Progress and Budget Assumptions

2.1 At its meeting of 19 February 2019 the Shadow Council approved a budget for 2019/20 and Medium-Term Financial Plan for West Suffolk Council to 2023. This Medium-Term Financial Plan was balanced for the first two years and then showed a budget gap of £2.7m in 2021/22 and £3.9m in £2022/23 (including unallocated costs).

2.2 The September Spending Round announcement confirmed the current governments intentions for the in-year (2019/20 level) Revenue Support Grant allocations and the current 50% Business Rate retention scheme to continue for 2020/21, giving some certainty for the next 12-month budget plans. However, the announcement pushed back the final design of the national Fair Funding Review and Business Rates Retention Scheme (consultation has taken place on a 75% scheme) to next year (2020/21), providing uncertainty for our medium-term plans. Until we have longer term confirmation from central government any financial plans beyond 12 months outlook will contain significant risk to the accuracy of government funding.

2.3 The review of the 2020–2024 budget assumptions, as part of the budget challenge workshops, have given rise to the following key assumption changes to the medium-term plans:

- *Confirmation received for the continuation of Revenue Support Grant and Rural Services Delivery Grant in the Spending Round.*
- *Revised estimate of the Collection Fund surplus from 2019/20 (to be confirmed in January).*
- *Future employer contribution rate assumptions review following receipt of the recent tri-annual year (2020-2023) from the actuaries for the Suffolk Local Government Pension Scheme – continuation of the 2019/20 rate for the next three years.*
- *Timing assumption for the Barley Homes dividend pending the adoption of the 2019 business plan – due for consideration at the December 2019 Council.*

2.4 *The net impact of each of these assumption changes is included in the table below. These changes, plus the outcomes from the Budget Challenge workshops, give rise to a budget gap of £0.3m for 2020/21, £2.0m for 2021/22, £3.0m for 2022/23 and £3.1m for 2023/24. These changes are set out in **Table 1** below:*

Table 1:

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Budget Gap - February 2019	0	2,700	3,900	4,400
<u>Budget Assumptions Review</u> <u>(paragraph 2.3)</u>	244	(759)	(991)	(1,407)
<u>Budget Challenge Workshops -</u> <u>Additional Pressures</u>				
Operations - Recycling Credits, reduction in income	217	217	217	217
<i>Significant volatility in global markets for recovered material (plastic, paper and card) is resulting in a reduction in the net recycling credit we receive from Suffolk County Council (SCC). Original assumption £9.76/tonne, revised plan £3.75/tonne, currently at £2.40/tonne. These are market changes and not driven by SCC.</i>				
Operations - Loss of CCTV income	84	84	84	84
<i>Loss of the Vertas contract for control room support for their security operations (Vertas have now acquired a security company with its own control room). Amend assumption to reflect reduction whilst exploring further income opportunities</i>				
Operations - Additional external valuation advice	30	30	30	30
<i>Valuation advice to support commercial property rent reviews - amend budget assumption to reflect last 2 years trend</i>				
Total Additional Pressures	301	301	301	301
<u>Budget Challenge Workshops -</u> <u>Income/Savings items</u>				
Recruitment - 1 Month advert	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
<i>Adoption of a policy to extend recruitment advertising to 4 weeks in line with other public sector partners and to make best use of recruitment windows and notice periods as well as creating potential for vacancy savings.</i>				
Corporate Cost Reviews	(46)	(49)	(50)	(50)
<i>Corporate costs (external printing, consumables, subscriptions etc.) reduced based on trends and saving initiatives</i>	.			
Establishment Review	(43)	(43)	(43)	(43)
<i>Revision of the salary establishment giving rise to a surplus against the previous assumption for 2020/21.</i>				
Operations - Park Income and Building Maintenance	(41)	(41)	(41)	(41)
<i>Improved income trends in 2019/20 in Parks and Building Maintenance reflected in the revised MTFs.</i>				
Barley Homes - SLA Income	(28)	(28)	(28)	(28)
<i>New Service Level Agreement with Barley Homes confirmed.</i>				
Total Additional Income/Cost Savings	(259)	(262)	(262)	(263)
Net Impact	286	1,980	2,947	3,031

- 2.5 *Work is still ongoing that will significantly impact this outlook. The key elements that are yet to be finalised include:*
- *Revised income assumptions based on current trends and outcomes of Fees and Charges reviews.*
 - *A small number of savings and/or initiatives from the budget challenge workshops that are yet to be quantified.*
 - *Outcome of the Service Delivery plans focusing on benefits realisation of existing projects and transforming our processes and the way we work.*
 - *Outcome of the two taskforces – Environmental and Rural.*
 - *Civil Parking Enforcement costs and incomes.*
 - *Minimum Revenue Provision and Interest Payable based on a revised capital programme and Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) interest rates.*
- 2.6 *This budget assumes no change to the 7-year Council Tax plan for harmonization between the predecessor areas of St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath.*
- 2.7 *The Capital Programme is currently being revised and updated with known changes. This will be presented to PASC for review in January 2020.*
- 2.8 *The Council is required to set a balanced budget for the forth coming year. At this stage of the budget process and given the opportunities set out in 2.5 above, delivery of a balanced budget for 2020/21 is deemed achievable (based on what we know at this stage of the process). Having said that and given the future medium term challenges facing the council, proposals are likely to be put forward at the January PASC meeting and as part of the main February Budget and Council Tax report, to enable the Council to deliver ahead of the curve and to bring forward saving and income initiatives into 2020/21. This is good financial management and will enable greater certainty for the delivery of a sustainable medium-term financial plan for West Suffolk.*
- 2.2 The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee considered the report and assumptions and did not raise any issues.
- 2.3 The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee **noted** the approach and timescales for the 2020-2021 budget setting process and medium-term plan as well as a further update being presented to the Committee on 30 January 2020.
- 2.4 The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee considered the report and has put forward a recommendation as set out on page one of this report.

3. Implications arising from the proposal

3.1 Financial: see Report No: [PAS/WS/19/019](#)

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Recommendation of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 28 November 2019: Treasury Management Report – September 2019

Report No:	CAB/WS/20/005	
Report to and dates:	Cabinet	14 January 2020
	Council	25 February 2020
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Sarah Broughton Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance Tel: 01284 787327 Email: sarah.broughton@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Chair of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Ian Houlder Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee Tel: 07597 961069 Email: ian.houlder@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Rachael Mann Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) Tel: 01638 719245 Email: rachael.mann@westsuffolk.gov.uk	

Decisions Plan: The decision made as a result of this report will usually be published within 48 hours and cannot be actioned until five clear working days of the publication of the decision have elapsed. This item is included on the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: All wards

Recommendation: **It is recommended that, subject to the approval of Council, the Treasury Management Report (September 2019), being Report No: FRS/WS/19/004, be approved.**

1. Background / Context

- 1.1 Following the Financial Resilience Sub-Committee's consideration of Report FRS/WS/19/004, the Service Manager (Finance and Performance) reported on the Sub-Committee's consideration of the report and recommendation.

2. Investment Activity 1 April to 30 September 2019

- 2.1 Following the creation of West Suffolk Council, the total amount invested at 1 April 2019 was £42,750,000 and at 30 September 2019 £46,900,000.
- 2.2 The 2019-2020 Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy sets out the Council's projections for the current financial year. The budget for investment income in 2019-2020 was £142,141 which was based on a 0.90% target interest rate of return on investments.
- 2.3 As at the end of September 2019, interest earned during the second quarter of the financial year amounted to £194,249 against a profiled budget for the period of £71,070; a budgetary surplus of £123,179. The budgetary surplus related to higher than expected cash balances due to slippages in the Capital programme and also the favourable interest rates secured on the investments carried over from the previous councils.
- 2.4 As at the end of September 2019 a total of £14.5m had been borrowed internally from available cash balances. This had meant the Council had not had any additional borrowing over the long-term £4m loan.
- 2.5 The report included assumptions on borrowing for the capital projects included within it, alongside the current £4m external borrowing in respect of the previous Newmarket Leisure Centre build. This new borrowing requirement was based around three specific projects;
- West Suffolk Operational Hub, Bury St Edmunds
 - Mildenhall Hub
 - Investing in our Growth Fund
- 2.6 The report also included a summary of the capital borrowing budget for 2019-2020; a summary of capital borrowing for quarter two; borrowing and income – proportionality; current borrowing as at 30 September 2019 and other market considerations. In particular the governments unexpected announcement on 9 October 2019 stating they would be raising the margin applied to Public Works Loans Board loans by 1%.
- 2.7 The Sub-Committee had scrutinised the Investment Activity for 1 April to 30 September 2019 and asked questions of officers as necessary. In particular discussions were held on the recent PWLB loan increase.
- 2.8 The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee considered the report and has put forward a recommendation as set out on page one of this report.

3. Implications arising from the proposal

3.1 Financial: see Report No: [FRS/WS/19/004](#)

4. Background documents

4.1 Capital Strategy 2019-2021, Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2019-2020 and Treasury Management Code of Practice:

[TMS/SE/19/002](#) and [PAS/FH/19/007](#)

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Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document - Adoption

Report No:	CAB/WS/20/006	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	14 January 2020
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Sara Mildmay-White Portfolio Holder for Housing Tel: 01359 270580 Email: sara.mildmay-white@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Julie Baird Assistant Director (Growth) Tel: 01284 757613 Email: julie.baird@westsuffolk.gov.uk	

Decisions Plan: The decision made as a result of this report will usually be published within 48 hours and cannot be actioned until five clear working days of the publication of the decision have elapsed. This item is included on the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: All wards

Recommendations: It is recommended that, Cabinet:

- 1. notes the Schedule of Responses set out at Appendix A to Report No: CAB/WS/20/006; and**
- 2. approves the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), contained in Appendix B to Report No: CAB/WS/20/006 for adoption.**

Reasons for recommendations:

The Affordable Housing SPD provides guidance to expand and support policies set out in the West Suffolk Local Plans and assists with implementing the key strategic issues relating to housing mix and affordable housing for West Suffolk.

1. Background / Context

- 1.1 The purpose of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is to build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies contained in an adopted Local Plan. SPDs are a material consideration in decision-making but cannot introduce new planning policies into the development plan or add unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development.
- 1.2 This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) updates and replaces the original Affordable Housing SPD for West Suffolk produced in October 2013. It was recommended that this is updated following changes to National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 which included a wider definition of Affordable Housing and how this may influence future housing delivery across West Suffolk.
- 1.3 It was considered whether publishing the revised Affordable Housing SPD should be held off and brought forward alongside the West Suffolk Local Plan. However, it was recommended that a strategic overview was necessary in order to set out how we plan to address the changes within the NPPF 2019 and how this will support the Council's Strategic Framework and vision for growth. Some of the key changes to the NPPF 2019 include:
- A presumption in favour of sustainable development in relation to housing;
 - At least 10% of homes on major sites should be available for affordable homes ownership;
 - The new Affordable Housing definition offering greater flexibility on the affordable products available. These include privately managed Build to Rents units being marketed at an affordable private rent.
- 1.4 A significant proportion of affordable housing is delivered through the planning system. As part of obtaining planning permission, Local Plan policy requires that applicants for housing development contribute towards the delivery of affordable housing, either onsite or elsewhere across West Suffolk.
- 1.5 To expand upon the policies set out in West Suffolk Local Plans which influence the Affordable Housing SPD:
- Core Strategy (2010) Policy CS5 for the former St Edmundsbury area;
 - Joint Development Management Policies Policy DM29 specifically relates to the former St Edmundsbury area and the provision of rural housing exception sites; and
 - Core Strategy (2010) Policy CS9 for the former Forest Heath area
- 1.6 The Affordable Housing SPD will provide further guidance on:
- The amount of affordable housing contributions being sought from housing developments
 - Affordable Housing Providers
 - Providing affordable housing through on-site and off-site contributions

- Development viability impacts
 - Rural exception sites
 - Management and occupancy arrangements
 - Section 106 agreements for affordable housing provision
 - Calculation the financial `commuted sums;
 - Monitoring and review
- 1.7 There is an ongoing need for the provision of affordable housing in the West Suffolk area. West Suffolk’s population is ageing and so we need to have the right type of housing in place to accommodate a household changing needs.
- 1.8 West Suffolk’s housing market is currently very buoyant, and it is considered that the lower quartile house price to income earners are needing to borrow 10 times their annual income to access the housing market. (Sept 2019 <https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/ed-42-sept-2019.pdf>) This is making homes currently unaffordable to some households, especially younger people. Therefore, this Affordable Housing SPD considers a range of different types, sizes and tenures of housing to assist in alleviating this issue.

2. The Affordable Housing SPD

2.1 Consultation and engagement

- 2.1.1 A draft version of the Affordable Housing SPD was subject to a nine-week public consultation between 24 July 2019 and 30 September 2019, in accordance with the Council’s adopted Statement of Community Involvement. A total of 11 responses were received.
- 2.1.2 The representations and schedule of changes recommended can be viewed within Appendix A.
- 2.1.3 An amended version of the Affordable Housing SPD as a result of those recommended changes is provided within Appendix B. A summary of the main issues raised during the consultation are provided below:
- Clarification around the definition of Affordable Housing and that the SPD clearly reflects the updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) such as the expectation that at least 10% of homes are to be available for affordable homeownership and that this is applied to planning decisions within West Suffolk.
 - To ensure consistency in the use of terms throughout the document and that this mirrors the NPPF 2019. For example, the definition of affordable housing and the use of the term rented (can mean social rent, affordable rent or affordable rent models) and intermediate housing (low cost homeownership). The definitions within the Glossary have also been amended and follows the same headings as those within the NPPF 2019.
 - Clarification around whether the Council will seek to impose the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) through the emerging West Suffolk Local Plan. The Affordable Housing SPD explains that

NDSS should be used as a guidance tool from the earliest stages of the development process of any site, including affordable housing, to ensure that the development protects the residential amenity of existing and future residents.

- Observations and clarity about economic viability assessments and when applications may not be supported if the viability of a development is an issue. The Council has advised that it will seek to ensure the transparency of viability evidence, wherever possible. This is in line with Government guidance set out in Paragraph 34 and 57 of the viability sections of the Government's Planning Practice Guidance.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 The alternative option would be not to adopt an Affordable Housing SPD. However, this would mean that the council will not have published up to date guidance on securing affordable housing delivery, potentially undermining the Councils ability to implement the Affordable Housing Policy within the adopted Local Plans.

4. Implications

Risks

- 4.1 Without the Affordable Housing SPD, the risk is that the Council will increasingly receive planning applications for major residential sites that are not policy compliant; causing delay to the processing of applications, subsequently delaying housing delivery and absorbing more Officer time than necessary.
- 4.2 If the Affordable Housing SPD is not adopted, we will not have any guidance for West Suffolk on the calculation of financial commuted sums, in lieu of affordable housing.
- 4.3 The Affordable Housing SPD will mitigate the impacts highlighted in paragraph 6.2 and 6.3.

5. Legal Compliance

- 5.1 There are legal issues to consider when adopting the Affordable Housing SPD, specifically satisfying Part 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). Any person with a sufficient interest in the decision to adopt the Affordable Housing SPD may apply to the High Court for permission to apply a Judicial Review of that decision, no later than 3 months after the date on which the Affordable Housing SPD was adopted.

6. Personal Data Processing

- 6.1 None identified

7. Crime and Disorder

7.1 None identified

8. Environmental or sustainability

8.1 None identified

9. Changes to existing policy

9.1 The Affordable Housing SPD does not support new policy as the joint Local Plan has not reached an advanced stage. The Affordable Housing SPD therefore must be viewed in the context of existing policies CS5 and CS9 of the Council's Core Strategies. The Affordable Housing SPD sets out that it has been prepared in accordance with current National policy.

10. Impact on other organisations (e.g. community groups, businesses, partner organisations)

10.1 None identified

11. Appendices

11.1 Appendix A – Schedule of Responses following consultation
Appendix B – Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document

12. Background documents

12.1 Forest Heath Area Core Strategy- Policy CS9
St Edmundsbury Core Strategy- Policy CS5
Joint Development Management Supplementary Planning Document
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019)
National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulation 2012.

Supplementary Planning Document for Affordable Housing

APPENDIX A

Responses

Respondent	Response	Council's Assessment	Action
Environment Agency	Paragraph 4.4 of the SPD sets out that all planning proposals should comply with Government guidance and adopted Local Plans for West-Suffolk. Accordingly, we have no concerns and do not wish to make any further comment at this time.	Response gratefully received	No change required
Community Action Suffolk	<p>Rural exception sites</p> <p>4.52 Maybe delete Parish Plan and insert Neighbourhood Plan and evidence through Housing Needs Surveys</p> <p>4.55 & Housing Needs Surveys</p> <p>4.56 & housing Needs Survey identifies a need for market housing</p>	No substantial change. Comments acknowledged and amendments made.	Change required
Natural England	<p>Whilst we welcome this opportunity to give our views, the topic of the Supplementary Planning Document does not appear to relate to our interests to any significant extent. We therefore do not wish to comment.</p> <p>Should the plan be amended in a way which significantly affects its impact on the natural environment, then, please consult Natural England again.</p>	Response gratefully received	No change required

Trevor Taylor	Would like to put forward a piece of land as part of the SHLAA.	Acknowledged and has been put forward to Planning Policy as part of the Local Plan examination.	No change required
Combined response submitted on behalf of Ousden, Lidgate, Risby, Stradishall and Stansfield parish councils.	<p>The changes in the Affordable Housing SPD are excellent; however, we would like to make the following comments:</p> <p>Rural Exception Sites 1. Evidence of need.</p> <p>There is a huge lack of understanding and confusion about what affordable housing actually means and this needs to be addressed. Rural communities may be concerned that affordable housing could lead to a huge influx of people with no connection to the village. Providing clear information about what is meant by affordable housing and how it is managed is crucial to gain the support of rural communities.</p> <p>One concern is that the current method of assessing housing need which relies on surveys and the HomeLink register is not robust enough and disadvantages rural communities as they do not provide a realistic reflection of actual need. People believe that the housing list only includes people who have registered with Home Link for social housing to rent. The challenge is to get information out to people to make them aware that the HomeLink system of registration is for other forms of affordable housing, particularly as this is not made particularly clear on the HomeLink website which states:</p>	<p>Response gratefully received</p> <p>An Affordable Housing Guide has been produced to provide a better understanding of the terminology used around affordable housing. This has been emailed to all parish and town councils' in West Suffolk</p> <p>Acknowledged.</p> <p>Affordable Housing Guide provides clearer information on the allocation of housing and HomeLink. This is not considered part of the Affordable Housing SPD.</p>	No change required

	<p><i>Other types of properties such as extra care and Equity Share properties may also be advertised here.</i></p> <p>A lot of people do not bother to respond to surveys and some people can be intimidated by the wording or amount of detail required. Older people might find them complicated as would people with poor literacy skills.</p> <p>Asking people to register because they need other affordable housing seems unrealistic and doesn't include people with slightly higher/middle incomes who would like to live in villages but can't afford to or people who have a local connection but do not consider themselves in need and so do not register.</p> <p>The same applies to older people, or anyone who currently has a home so would not feel the need to register but may like to move to a place where they have a local connection, or which is better suited to their needs. There may also be people who have moved away who would not be reached by a local survey. The system is geared up for people who are in housing need but doesn't help people who wish to remain in or move into a rural area but can't afford to.</p> <p>The evidence base is provided by West Suffolk Council and there is limited input from local communities who are ultimately the best people to provide information about need. Residents will often talk to local councillors about their housing needs or concerns and this helps build up a picture of local need. It would be better if information about need could be provided by local communities in conjunction with</p>	<p>Community Action Suffolk to contact parish councils about local housing need and how we can work more closely with Parish Councils. This is noted and will make Community Action Suffolk aware of the parishes concerns.</p>	
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	<p>West Suffolk Council as there is greater trust and contact between parish councils and the communities they serve, and villages would like to have more say. They are also able to pass on information more effectively through local newsletter, parish websites and forums. Community led schemes would also win more favour in rural areas.</p> <p>1. Self-build There is no provision for self-build in rural areas. Could they incorporate something similar to the scheme described in this link? https://www.gravenhill.co.uk/</p> <p>We have already had queries from residents who would like to give land to one of their children who otherwise would not be able to afford a home for a self-build, but this is not allowed under current planning policy. In rural areas, this may be one of the most effective ways of enabling small scale affordable development. As soon as developers get involved in the planning process, costs increase because they are trying to make a profit. Self-build would remove the need for a developer to get involved and would help to keep costs down.</p> <p>In rural communities, there may be small plots of land or large gardens which could be used to enable self-build.</p> <p>2. Types of properties available There is often a need for smaller properties in rural areas for young people, people who live on their own, people who</p>	<p>Acknowledged and put forward for consideration as part of the Local Plan examination.</p> <p>Acknowledged.</p>	
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	<p>need to downsize. Developers want to build more profitable large properties. Could the affordable housing policy be adapted to allow affordable properties to be built which meet very specific criteria with regard to number of bedrooms and design?</p> <p>Another problem in rural communities is that smaller houses are often extended. This in itself is not an issue, but it does increase their value, thus depleting the affordable housing stock for that type of property. Could there be a legal undertaking not to extend properties if initially purchased under any "affordable" scheme to prevent them from being affordable in the future?</p> <p>Middle-income earners are often priced out by an uneven mix of properties, (again often exacerbated by current owners building extensions depleting housing stock in that particular price range).</p> <p>3. Design of properties</p> <p>Properties need to be fit for purpose, for example an elderly person who wishes to downsize may need a single storey property which will suit their needs as they get older. This needs to be reflected in the policy to enable more suitable housing to be built. The policy of extra care homes is excellent, but it would be good to see them provided in rural communities as well so that older people who need to downsize or need extra care can stay in the community, they have lived in all their lives.</p> <p>In some parts of France if you live in a rural community you</p>	<p>Comment passed to Planning Policy for consideration as part of the Local Plan examination.</p> <p>Comment passed to Planning Policy for consideration as part of the Local Plan examination.</p>	
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	<p>earn the right to move into purpose-built accommodation within your community as you get older. This means that people know that they will be looked after well into old age and removes any anxiety about what will happen to them. Could this be a possible model for UK, whereby there is a range of housing in a village which people can move into as their needs change?</p>		
<p>Martin Aust on behalf of my client Pigeon Investment Management Limited (Pigeon).</p>	<p>General comment: The purpose of the SPD should be to facilitate the delivery of affordable housing, rather than introduce additional controls that in practice may hinder the delivery of new homes. We have therefore sought within the comments below to highlight where the draft SPD has the potential to frustrate the delivery process and, where appropriate, have constructively suggested alternative wording or proposals that will facilitate affordable housing delivery.</p> <p>3.3/3.5. Comment: The type and tenure of affordable housing to be provided must also have regard to the impact on scheme delivery, and the aspirations of Registered Providers who it is hoped will invest in acquiring the homes. We believe the full range of affordable housing tenures should be readily available, as defined in the NPPF, and see no justification for restricting this. In this regard we welcome the list of definitions at 3.11 and comment at paragraph 3.13. We strongly believe the final tenure and scheme mix of the affordable housing is best left to the Reserved Matters stage, to best reflect emerging and changing housing need. Measures that seek to agree the affordable housing tenure ahead of this stage run the risk of hindering affordable</p>	<p>The SPD defines the council position on affordable housing. This includes the overall affordable housing percentage as well as the tenure requirement as per the latest economic assessment.</p>	<p>Minor change required. No material change to SPD content.</p>

	<p>housing delivery, counter to the purpose of the SPD, which is to facilitate affordable housing delivery.</p> <p>Only if the SHMA has fully explored all other tenures and their financial implications, and concludes they should be discounted, can this paragraph (3.5) be justified. The Council's approach to affordable housing tenures should be clear and robust. As currently worded, the SPD has the potential to hinder, rather than facilitate affordable housing delivery. By allowing the full range of affordable housing tenures as defined by the NPPF then this will help to facilitate affordable housing delivery. Furthermore, the NPPF (published in Feb 2019) is more up to date than the SHMA and should therefore take precedence in respect of the full range of affordable housing products.</p> <p>3.7/3.9. Comment: West Suffolk's objective to secure affordable housing on major developments of 10 or more homes, or sites of 0.5 hectares or more needs to be explicit within the SPD. This is in accordance with the NPPF. It should be clear that it supersedes the policy within the current local plan.</p> <p>3.11. Comment (see footnote): The Council note the robust evidence they have to support the need for Shared Ownership. There is no reference to where this evidence can be seen or if at the time other intermediate tenures referred to in the NPPF were explored, or indeed the impact on overall scheme delivery of alternative tenures. Comment here appears at odds with 3.13.</p>	<p>Acknowledged and will form part of the evidence base for the Local Plan examination. Our current policy requirements are highlighted within the SPD and still relevant to the delivery of housing across West Suffolk.</p> <p>Acknowledged and changes made.</p> <p>The SPD under paragraph 3.13 states that it will have regard to the affordable housing products defined within the NPPF Annex 2. The evidence used will identify the tenure type needed to meet the needs of those on local incomes and reflect local house</p>	
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	<p>3.14. Comment: We welcome reference to entry level exception sites. No further comment is made in the draft SPD other than quoting the NPPF. We support this policy which will enable increases in home ownership and the delivery of affordable housing. We believe the Council should more explicitly encourage the delivery of such schemes within the SPD.</p> <p>3.15/3.16. Comment: We welcome the site by site evidence-based approach to agreeing tenure mix. The tenure split detailed in table 1 is out of date and not supported by up to date evidence. It would be helpful in our experience for there to be a commitment to timely negotiations that don't delay schemes coming forward. As noted earlier we believe the tenure of affordable housing is best left to the reserved matters stage and needs to allow for the delivery of the full range of affordable housing tenures noted in the NPPF, in order to facilitate affordable housing delivery.</p> <p>We are concerned at the footnote to the table. This notes the Council has taken a decision that on small sites generating 2 or 3 affordable homes they should be for rent. This contradicts both adopted council policy and the NPPF requirement for 10% of homes to be affordable home ownership and so cannot be correct.</p> <p>Table 1 notes that up to 80% of affordable housing to be for affordable rent and only 20% for intermediate tenures. This</p>	<p>prices.</p> <p>The council will consider each scheme in line with current policies.</p> <p>Comment acknowledged and will form part of the evidence base for the Local Plan examination. Our currently policy requirements within the SPD are still relevant.</p> <p>Acknowledged and amended to include 10% affordable home ownership provision in accordance with NPPF.</p>	
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	<p>leads to a very low proportion of intermediate housing in comparison to the norm. This tenure mix is not consistent with the NPPF in encouraging the delivery of the full range of affordable housing tenures and is not supported by evidence.</p> <p>3.22. Comment: The requirement to involve a RP in the delivery of affordable housing should not be explicit. For example, RP involvement would not be required for Build to Rent or Discounted Market Sale schemes as defined in the NPPF, or indeed the involvement of other such bodies should be able to be agreed with the Council (for example Community Land Trusts etc.)</p> <p>We would also recommend caution about the necessity to engage with specific Registered Providers (RP's) at the outline stage. In our experience their investment strategies may well change before individual phases of larger strategic projects commence, RP's are also more likely to engage when there is certainty surrounding a scheme. In addition, there also needs to be flexibility with the housing mix and location allowing for circumstances to evolve between the pre-application stage and delivery, particularly problematic on larger strategic schemes and schemes that are submitted as outline applications.</p> <p>The Council is seeking to add to the definition of Affordable Rents by including reference to Local Housing Allowance rates. We do not support this, as RP's could find future rent levels inappropriately controlled, (through future welfare reform etc which may not be designed to control affordable housing in itself). This places undue risk on associations</p>	<p>Amended.</p> <p>We encourage early engagement with Registered Providers to assess the deliverability of the site. This is encouraged throughout the planning process.</p> <p>The need to include Affordable Rents not exceeding the Local Housing Allowance has been agreed by Members and was consulted as part of West Suffolk Housing Strategy and Tenancy</p>	
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	<p>which can only be mitigated by them offering lower prices than the market would dictate, again harming scheme delivery. Broad Rental Market Areas cover large geographical areas and are often too imprecise and can lead to large anomalies in comparison to the definition of Affordable Rents relating to the Market Rent. (There may be an argument for Local Housing Allowance rates to be referred to at the point of initial letting (following construction only).</p> <p>3.24. Comment: This paragraph notes affordable housing should be available in perpetuity. Requirements for affordable housing to be available in perpetuity must be subject to an appropriately worded Mortgagee in Possession (MiP) clauses acceptable to the RP's main funders. Failure to incorporate this will lead to affordable housing provision stalling as RP's will find homes not to be fundable. We would suggest that model clauses are agreed with Registered Providers to avoid often lengthy delays while Deeds of Variation are agreed and implemented, as by default has been the practice elsewhere where this issue isn't addressed at the policy level.</p> <p>There also needs to be acceptance of the implications of the Right to Acquire, if exercised by a tenant of a home being available in perpetuity.</p> <p>The monitoring and enforceability of subsidy recycling, to deliver alternative affordable housing provision within the district, has in practice proven very difficult to monitor and enforce in other districts. RP's have often resisted such</p>	<p>Strategy.</p> <p>The Mortgagee in Possession (MIP) Clause used in S106 follows the recommended wording issued by the National Housing Federation.</p>	
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	<p>clauses as they are often seen as being overly restrictive and often not practical if relatively small levels of receipt are received (for instance from when individual stair casing of shared ownership homes occurs). This has often been dealt with elsewhere by close strategic relationships between Councils and the main RP's operating in their areas.</p> <p>Homes England uses the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) for benchmarking purposes rather than as a design standard. These floor areas are in excess of most RP's standards and the majority of affordable housing delivered in the last 30 years under former Homes England predecessors design advice, including the 'Code for Sustainable Homes'. However, their adoption can mask the need for good design and therefore layouts that maximise useable space. It should be acknowledged in the SPD that many RP's do not look for their housing to be constructed to the NDSS in order to meet the key objective of delivery of affordable housing. These standards could inadvertently lead to the delivery of fewer affordable homes, when it is a priority to deliver such homes to meet housing need. We are concerned that there may therefore be unintended consequences by the adoption of policies that have not been thoroughly tested on scheme delivery.</p> <p>4.1. Comment: This paragraph is poorly worded. We assume the intent is to be clear that public subsidy will not be available in normal circumstances (e.g. unless policy levels of affordable housing are exceeded) on schemes where affordable housing is delivered via S106 agreements, as opposed to affordable housing led schemes and schemes</p>	<p>Point 3.24 advises it is the council's preference that properties are built to MHCLG " Nationally Described Space Standard". This is not explicit but will be reviewed as part of the Local Plan examination.</p> <p>Acknowledged and amended.</p>	
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	<p>that exceed policy requirements. The suggested early engagement by developers is probably problematic and should at the Reserved Matters stage.</p> <p>4.2. Comment: This paragraph appears to contradict 3.22. We support comment at 4.2.</p> <p>4.7/4.9. Comment: The proposed arrangements for information being made available at full, outline and reserved matters applications are to be welcomed. However, provision of this information requires full engagement and cooperation from the authorities housing officers.</p> <p>4.10/4.13. Comment: We consider that the requirement for clusters of affordable homes to be limited to 6 homes in smaller settlements and 15 in larger ones is overly prescriptive. A limit of circa 25 homes seems sensible and should suffice on its own. Furthermore, there must be flexibility in how the policy is applied. The policy should allow for clusters to be located adjacent to one another where separate accesses arrangements are provided, in order to be practical. It should also be acknowledged that if the design approach for a scheme includes apartments then it is not necessarily practical to artificially split an apartment building to achieve cluster sizes of no more than 15. Again, flexibility should be allowed to achieve the key objectives of facilitating affordable housing delivery.</p> <p>4.14/4.15. Comment: Encouragement to avoid the design of schemes with high maintenance or high service charge requirements, is acceptable, although it should be noted</p>	<p>Remove paragraph 4.2</p> <p>Parcels no greater than 15 affordable dwellings have been supported by the Cambridgeshire Sub Region. This is to ensure we meet the Governments agenda of delivering a balanced and sustainable community.</p>	
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	<p>these costs will be reflected in RP's offer prices.</p> <p>4.16. Comment: Tenure blind development is to be encouraged as proposed by the draft SPD. However, the preference for NDSS for affordable housing could have the unintended consequence of hindering this.</p> <p>4.17/4.18. Comment: We note the Councils stated preference for homes to comply with the NDDS. See comment at 3.24 above. In addition, this proposal has not been tested as part of any West Suffolk Plan Viability Study to ascertain the effect on scheme delivery. The introduction of the SPD at this stage appears out of sequence with the Local Plan process, as this work has not yet been carried out. We are concerned that there may therefore be unintended consequences by the adoption of policies that have not been thoroughly.</p> <p>4.21. Comment: The draft SPD notes that all of the affordable homes should be constructed to Lifetime Homes. Such homes come at an additional construction cost of between £5/10,000. This proposal has not been tested as part of any West Suffolk Plan Viability Study to ascertain the effect on affordable housing delivery. Furthermore, we are concerned that such homes could still require immediate adaptation to meet individual tenant's needs in many circumstances. The SPD should therefore require the Council to identify particular needs of wheelchair users, rather than apply a blanket approach.</p> <p>4.22/4.23. Comment: Proposed arrangements for phasing</p>	<p>The SPD refers to the council's preferences on NDSS as per the Technical Advice Note but notes that this is not yet policy. Space standards will be considered further as part of the Local Plan examination.</p> <p>Acknowledged and will form part of the evidence base for the Local Plan examination.</p>	
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	<p>leading to affordable housing delivery proportionately with market housing are sensible. The early delivery of affordable housing can have significantly negative impacts on scheme delivery.</p> <p>4.24/4.28. Comment: We agree that in general on-site provision of affordable housing should be the preference. In our experience, almost without exception RP's will only take ownership of flats in blocks where the homes are all affordable housing in a block and the freehold can be transferred. Encouragement to consider such issues at the design stage may be considered wise, but specific acknowledgment of this example would be wise in our view</p> <p>Off-site provision includes examples of the transfer of free land in the draft SPD. This should be limited to accommodate the same number of homes and be by agreement. However, we are very concerned that table 2 notes that the Council may be willing to accept commuted sums only if all other options have been discounted. We believe this is far too prescriptive.</p> <p>4.29/4.30. Comment: We note the principal that commuted sums should neither be to the advantage or disadvantage of the developer. We note that such a payment relates to the difference in value between open market sale and restricted sale as affordable housing. The tenure of that affordable housing is of course critical to the calculation and should be referred to and in line with adopted policy. Open market values should be nett of the costs of sale and other incurred costs.</p>	<p>The Council preference is to secure onsite provision.</p> <p>Acknowledged and includes such provision within the SPD.</p>	
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	<p>4.31/4.39. Comment: These paragraphs outline the process for negotiating a reasonable commuted sum and in general are sensible. We see the principal danger as being the time this may take and the need for an arbitration clause to be included. Other authorities publish tables of commuted sums for the off-site provision of affordable housing and annual review mechanisms that give all parties certainty and should be included.</p> <p>4.51. Comment: The proposed limits to the number of homes to be provided on rural exception sites is viewed as being overly prescriptive. The introduction of entry level exception sites also brings into question the need for different controls from those at 3.14 above.</p> <p>4.56. Comment: The draft SPD on Rural Exception Sites paragraph appears to be at odds with the NPPF. The draft SPD notes “a small number of market housing” may be considered. Whereas the NPPF states that: 77... Local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs and consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would help to facilitate this. (Our emphasis)</p> <p>Paragraph 4.56 of the SPD should be amended to reflect paragraph 77 of the NPPF.</p> <p>5.1/5.3. Comment: We welcome comments in these sections relating to viability testing. However, we are</p>	<p>The Council considers that the use of tables for commuted sum figures can quickly be outdated. Therefore, we use a benchmark of three Registered Provider values to ensure current, robust values are agreed.</p> <p>Acknowledged. To be reviewed in line with the Local Plan examination.</p> <p>Amended.</p> <p>Viability testing as referenced should fully accord with the</p>	
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	<p>concerned that the full impact of policies contained in the draft SPD have not been tested as part of any West Suffolk Plan Viability Study to ascertain their impact on affordable housing viability.</p> <p>6.1/6.2. Comment: With regards to ongoing management we note the Council’s preference for sale to RP’s as a general principal. But this should not be required in all circumstances, for example where development occurs through ‘Build to Rent’, Discounted Market Sale, or where other approved bodies are involved.</p> <p>We assume Equity Share refers to Shared Equity and welcome the ability for developers to use this mechanism as included in the NPPF definitions of affordable housing. This seems contrary to 3.11 and the stated preference for Shared Ownership which we feel is inappropriate.</p> <p>6.4. Comment: See comment at 3.22 above</p> <p>6.11/6.13. Comment: With reference to comments on perpetuity reference must be made to appropriately worded MIP clauses – see 3.24 above (and provisions that do not hamper the Right to Acquire).</p> <p>Appendix 3. Comment: In the calculation of commuted sums open market values must be net of sales costs (legal, sales and marketing) and other incurred costs which are considerable in comparison to affordable housing.</p> <p>We suggest the Council by way of introducing an additional</p>	<p>NPPF.</p> <p>Amended</p> <p>Acknowledged and include full costs.</p>	
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	appendix keep a delivery register of affordable housing which is updated quarterly.	Affordable Housing figures are reported annually as part of the Annual Monitoring Review.	
Bidwell's on behalf of Jockey Club Estates	<p>Our comments are set out below, numbered as per the numbering within the SPD:</p> <p>3.11 - We support the definitions proposed for 'affordable housing for rent', 'affordable routes to home ownership', 'discounted market sales housing' and 'starter homes' as they replicate the definitions set out in the 2019 revised NPPF and they support build to rent (BTR) schemes</p> <p>3.22 - We suggest adding a comment here to clarify that the Landlord for affordable units of a BTR scheme is not required to be a registered provider as per Part A of Annex 2 of the revised NPPF</p> <p>3.24 - Regarding nominations agreements being entered into with the Council, we would suggest adding a comment to indicate that the Landlord of a BTR scheme may choose the occupiers of the affordable units, meeting affordability criteria. We agree that the affordable housing should be tied to stay as affordable housing for future eligible households</p> <p>4.2 - We support this clause which allows alternative arrangements for developing affordable housing; this will encourage and facilitate the delivery of affordable units in the district.</p>	<p>Amended</p> <p><i>To be considered internally.</i></p> <p>To be addressed as part of the Local Plan examination.</p>	<p>Minor change required: No substantial changes to document.</p>

	<p>4.5 - We are supportive of this clause but would suggest that it is expanded to clarify that one of the planning objectives which should be taken into consideration is the provision of affordable housing for a particular local need for specific social/employment sector such as the horse racing industry. This would support the other horse racing specific policies and will support the racing industry itself which is vital to the economic and social health of Newmarket and its surroundings.</p> <p>4.45 - We support this clause as it states that the Council will be reasonable in applying its policies on affordable housing</p> <p>6.1 - We would propose commenting to confirm that BTR schemes can be managed by non-RP Landlords as per the earlier sections of the document.</p> <p>6.6 - After the last bullet point, we would propose adding 'or evidence-based need' to enable the Council to support housing which is needed for specific local social/employment sectors.</p> <p>Glossary - We would propose that it would be helpful for the Glossary in this document to match the NPPF Glossary to ensure equitable considerations.</p>	<p>Amended.</p> <p>To be considered as part of the Local Plan examination.</p> <p>Amended.</p>	
Clinical Commissionin	The CCG would like it noted that developments with a large percentage of affordable housing will still create the same	Acknowledged.	No change

g Group	demand as those developments with less affordable housing. The CCG would like reassurance that the amount of developer contributions that can be requested for the provision of primary care in the vicinity of the development will not be reduced? Providing that the amount of S106 that can be requested will not be reduced then the CCG does not have a problem with agreeing to the new terms in the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2019.		required
Planning Issues Ltd on behalf of the Retirement Housing Consortium	<p>Policy Context – Section 1 The Draft SPD is introduced as an update to the 2013 guidance. The SPD does not support new policy as the joint Local Plan has not reached an advanced stage. The Draft SPD therefore must be viewed in the context of existing policies CS5 and CS9 of the existing Core Strategies. The Draft SPD sets out that it has been prepared in accordance with current national policy.</p> <p>Historic Delivery – Section 1 Paragraph 1.9 of the Draft SPD summarises recent levels of affordable housing delivery within West Suffolk on larger sites (10 units and above). It states that the council has been successful in delivering over 30% affordable housing in the context of achieving against local plan targets of 30% from sites of 10 units or more. Large sites are reported to have delivered 32% affordable housing but it is unclear the tenure make up of this delivery, who delivered it (e.g. majority affordable RP or local authority led schemes) or if grant funding (historic or recycled capital grant funding) enable higher than average delivery.</p>	Monitoring of affordable housing delivery is in line with the requirements of the Annual Monitoring review. Internal monitoring of all schemes is held by the Strategic Housing Team and requests for information can be made available.	No change required.

	<p>Although retirement housing typologies appear to be treated as general needs C3 development typologies, there is no breakdown of affordable housing delivery from this specific typology. Recent changes to the PPG require that Councils should assess housing needs for older people in greater detail and establish targets and measure delivery. The PPG section on housing for older people also alludes to the viability constraints associated with this housing typology.</p> <p>National Policy – Section 2 The Draft SPD references the 2019 NPPF and by association, the NPPG which now supports the revised NPPF. The current NPPG makes it clear that specific viability concerns may need to be taken into account where particular types of development are proposed which may significantly vary from standard models of development for sale (<i>for example build to rent or housing for older people</i>). The NPPG is also now clear that <i>different requirements may be set for different types or location of site or types of development</i>. It is therefore envisaged by the most recent national policy and guidance that the viability of the delivery of different types of housing (in comparison with the mainstream housing market) requires closer scrutiny at both the plan making and decision making levels. Not all C3 housing proposals are alike and should not be treated as such in policy terms. It is appreciated that work is underway to prepare a new local plan policy but the above points should be factored into the evidence base underpinning any emerging guidance. One</p>	<p>Acknowledged and will be put forward as consideration as part of the Local Plan examination.</p>	
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	<p>of the drivers of the NPPG relating to viability matters is providing certainty for all stakeholders and the Consortium is of the view that this is particularly important for our sector given that they specialise in non-mainstream housing development.</p> <p>Housing Needs of Older People National Guidance as summarised above is clear that in order to establish a local plan policy seeking affordable housing, housing need by typology must be established and that once need is established and balanced against viability considerations, different targets may be set in policy for different types of sites and different types of development. <i>1 Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 63-004-20190626,</i> <i>Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 63-006-20190626</i> <i>2 Paragraph: 007 Reference ID: 10-007-20190509</i> <i>3 Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 10-001-20190509 3</i></p> <p>The Cambridge Sub Region SHMA (2013) provides at Section 15 an overview of the housing for older people position within the area. The Housing Commission Priorities set out are for the provision of a range of housing types and tenures to enable choice. No specific target analysis of tenure requirements within this housing typology appears to have been undertaken, however. Providers are therefore unclear as to the actual need for affordable housing tenures for older peoples housing and based upon experience of working in the area are likely to be subject to a generic all C3 affordable housing target which is unlikely to be reflective of specific typology need.</p> <p>The Consortium would strongly encourage the Council</p>	<p>Acknowledged and will be put forward for consideration as part of the wider evidence base to form part of the Local Plan examination.</p>	
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	<p>to robustly examine housing needs within the older persons housing typology. In light of recent changes to the PPG as summarised above, it is appropriate to have a typology specific set of targets in respect of proposals for housing for older people.</p> <p>Certainty – Section 3</p> <p>This comment echoes earlier ones in relation to certainty of developer subsidy. At paragraph 3.5, the Draft SPD states that the Council’s preference for affordable housing types will be formally disclosed at the time of negotiations based upon what the Strategic Housing team consider the priority need is at that time. Such an uncertain approach makes it difficult for providers of specialist housing to secure and enter into land contracts when the subsidy required to provide affordable housing is unknown. The PPG states in this regard:</p> <p><i>Policy requirements should be clear so that they can be accurately accounted for in the price paid for land.</i></p> <p>In relation to the tenure of affordable housing considered acceptable (paragraph 3.11), it is clear that these relate primarily to mainstream housing typologies and in the Consortium’s experience, intermediate types of affordable housing may be more suitable to retirement developments in addressing need given that many of those moving into sheltered accommodation will tend to have equity in their own homes. Similarly, Table 1 on page 14 sets out the tenure requirements as they apply to mainstream housing with little consideration for specialist typologies.</p>	<p>The Council’s requirement for affordable housing is set out in the current local plan documents. It is recommended that developers take this into consideration prior to securing a deal with the landowner to ensure all the council’s planning obligations are met.</p> <p>This is the council preferred option based on the latest housing needs evidence.</p>	
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	<p>Extra Care and Sheltered Housing Schemes – Section 3</p> <p>The Consortium is firmly of the view that affordable housing policy must not apply to extra care housing proposals. The Draft SPD states that a measure of whether extra care proposals should be subject to affordable housing policy should be based upon the nature and type of service and accommodation in a scheme.</p> <p>The appeal inspector for the Pegasus Life proposal in Sidmouth states that</p> <p><i>I do not accept the Council’s criticisms of this range, albeit broad. Whilst many of the activities listed might be taken for granted by most people, every one of them is likely to become more challenging in advancing years. Many residents might only require relatively limited personal care, perhaps the minimum amount of 2 hours per week, but there are also likely to be many who require substantially more than this. Furthermore, the age restriction associated with the development is such that the need for personal care will inevitably increase for many people with age. I accept that not all people will require the same level of care at the same point in their life, but what is important is that care is available to meet their individual needs as and when the time comes. That is what the scheme seeks to provide (44).</i></p> <p><i>The planning obligation would provide certainty in restricting the age of primary occupants and ensuring that a minimum level of care is needed and taken up by future residents (51).</i></p> <p>Good points of reference in this regard are the RTPI Good Practice Note No8 and the Housing Lin note Extra Care Housing <i>What is it</i> both of which provide guidance on how</p>	<p>Acknowledged. Will be put forward for consideration as part of the wider evidence base to inform the Local Plan examination.</p>	
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	<p>individual schemes should be assessed in this regard. The Consortium therefore requests that all extra care proposals are exempted from the affordable housing policy due to the minimum level of care offered by such proposals. This will allow the necessary certainty for providers to plan and secure land for what after all meets an identified housing need locally and brings with it considerable benefits . Appeal Ref: APP/U1105/W/17/3177340 5</p> <p>On Site Delivery of Affordable Housing – Section 3 Paragraph 3.21 requires that where an extra care scheme is considered liable for affordable housing contributions this will be expected to be provided on site and in accordance with the overall 30% affordable housing requirement and that this will depend on the size of the site. As already established the Consortium is of the view that Extra Care proposals should not be subject to the affordable housing policy due to the minimum level of care provided in all cases which in planning use terms would make the proposal a C2 use class as demonstrated by the Sidmouth decision mentioned already. At paragraph 4.14 the Draft SPD talks about ensuring that developers avoid design resulting in high maintenance and service charges. Typical retirement blocks are located on constrained brownfield sites in or on the edge of town centres and will often preclude the creation of separate blocks. Occupiers of single blocks will in nearly all cases be required to pay equal service charges and the nature of successful retirement proposals is that service charges for maintenance of enhanced communal areas will make on site</p>	<p>Acknowledged. This will be put forward for consideration as part of the wider evidence base to form part of the Local Plan examination.</p>	
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	<p>provision unaffordable for those paying Affordable Rent. Perhaps the most relevant example in this context of an off-site provision rather than on site being most appropriate on a retirement development is the Churchill Retirement Living scheme in Haverhill. The Inspector for the Haverhill scheme concluded:</p> <p><i>Having considered the evidence over the practicalities in relation to service charges, management arrangements and viability (should this demonstrate provision be significantly below 30%), and over the priority locally for family- sized affordable homes, I am persuaded that this scheme would not lend itself to affordable units being part of the development. This has been demonstrated to be the case with other similar developments where on-site affordable housing provision has proved impractical (18).</i></p> <p>Commuted Sums – Section 4</p> <p>We are pleased to see a methodology within the Draft SPD which provides detail in relation to a commuted sum approach. However, we believe the approach should be clear that it relates to the open market value of a comparable property within the area and not specifically new build property. Appeal Ref: APP/E3525/W/16/3161310 6</p> <p>We understand the intention of the proposed methodology is to enable an RP to acquire priority need property on the open market quickly which in most cases will be existing properties.</p> <p>Appendix 3 provides a worked example referring to a 30-unit scheme in Newmarket with no detail of mix. It then goes on to refer to a three-bed semi-detached property. This</p>	<p>Acknowledged. The deliverability and viability of older persons care homes will be considered further as part of the Local Plan examination.</p>	
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	<p>example presumably reflects broadly what the original development proposed? If not, then the methodology will not reflect a broadly equivalent off-site contribution.</p> <p>At 4.34, the Draft SPD states that if there are a large number of affordable dwellings the council may assess the contribution based upon a mix of affordable rented and intermediate dwellings which implies that the starting position is 100% affordable rent for off-site provision. This approach appears illogical given the on-site position is for a mix of affordable tenures. As per earlier comments regarding tenure, the Council should firstly assess the specific tenure requirements for this typology and establish the viability of deliverability in order to establish certainty for providers.</p> <p>Clawback – Section 4 and Appendix 1</p> <p>We note that the SPD makes mention of so-called claw back provisions and sets out at Appendix 1 and an example of clawback for on-site provision. We would point out here that the NPPG7 requires that such policy should only be sought to be introduced in Local Plans and not SPD. The PPG in relation to planning obligations explicitly states that it is not appropriate for plan-makers to set out new formulaic approaches to planning obligations in supplementary planning documents or supporting evidence base documents, as these would not be subject to examination.</p>	Removed from SPD.	
Clare Town Council	The Council has no further comment to make at this stage in relation to the SPD consultation.	Response gratefully received and relevant departments contacted regarding the Housing Register	No change required

	<p>However, it would like to draw your attention to the reported difficulty some residents have in managing the online registration process which in turn limits their ability to access the Housing Register. Please could you draw this to the attention of the relevant department within West Suffolk and signpost where the Town Council should refer such residents to within your organisation for support?</p> <p>Also, the Council would like to undertake a housing needs survey of its residents - can you put us in touch with anyone at the District Council who could help us pull this together/ avoid us doubling up on data which is already in your possession and which you are able to share.</p>	<p>process and Community Action Suffolk undertaking a Housing Needs Survey.</p>	
Rural Task Group	<p>Discussions were held around the use of Shared Equity and Shared Ownership Schemes to enable property purchases and whether this was an option which should be considered by West Suffolk Council. Should the Council be directing some of its capital towards the provision of affordable homes through a shared equity scheme model? - Should County Farms be encouraged to release land for rural housing development? - Small scale rural exception sites were a key area where affordable housing could be provided, but this would need the co-operation of landowners, the community and registered providers of social housing. This was noted by the Taskforce this could be an emerging area of recommendation – the Council playing a more proactive role in developing/applying policy that helped bring exception sites forward where there is local support and leadership, for example via a neighbourhood plan or a development brief for</p>	<p>Response gratefully received. Comments are not specific to the Affordable Housing SPD and are dealt with as part of the NPPF and Affordable Housing Guide.</p>	<p>No change required.</p>

	a site. - Parishes should be offered the opportunity to undertake a Housing Needs Survey which would then provide data on housing need at a local level and provide vital information to help plan new developments.		
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APPENDIX B

**Affordable Housing
Supplementary Planning Document 2019**

**November 2019
Version: Final**

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1. Introduction

Purpose

- 1.1 This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) updates and replaces the original Affordable Housing SPD for West Suffolk produced in October 2013. It is a material consideration when making planning decisions.
- 1.2 The purpose of any SPD is to provide additional guidance on key development plan policies and how they will operate. It should not introduce new policy but supplement existing policies in the former councils' Core Strategies. This SPD aims to provide advice to developers, including registered providers (RPs) on the council's approach to affordable housing provision.
- 1.3 This document will help guide the delivery of affordable housing in West Suffolk which will help to meet the strategic vision and objectives set out in the existing former St Edmundsbury and former Forest Heath area Local Plans by supporting the creation of a sustainable long-term future for communities within West Suffolk.
- 1.4 Guidance is presented on the criteria for delivering affordable housing, including the thresholds and percentages applicable, as well as advice on viability and how and when commuted sum payments will be considered. The SPD also provides advice on the Section 106 (s106) agreements, which will be used to secure the provision of affordable housing on new developments.

Why is a revised SPD required?

- 1.5 This SPD has been produced to expand upon the policies set out in West Suffolk Council's, (known as the "council" for the purposes of this document), core strategies (CS5 for former St Edmundsbury area and CS9 for the former Forest Heath area) and to provide clear policy advice to ensure the delivery of affordable homes in West Suffolk. The council is in the process of producing a West Suffolk Local Plan and until such time we currently have two separate core strategies as set out above.
- 1.6 In particular this SPD gives guidance on:
 - The amount of affordable housing contributions being sought from housing developments
 - Affordable housing providers
 - Providing affordable housing through on-site and off-site contributions
 - Development viability impacts
 - Rural exception sites

- Section 106 agreements for affordable housing provision
 - Management and occupancy arrangements.
- 1.7 This SPD also provides a summary and links to other sources of information that relate to the delivery of affordable housing such as the [Strategic Housing Market Assessment](#).
- 1.8 In this updated SPD we have made particular effort to:
- Emphasise the importance of delivering affordable housing so that we can provide suitable housing for people living and working in the area and that early engagement in dialogue with planning and housing officers will help achieve this.
 - Provide a comprehensive methodology on the calculation of commuted sums. Commuted sum payments will be based on local house prices and the difference between what a registered provider will pay for an affordable property and the subsequent uplift in market value, if the affordable dwelling is no longer provided on site. This approach will help to provide an element of 'future-proofing'.
- 1.9 West Suffolk has a good track record of delivering new affordable housing. Between 2012/13 and 2017/18, 32% of all new homes built were delivered as affordable homes in West Suffolk on larger sites (10 units and above), indicating that the council has been successful in delivering over their 30% requirements as set out in our adopted policy. Over the past six years, West Suffolk has delivered 866 affordable homes, representing 24% of all net housing completions. [West Suffolk Housing Delivery Report.pdf](#)
- 1.10 This SPD will be reviewed should circumstances change, including updates to Government policy and when it is considered by the Council that the SPD needs to reflect those changes. The SPD will also be reviewed once the West Suffolk Local Plan is adopted. In the meantime, this SPD will continue to refer to our core strategies as within the former Forest Heath and former St Edmundsbury Boundary areas.

2. Planning Policy context and local evidence

- 2.1 This SPD has been prepared in accordance with relevant local and national policy and guidance. In addition, it has taken into account other documents prepared by and for the Council. These are summarised below.

National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF)

- 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 produced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. Paragraph 61 of the NPPF aims to promote the delivery of a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities by: *'Ensuring the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes).'*
- 2.3 Specifically, for affordable housing, the NPPF expects *'affordable housing to be provided on site unless off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified; and that the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.'*
- 2.4 The NPPF introduces a new policy requirement:
- Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of the homes to be available for affordable home ownership [as part of the overall affordable housing contribution from the site], unless this would exceed the level of affordable housing required in the area, or significantly prejudice the ability to meet the identified affordable housing needs of specific groups. Exemptions to this 10% requirement should also be made where the site or proposed development:*
- a) *provides solely for Build to Rent homes;*
 - b) *provides specialist accommodation for a group of people with specific needs (such as purpose-built accommodation for the elderly or students);*
 - c) *is proposed to be developed by people who wish to build or commission their own homes; or*
 - d) *is exclusively for affordable housing, an entry level exception site or a rural exception site.*

Local housing policy

- 2.5 Affordable housing has a significant role to play in meeting the council's strategic priority to 'Increase and improve the provision of appropriate housing in West Suffolk in both our towns and rural areas.' We also continue to work with registered providers and developers to provide affordable housing across West Suffolk. Increasing the range of housing products available to people in housing need and providing quality alternatives to homelessness will help to deliver this priority.

West Suffolk's Housing Strategy

- 2.6 West Suffolk's Housing Strategy (2018-23) seeks to deliver a step-change in the provision of affordable housing by setting out plans to manage growth and meet the changing needs and aspirations of local residents over their lifetime. This will be achieved by facilitating choice and providing ways of helping residents move through different types of tenure as their circumstances change. The strategy also seeks to secure viable affordable housing to meet identified local needs to help achieve a more balanced, sustainable housing market and make best use of the existing housing stock.

West Suffolk's Tenancy Strategy

- 2.7 West Suffolk's Tenancy Strategy (2018) sets out how the council expects registered providers and other approved providers to operate affordable housing tenancies, and how affordable homes should be managed in future. The council expects that all new affordable homes must be delivered in accordance with this guidance.

West Suffolk Strategic Framework

- 2.8 The priority of affordable housing delivery forms a key part of the West Suffolk Council Strategic Framework. At the time of adoption of this SPD, the 2018-20 Framework included the Council's objective of: "ensuring there is sufficient mix of housing types to meet the needs of our local communities, including delivering 30% affordable housing on any private development." [West Suffolk Strategic Framework](#)

Core Strategy and Development Management Policies

- 2.9 The core strategy sets out a range of affordable housing targets across West Suffolk, based on an assessment of viability in relation to individual settlements, and makes provisions for rural exception

sites and the conversion of rural buildings for affordable housing. Please refer to core strategy policies:

The former Forest Heath area Core Strategy

- CS9 which covers affordable housing requirements

The Former St Edmundsbury area Core Strategy

- CS5 and Policy DM29 (see Table 1), which cover affordable housing requirements and affordable housing in rural areas.
- Policy DM29 relates specifically to the former St Edmundsbury area and the provision of rural housing exception sites within the former St Edmundsbury area.
- The Core Strategies also set out the trigger for affordable housing provision and further detail of these can be found in Section 3.

Housing Needs Assessment or Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

- 2.10 A Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) is required to set out the number of homes needed in the future and to inform local plans and housing strategies, which seek to meet housing need, support a healthy economy and achieve a 'balanced' housing market. The SHMA was last updated in 2013 but in addition, every three months a [Housing Market Bulletin](#) is produced to show recent changes in house prices, numbers of sales, affordability, and other market forces.
- 2.11 In line with the requirements of the NPPF, the SHMA provides an objectively assessed need for market and affordable housing in the wider market area. This provides an overview for the council to determine specific affordable housing needs that will be fit for purpose within different parts of West Suffolk.
- 2.12 For more information, please refer to the most up to date [SHMA](#) for the former Forest Heath and former St Edmundsbury area.

Housing register

- 2.13 The housing register for West Suffolk provides more local detail about the number of households in need of affordable housing in West Suffolk. The housing register currently shows a high overall requirement for affordable dwellings based on a one to four-bedroom need.
- 2.14 In July 2019 West Suffolk's live housing register held 1456 households. This represents the number of households with an

identified housing need and is made up of families and vulnerable people. The households on the housing register require social and affordable rented homes.

- 2.15 This register does not include those people on median to high incomes who are on waiting lists for intermediate affordable housing such as shared ownership or equity share schemes. The Help to Buy agent for West Suffolk is Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association and they hold a separate register of people who want to acquire a low-cost home in the area. Their website is www.helptobuyese.org.uk

Affordable Housing Guide

- 2.16 The [Affordable Housing guide](#) has been produced to help explain what affordable housing is, the different tenures available and the different methods for delivering affordable housing. It is specifically aimed at helping individuals, community groups and parish councils who are interested in understanding and exploring the opportunities for providing new affordable housing within a village and community.

3 Providing affordable housing

- 3.1 It is important that everyone living in West Suffolk has the opportunity to live in a decent and affordable home. One of the priorities of the West Suffolk Housing Strategy is to ensure "Partners will work together to continue to enhance the supply of affordable housing, using land, resources and influence."
- 3.2 This reflects the commitment of West Suffolk to help local people who cannot afford to buy or rent a home on the open market in the area.

What is affordable housing?

- 3.3 The type and tenure of affordable housing required on development sites will be determined, in discussion with the applicant, by consideration of a combination of information including the:
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment
 - Local housing needs surveys/rural profiling data
 - Housing register/Choice Based Lettings data
 - Availability and type of existing stock
 - Local housing market
 - Neighbourhood plans.
- 3.4 As well as the scale and need, the dwelling mix will depend on the nature of the development, the location and constraints of the site, the facilities available locally and any local development aspirations for the area.
- 3.5 The council's preference on the type and tenure of affordable housing, that will form the starting point for negotiations, will be based on the findings of the SHMA and housing register. The Strategic Housing Team at West Suffolk will also consider relevant additional up to date evidence of specific local need, identified at the time of negotiations.

Amount of affordable housing required

- 3.6 The council will expect new developments to contribute towards the delivery of affordable housing, in relation to individual settlements. These targets are set out in the core strategies and have been tested as viable and are considered a reasonable target to achieve on all developments. Although it should be noted that different criteria will apply in relation to rural exception sites (see page 20).

3.7 **Developments within the former Forest Heath area boundaries**

Policy CS9 Provision for Affordable Housing

On all schemes of 10 or more dwellings or sites of 0.5 hectares a target of 30% of the total net new dwellings will be sought as affordable

Where this policy would result in a requirement that part of a dwelling should be affordable a financial contribution of equivalent value to that 'part dwelling' will be required.

3.8 **Developments within the former St Edmundsbury area boundaries**

Policy CS5 Provision for Affordable Housing

In new developments of 10 or more dwellings or sites of 0.5 hectares a target of 30% of the total net new dwellings will be sought as affordable

Where this policy would result in a requirement that part of a dwelling should be affordable, a financial contribution of equivalent value to that 'part dwelling' will be required.

3.9 In accordance with the revised NPPF as defined within its [Annex 2](#) West Suffolk Council will be seeking to secure affordable housing on major developments where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more.

3.10 Where existing dwellings are being demolished, the application of the target will apply to the net increase in dwellings in a site. The target also applies to conversions (e.g. barn conversions) as well as new build.

3.11 The NPPF 2019 specifies the affordable housing products available and defines these as:

Affordable housing as housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable

Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

Affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low-cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

Discounted market sales housing*: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

Starter homes *: is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.

* NB: These products will be considered, subject to the evidence of need. (The Council's preferred choice for home ownership is shared ownership as evidence from the Help to Buy Register can justify the need for this product type)

- 3.12 Homes that do not meet the above definition of affordable housing, will not be considered as affordable housing in West Suffolk. When new products emerge, which meet the Government's definition they will be considered as affordable housing for planning policy purposes. Gypsy and Traveller pitches will only be classed as affordable housing units where they are managed under legal agreements by an RP, the council or Suffolk County Council, subject to a nominations agreement and occupied by a nominee of the council's choosing.
- 3.13 Our core strategy policies CS5 and CS9 as defined above are silent on the inclusion of starter homes, discount market housing and other routes to affordable homes ownership. The council will have due regard to the definitions in the NPPF (2019) and the consideration of these products in new applications where it can be demonstrated that it addresses an affordable housing need across West Suffolk. This SPD cannot change approved Policy CS5 or CS9, but it can highlight how these products will be considered.
- 3.14 The revised NPPF (2019) introduces entry level exception sites which are: *'suitable for first time buyers (or those looking to rent their first home), unless the need for such homes is already being met within the authority's area. These sites should:*
- a) *comprise of entry level homes that offer one or more types of affordable housing as defined by the NPPF; and*
 - b) *be adjacent to existing settlements, proportionate in size to them [not be larger than one hectare or exceed 5% of the size of the existing settlement], not compromise the protection given to areas or assets of particular importance in the NPPF and comply with any local design policies and standards.'*

Tenure mix

- 3.15 The findings from the Housing Needs Assessment (or SHMA) will be particularly important to the determination of an agreed mix, to reflect current need. The council will also use the most up to date information available on local need to inform its negotiations on the affordable housing mix, including local registers of need for rented and intermediate housing.
- 3.16 The tenure mix required on each site will take into account the tenure profile of the surrounding area. It will be based on the prevailing need for affordable housing units and is to be agreed with the Council's Strategic Housing Team on a site-by-site basis. If

the proposed affordable housing mix between social/affordable rented and intermediate housing is not acceptable, then the Council's Strategic Housing Team could object to the planning application and this could lead to a refusal of the planning permission.

Table 1 shows the tenure mix sought by policy CS5 and CS9.

Size of site (gross)	Affordable housing – on-site mix	Units sought off-site
	Former St Edmundsbury Area CS5 Policy	
10 or more: or a site area requirement of 0.5ha in the former St Edmundsbury Area	80% social and affordable rent, *20% intermediate <i>(On smaller sites where the requirement for affordable housing may trigger one or two dwellings and the NPPF requires at least 10% of the intermediate percentage as stated above to be delivered as a form of low cost home ownership, it will at the discretion of the RP as to whether they will be willing to take a single dwelling. Alternatively, if this is not supported by the RP, the 10% required will need to be secured as a commuted sum in lieu of onsite provision.)</i>	Only in exceptional circumstances.
	Former Forest Heath Area CS9 Policy	
10 or more: or a site area of more than 0.5ha in the former Forest Heath Area	70% social and affordable rent, *30% intermediate <i>(On smaller sites where the requirement for affordable housing may trigger one or two dwellings and the NPPF requires at least 10% of the intermediate percentage to be delivered as a form of low cost home ownership it will at the discretion of the RP as to whether they will be willing to take a single low cost ownership</i>	Only in exceptional circumstances.

Size of site (gross)	Affordable housing – on-site mix	Units sought off-site
	<i>product. Alternatively, this will need to be secured as a commuted sum in lieu of onsite provision.)</i>	

Extra care and sheltered housing schemes

- 3.17 Extra care and continuing retirement communities often provide self-contained units for sale to meet the needs of a growing older population. Extra care housing can take a variety of forms which can influence whether it is part of the C2 (Residential Institution) or C3 (Dwelling House) Use Class. The nature and type of service and accommodation in a scheme will determine the use class and therefore whether it needs to accord with the provisions to provide affordable housing on site as part of Policy CS5 and CS9.
- 3.18 For the purposes of this supplementary guidance, extra care housing will be regarded as a model of housing that combines independent housing with flexible levels of care and support. Schemes might incorporate purpose-built, self-contained and accessible rented, shared ownership, or leasehold accommodation. Extra care schemes will be subject to planning obligations to contribute to affordable housing under s106 agreements depending on the specific characteristics of the relevant scheme. The obligation to make an affordable housing contribution will depend on which Use Class Order the council considers the scheme to be.
- 3.19 In relation to extra care schemes, the factors which differentiate C2 and C3 are those relating to the predominant level of care provided and whether it is provided as a condition of residency, which is more likely to indicate a C2 classification. However, receiving a care service does not in itself necessarily determine it as C2 accommodation if it is not a requirement. If the level of care provided is high or equivalent to the service normally associated with residential care homes, a C2 classification would be indicated.
- 3.20 The council will take all the characteristics of a scheme into account in determining the use class and will not consider any one factor as the defining criterion.

The affordable housing requirement for an extra care scheme

- 3.21 Where a C3 use is determined, an Extra Care housing scheme will be subject to the provisions of policy CS5 (former St Edmundsbury

Area) or CS9 (former Forest Heath Area) and be required to achieve 30% affordable housing on-site (dependent on the size of the development).

Affordable housing – registered providers

- 3.22 The council will require the affordable dwellings on a new development to be delivered by or transferred to a registered provider (RP), except in the provision of a Build to Rent or Discounted Market Sale Scheme as defined by the NPPF. Developers are encouraged to involve an RP at the earliest opportunity and to take advantage of their experience in the delivery of affordable housing and securing funding, when available.
- 3.23 Although the council will not impose the choice of a RP partner on a developer, it has worked closely with several RPs, which operate within West Suffolk. West Suffolk Council would expect that affordable rents are affordable to those on local incomes and therefore will require that all affordable rents do not exceed the prescribed local housing allowance.
- 3.24 Where a private developer is obligated to provide affordable housing, it will be expected that they enter into a Section 106 agreement. The s106 agreement will require that a nominations agreement is entered into with the council to ensure that the affordable dwellings remain affordable in perpetuity. In all cases, the council expects that affordable houses are free from burdens of service charges and has a preference that properties are built to MHCLG "Nationally Described Space Standard". Further guidance on site can be found in Section 4 of this document.

4. Delivering Affordable Housing

- 4.1 A significant proportion of affordable housing within West Suffolk and nationally is delivered without any public subsidy from Homes England. Applicants will need to consider this when purchasing land and considering the economics of the development. Applicants are responsible for the delivery of affordable housing and working with RPs is common practice. Therefore, early engagement with an RP is highly recommended.
- 4.2 Appendix 3 of this document contains an affordable housing checklist. This checklist is designed to guide applicants and illustrate what affordable housing related information will be required as part of the planning application process.

Planning applications

- 4.3 All relevant planning proposals should comply with Government guidance and the adopted former Forest Heath and former St Edmundsbury Area Local Plans, as supplemented by this SPD. Failure to do so may lead to a refusal for planning permission unless amendments can be made, planning conditions imposed, or legal agreements introduced to minimise or counter any potential negative impact of the development site.
- 4.4 As part of the decision-making process, the council will need to reach an appropriate balance between a wide range of competing planning objectives and material considerations in order to manage the development and use of land in the wider public interest. A balance will need to be struck between the relevant policies in the local plan and the specific circumstances of each case.
- 4.5 For full details on planning conditions, obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy, please see separate documents entitled:
- [Planning Guidance Documents](#)
 - [S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy Schedule](#).

Full applications

- 4.6 Full applications should confirm the amount of development proposed, including the amount of affordable housing to be provided; the dwelling mix in terms of tenure and unit size and the location of the affordable homes. In addition, it would be helpful if applications identified if any plots are designated for custom or self-build dwellings. If the affordable housing cannot be provided on site, application documentation should confirm the percentage of financial contribution to be provided. This must be agreed with the council.

Outline and reserved matters applications

- 4.7 If an outline application is made, the council will require applicants to define the affordable housing element of the scheme. This will be secured through planning obligation. Outline applications are therefore advised to set out the following:

- The percentage of affordable housing to be provided
- The indicative dwelling mix and location of the affordable homes
- The indicative tenure mix and dwelling types and sizes.

- 4.8 Reserved matters applications should confirm the affordable housing mix proposed on the site. Developers will be expected to provide details of the specific location of affordable housing within the site, usually including plot numbers, number of bedrooms, gross internal floor area of each affordable dwelling type and tenure. The dwelling and tenure mix should broadly reflect the indicative housing mix specified within the outline application.

Distribution of new affordable homes within the development site

- 4.9 The nature and size of the proposed development will influence the distribution of the affordable homes. In all cases they should be an integral part of the development. The required density on a given site will need to have regard to its wider context and other policies associated with the local plan.
- 4.10 The council will usually expect affordable units to be distributed around the site, rather than grouped together in one area. On large sites, RPs may prefer small clusters of units for management reasons. In exceptional circumstances, such as a development of flats, it may be appropriate to have the affordable housing in one location within the development (providing that this will still create a balanced and sustainable community).

- 4.11 Based on local experience, the affordable housing in villages with a population under 3000 should not be concentrated in clusters greater than six properties and in towns, key service centres and villages (as defined in the core strategy) clusters no greater than fifteen properties.
- 4.12 On phased developments or large developments split into parcels of land, developers must consider the clustering of affordable housing on neighbouring parcels to ensure the even distribution of affordable housing clusters throughout the development area as a whole.

Access to flatted development

- 4.13 Developers should avoid designs that would result in high maintenance and services charges affecting the affordable part of the development. When designing a scheme, it is recommended that applicants liaise with the Council's Planning and Strategic Housing Team early in the design process.
- 4.14 In flatted schemes, no more than fifteen affordable dwellings should normally have access from a common stairwell or lift. This is in line with the [Homes England Housing Quality indicator 2.15](#).

Design of new affordable homes

- 4.15 To ensure the creation of mixed and integrated communities the affordable housing should be "tenure blind". This means that it should not be visually distinguishable from the market housing on the site in terms of build quality, materials, detailing, levels of amenity space and privacy. Reductions in size, use of sub-standard materials, or poor finishing and detailing are not an acceptable shortcut to affordability.
- 4.16 The council's preference is that all new affordable housing proposed meets the new Nationally Described Space Standards for each dwelling type. The council has introduced a Technical Advice Note that sets out West Suffolk Council's interpretation of the Nationally Described Space Standards published in March 2015, which came into effect in October 2015. This should be read in conjunction with Building Regulations requirement M4 (2) 'accessible and adaptable dwellings'.
- 4.17 The Technical Advice Note is helping the council to guide appropriate space standards when considering applications for residential (Use Class C3) development in West Suffolk. This will result in residential developments that are well designed and fit for purpose, have a positive impact on residents' health and well-being, provide adequate space for occupants' amenities and enable

greater adaptability in terms of lifetime change. Further information can be found on [West Suffolk Council's website](#).

- 4.18 [The Suffolk Design Guide 2018](#) provides further details, identifying the principles that should be followed to deliver good quality design of new development across Suffolk. These principles apply equally to affordable housing and market housing.
- 4.19 Where sites or areas are subject to other guidance prepared by the council for example a masterplan or strategic design codes, developers must consider the affordable housing requirements carefully to reflect all appropriate guidance.

Accessible housing, lifetime homes and specialist accommodation

- 4.20 The council will encourage all affordable homes to achieve Lifetime Homes Standard. The [Lifetime Homes Standard](#) incorporates design features which can be adapted to different occupiers needs or to encourage the provision of lifetime homes and the council will work with developers to ensure such provision.

The phasing of affordable housing provision

- 4.21 Affordable housing units must be provided without unreasonable delay; as a guide, the affordable housing units should be completed proportionately with the market housing. However, the council will consider the timing of affordable housing delivery on a case by case basis.
- 4.22 The timing of the delivery of the affordable housing is particularly important on larger schemes, where poor timing can result in isolated pockets of development and cause problems with infrastructure delivery, leading to a poor living environment for new residents in the short term. Phasing of affordable housing delivery should generally be commensurate with market housing, considering the phasing of other infrastructure.

Off-site provision

- 4.23 The council recognises that there can be exceptional circumstances where an alternative to the inclusion of affordable housing on-site may be appropriate.
- 4.24 On-site provision will always be the council's preference. Off-site provision or a commuted sum will, however, be considered where it is robustly justified, usually where provision of affordable housing

on-site cannot reasonably be accommodated or the council feels that on-site provision is not appropriate in a given location (e.g. if the council feels that there is more benefit to be gained by making improvements to existing stock).

4.25 Applicants will need to provide evidence-based reasons why on-site provision is not appropriate. Such reasons may include:

- The conversion or redevelopment of existing buildings (e.g. barn conversions or listed buildings) where the resulting dwellings may not meet the standards required to attract grant funding and may, therefore, be unacceptable to a RP
- Insurmountable problems with funding meaning that a RP is unable to commit to the scheme (N.B. neither the absence of grant funding nor the absence of a RP willing/able to take on the scheme will be considered as evidence until non-grant funded options and direct provision by the developer have been fully explored)
- Where there is a dominance of a particular type or tenure of affordable housing, or an overly high concentration of affordable housing in the immediate area, and further provision would be unlikely to support the creation of mixed communities.

4.27 The alternatives to on-site provision are set out in priority order in Table 2.

Table 2: Hierarchy of Alternatives to on-site provision

Type of Provision	Notes
Provision of affordable units on an alternative site.	This may include two separate sites within one application, but this will be at the absolute discretion of the local planning authority.
Purchase of land for a RP or other body identified council within the same settlement.	Suitable land within the same settlement or place as the application site will be transferred at no cost to a RP or any other body identified by the council, who will then finance and build the required affordable homes on that land. The location should be agreed with the appointed housing officer.

Type of Provision	Notes
Purchase of existing housing units within the local authority area.	The developer will purchase the required number of units on the open market and sell them to a RP or other body identified by the council at a 30%-40% discount. The location, quality, cost, size and design of the units must be agreed with the RP and the council's housing officer to ensure the units meet the prevailing need and are of an appropriate standard.
Purchase of land for a RP or other body identified by the council elsewhere in district.	Suitable land elsewhere in West Suffolk will be transferred at no cost to a RP or other body identified by the council, who will then finance and build the required affordable homes on that land. The location should be agreed with the appointed housing officer.
Commuted sum for affordable housing.	The council may be willing to accept this option on sites of 0.5 hectares or more but only if all other options have been discounted.

4.28 In respect of the alternatives to on-site provision listed in Table 2, land should be provided at no cost to an RP or other body identified by the council and the gap between construction costs and what an RP or other body is able to afford should be reflected in negotiations between developers and landowners. Where off-site affordable housing is exceptionally agreed, payments-in-lieu will normally only be agreed where, for example:

- On smaller sites, where RPs may not want affordable housing because of management difficulties
- Service charges and other costs are prohibitively expensive to occupiers of affordable housing
- The council/RP does not consider it appropriate to have units in that location due to their unaffordability
- The site is in a remote, rural location outside of any of the villages listed in the settlement hierarches in the council's core strategies.
- Where such issues could reasonably have been anticipated and addressed prior to the submission of an application, the application is likely to be refused.

Commuted sums

4.29 As noted above, the presumption is that affordable housing will be provided on site. Financial contributions in lieu of on-site provision of affordable housing will only be considered if:

- The requirement that 30% of all homes results in less than a whole number of homes. In such instances, the fraction of a home will be taken as a commuted sum
- In exceptional circumstances where the council is satisfied that there is good case in housing needs terms for an affordable property or properties *not* to be provided on site.

4.30 The commuted sum payments formula aims to ensure that the housing developer is neither advantaged nor disadvantaged by providing a commuted sum in lieu of onsite provision. The council wishes to ensure that the calculation of the commuted sum is simple and transparent. The commuted sum calculation is as follows:

Step 1. Calculate the open market value of the dwelling(s) on the site that would otherwise being provided as an affordable rented or a low-cost home ownership dwelling

Step 2. Calculate the amount a registered housing provider (or other provider of affordable housing) would pay for the dwelling(s) if it were to be provided as affordable rented or low-cost home ownership housing

Step 3. Subtract the figure at step 2 from the figure at step 1. This is the commuted sum.

How the commuted sum calculation should be applied

4.31 The calculation can be used to calculate the commuted sum arising from one or more dwelling not provided on site.

4.32 If the calculation is to be used to work out the commuted sum relating to a fraction of a property, the same method should be used but at steps 1 and 2, the property to which the values and prices apply should be a property on site that could reasonably be provided as affordable housing.

4.33 If, for whatever reason, the developer and council agree that there are no properties in the development that could reasonably be used in steps 1 and 2 of the negotiation, both parties shall agree on an alternative 'reference' property. The reference property would be a property of the same type as that or those foregone on site, with the same number of bedrooms and in the same location (meaning within the same town or village or broad location) that a RP (or

other provider of affordable housing) could reasonably be expected to purchase in the open market to mitigate the non-provision of that dwelling on site.

- 4.34 If a large number of affordable dwellings are to be funded via a commuted sum rather than on site (or off site) provision, the developer and council may agree to a RP offer price (or that of another provider of affordable housing) being based on a mix of affordable rented and low cost home ownership homes.
- 4.35 Open market values may be derived from web-based information, the Land Registry or from specific valuations.
- 4.36 Registered providers' prices (or those offered by another provider of affordable housing) may be derived from actual offers made for the dwellings concerned, exemplar offers for the type of dwellings in question, whether made by a provider in relation to those particular properties or not, typical values evidenced with reference to similar schemes or the capitalised value of the net rental stream for social and affordable rent (gross rent less service charge, management, maintenance, voids and bad debts), and the value of the first tranche sale plus the capitalised value of the net rental stream for the shared ownership units.
- 4.37 The council does not wish the calculation of commuted sums to place too onerous a burden on developers and it is expected that in many cases the developer will already be in contract with a RP and therefore have information regarding what a provider would offer or indeed has offered to pay for a particular type of dwelling or tenure. If this information has already been used in the developer's viability appraisal this may be used.
- 4.38 Regardless of the source of any market values or RP's prices, the council reserves the right to substitute its own figures and evidence should it wish to challenge any of the developer's inputs. The final commuted sum figure will then be derived through negotiation.
- 4.39 Should the developer provide no evidence at all, the council reserves the right to use its own calculation and should the developer not provide any subsequent evidence to the contrary, the council expects that its figures will form the agreed level of commuted sum payment.

How will the Commuted Sum be spent?

- 4.40 When financial contributions are received, these will be pooled and spent on the provision of affordable housing to achieve any of the following:
- development of more affordable housing by whatever route;
 - achieve more larger/specialist/costly homes that otherwise would not be provided
 - acquisition of land for affordable housing and onward disposal
 - offset the cost of any land being provided by the council which might otherwise be sold on the open market
 - purchase of existing or additional units for use as affordable housing
 - to provide financial support for the development of affordable housing in West Suffolk.

Section 106 agreements

- 4.41 Delivery of affordable housing will be secured through a planning obligation. This will consist of a Section 106 (s106) Agreement. A Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) allows the local planning authority to enter into a legally binding agreement with anyone who has an interest in the land with a landowner in association with the granting of planning permission in order to secure planning obligations such as contributions towards or the provision of affordable housing.
- 4.42 The s106 obligations should be completed to enable the grant of planning permission within the statutory 8 weeks & 12-week periods, or by an agreed extension to these timescales.
- 4.43 Where affordable housing is to be secured by Section 106 Agreement, the council will provide its standard draft and the applicant will be required to pay the council's legal and administrative costs incurred in negotiating and completing the deed and the costs of the transfer of any land to the council, as well as to pay a contribution towards the cost of monitoring for compliance.
- 4.44 The proposed heads of terms of any agreement will need to be established before instructions to draft a section 106 agreement are issued.
- 4.45 The council will be reasonable in applying its policies on affordable housing and will have regard to best practice and other advice, including the Homes England guidance on promoting mortgage access for affordable housing. The council recognises the tests in

the Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) Regulations 2018 (Regulation 122) and in the NPPF 2018 for planning obligations.

- 4.46 If a payment in lieu has been agreed, the council will negotiate for payment or a proportion of payment to be triggered on completion of an agreed number of units or particular development phase. s106 agreements should refer to payment upon the completion of the units to which that payment relates. Any financial contributions will normally be index linked to the Building Cost Information Service (BCIS) and take into account of any price increases in the index during the time period that elapses between the date of the deed and when the contribution is due to be paid.
- 4.47 Planning obligations will only be sought where they meet all the following tests:
- a) Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
 - b) Directly related to the development
 - c) Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 4.48 The council will expect all RPs to enter into a nominations agreement with the council to ensure the management and occupation of the affordable dwellings in accordance with the council's policies. Please see section 6 for further details.

Rural exception sites (RES)

- 4.49 The former St Edmundsbury area Core Strategy Policy DM29 and former Forest Heath area CS9 Policy permits small-scale affordable housing developments adjacent to existing villages in the countryside as an exception to normal policy. This only applies where the proposed development is small-scale, and where affordable housing is required to meet recognised local need in those villages.
- 4.50 Paragraph 77 of the NPPF 2019 adds that in rural areas, housing should respond to local needs particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites, where appropriate. Consideration should be given to allowing some market housing where it would facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs.
- 4.51 An exception site is normally but not explicitly likely to consist of:
- no more than 10 units in a larger village
 - no more than five units in a smaller village.

- 4.52 An application for affordable housing to meet local needs will be viewed favourably where:
- the need is proven – this must be based on robust evidence using an up to date profile of the village, such as rural profiling data, Neighbourhood Plan and evidence through Housing Needs Surveys
 - the need cannot be met on other more suitable sites in a nearby town or the village
 - the site is suitable in all other respects.
- 4.53 The new housing should:
- be delivered through a RP or other body recognised by the council (including a village or other charitable trust, or exceptionally with the involvement of a developer)
 - meet the type of local need identified
 - be available to people with a local connection as a matter of priority
 - remain affordable in perpetuity (this is explained further in paragraphs 6.11-6.13).
- 4.54 Rural exception sites should be located adjacent to the development boundary of the village.
- 4.55 To encourage rural exceptions developments, the council will:
- promote the rural exceptions policy with parish councils, supporting relevant neighbourhood plans and Housing Needs Surveys
 - advise of the information it holds on rural needs (through the appointed housing officer).
- 4.56 While the whole of a rural exceptions scheme is normally expected to deliver 100% affordable housing, the Local Planning Authority will support opportunities to bring forward rural exceptions sites that will provide affordable housing to meet an identified local needs and will consider allowing some market housing on these sites would help to facilitate this. Given that such housing development would only proceed on an exception's basis, we would expect the land value achieved to reflect this and be considerably lower than that achievable on an unfettered housing development site.
- 4.57 Where rural exception sites are proposed, they should take account of the provisions of any conservation area appraisals/management plans, village design statements, parish plans or neighbourhood plans. The [Historic England Affordable Housing guidance](#) is relevant as is the guidance on the [conversion of traditional farm buildings](#).

Local Connection Criteria

- 4.58 Affordable housing within West Suffolk will ordinarily be allocated in line with the prioritisation criteria detailed in West Suffolk's Allocation Scheme. On certain rural sites, the council may seek to prioritise the letting and or sale of affordable housing to those with a local connection to the parish in which the homes are being developed.
- 4.59 The exact definitions of local connection applying to a particular scheme will be clearly set out in the Section 106 agreement, where applicable.

5. Viability testing

- 5.1 A viability assessment is a process of assessing whether a site is financially viable, by looking at whether the value generated by the development is more than the cost of developing it.
- 5.2 The [National Planning Guidance \(NPPG\)](#) sets out the Government's recommended approach to viability assessment for planning. The approach supports transparency in the viability assessment process so that it is clear what policy requirements will inform planning decisions including the contributions expected from the developer. (For example, the level and type of affordable housing and for supporting infrastructure including education, transport and health).
- 5.3 The approach to viability should accord fully with the NPPG (dated May 2019) and any subsequent amendment to it.

6. Management and Occupancy

Management

- 6.1 The council's preference is for affordable housing to be transferred to a RP or another body recognised by the council (except for the provision of a Build to Rent or Discounted Market Sale Scheme), once it has been built. It will then be managed as affordable housing with reference to Homes England guidelines and the Council's Tenancy Strategy. An agreement with the provider of the affordable housing should be reached at an early stage of the process as it will normally provide some financing for the affordable units.
- 6.2 Equity share may be more appropriate on smaller schemes and may directly involve the council or RP. In other circumstances, developers may choose to retain ownership of the affordable housing and manage it directly. In any case, the council will want to ensure that appropriate management arrangements are in place.
- 6.3 The council welcomes the opportunity to work with a range of RPs with a local presence in West Suffolk or whose nearest local office is no more the 50 miles from the development site.

Affordability

- 6.4 The council will need to be satisfied that rental levels, service charges and shared ownership or shared equity costs are genuinely affordable to occupants both in the short term and the long term. The council will seek to ensure that all affordable rent levels, including any service charge do not exceed the local housing allowance.

Control of occupancy

- 6.5 The council will ensure that occupancy of the affordable housing units provided is restricted to eligible and qualifying households whose needs are not met by the market. There will be an obligation set within the s106 for RPs or developers who retain the affordable housing to enter into a nomination agreement.
- 6.6 People in housing need will comprise:
- People nominated by West Suffolk
 - Those nominated by a registered provider, where the council does not have nomination rights, for example in respect of some intermediate housing and specialist supported housing

- Those nominated from other registers of housing need as agreed by the council.
- 6.7 This will include households in the Cambridge Sub Regional Housing Market Area, which have access rights to affordable housing through the sub regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme.
- 6.8 Where deemed appropriate, the council will consider negotiating local lettings plans in order to promote the development of sustainable communities, taking account of issues such as the proportion of working households, number of school children.
- 6.9 For rented properties (social and affordable rented housing) the council will expect to be able to nominate 100% of the initial lettings and 75% of re-lets.
- 6.10 For shared ownership and shared equity properties secured through s106 agreements on privately developed sites the council expects that all properties will be advertised through the Help to Buy agent (or any successor body or arrangement) with the agent being able to nominate to 100% of initial sales and re-sales.

Perpetuity

- 6.11 In accordance with the definition of affordable housing, the council will ensure that affordable homes delivered under Policy CS5 and CS9 either remain available at affordable rents in perpetuity, or the 'release' of development subsidy at the point of resale is recycled to provide further affordable housing to meet identified local needs.
- 6.12 All money received as a result of occupants either purchasing their property through the 'right to acquire' or 'right to buy' or acquiring a further share through 'stair casing' should, subject to any statutory restrictions, be used to provide affordable housing within West Suffolk. Recovered Homes England grant must either be paid back to the agency or recycled to provide affordable housing, in accordance with the Homes England guidance on recycled capital grant funding. Equity share arrangements will be set out through a Section 106 agreements as a charge on the property.
- 6.13 Affordable rented housing on rural exception sites (Policy DM29) should be provided in perpetuity. Shared ownership dwellings will have the ability to staircase to 100% on rural exception sites but subsequent sales will need to comply with the local connection criteria set out within the s106.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Viability appraisal content

An appraisal will be expected to include, as a minimum:

- **Building costs:** to include site works and unit construction works expressed as a price per m² of proposed built form
- **Land value:** a sum of money available for the purchase of land can be calculated from the value of the completed development minus the costs of development
- **Site abnormal:** which may be considered to include site remediation; decontamination; or unusual engineering or infrastructure costs
- **Professional fees:** which should be broken down to include planning application costs; building costs); marketing costs; and sales fees
- **Planning obligations:** all non-affordable housing s106/CIL costs that will be incurred by the proposal
- **Finance costs:** which should be costs associated with borrowing incurred over the development period to cover expenditure before receipts are secured
- **Contingencies:** which should be an allowance to cover the risk of cost overruns on the above and should be at a reasonable level
- **Developers profit/return:** which should be the level of return that is expected to the developer (related to market risk and the needs of investors)
- **Residential and non-residential market values:** expected sales and/or yield for the development proposed broken down by unit type (with evidence of recent sales values for comparable schemes (in terms of location and size of the development) including date of sale, size of property, value achieved and address details)
- **Grant funding:** which should be an allowance for any grant funding secured to deliver any elements of the development, including affordable housing.

Applicants will also be expected to demonstrate that they have, as a minimum, considered different options in relation to:

- **Scale and mix of uses:** amendments to scheme layout and design can have a significant impact on value generation
- **Phasing of development:** whereas high upfront infrastructure costs can have a detrimental impact, bringing forward high value generating uses in the programme will have a converse positive impact. Similarly, discounting the cash flow can assist with overall viability
- **Affordable housing mix and tenure:** changing the mix and tenure of housing can have a significant effect on the percentage of affordable housing that can be delivered.

Appendix 2: Calculating a commuted sum.

Examples of calculating the affordable housing contribution required for an application.

Example 1: Off-site contribution

Using the above methodology, the example below indicates an example of the amount of commuted sum that a developer could be expected to pay in lieu of off-site affordable housing provision.

Scenario A

30 new homes proposed in Newmarket where with a 30% affordable housing target applies.

This gives an affordable housing target of: $30 \times 0.3 = 9$

The estimated open market value of a three-bed semi-detached property in Newmarket is £200,000.

A registered provider or other housing provider would pay approx. £130,000 for that property as an affordable dwelling.

Therefore, the commuted sum is the difference between the open market value and the value paid for an affordable dwelling by a Registered Provider.

Committed sum payable = $£200,000 - £130,000 = £70,000(x 9) = £630,000$

Example 2: On-site contribution

An example of calculating an on-site contribution is:

A development of 12 dwellings in Bury St Edmunds would trigger a 30% affordable housing requirement. This would equate to an on-site affordable housing contribution of:

$12 \times 0.3 = 3.6$ dwellings.

Therefore, the onsite contribution would be for 3 of the 12 dwellings to be provided as affordable homes on site and 0.6 of a dwelling to be provided as a commuted sum. The methodology for calculating the 0.6 of a dwelling is the same as the calculation for an off-site contribution.

The estimated open market value of a three-bed semi-detached property in Bury St Edmunds is £220,000.

A registered provider or other housing provider would pay approx. £130,000 for that property as an affordable dwelling. Therefore, the commuted sum is the difference between the open market value and the value paid for an affordable dwelling by a registered provider.

Commuted sum = £220,000 - £130,000 = £90,000 (then multiply £90,000 by 0.6) = £54,000.

Commuted sum payable for 0.6 of a three-bed semi-detached property in Bury St Edmunds is £54,000.

*Please note these figures used are hypothetical and do not represent an accurate open market value or do they indicate an indicative price paid by a registered provider of social housing for a three-bed semi-detached property.

Appendix 3: Affordable Housing Checklist

The list below offers a guide to what will be required in a planning application submission in relation to affordable housing. For outline planning applications, the list below will not be wholly relevant and submitted documents may show indicative information. This is a guide only, the list is not exhaustive.

- Site plan showing tenures (rented and intermediate)
- Floor plans showing tenures with areas (rented and intermediate)
- Floor plans showing the location of the wheelchair accessible unit(s), if applicable
- Gross internal floor areas of all affordable dwellings
- A schedule of accommodation showing number, size (number of bedrooms), type (houses, flats and duplexes) and tenure of units, including highlighting wheelchair accessible units
- Number of bed spaces
- Car parking plan showing tenures
- Phasing plan
- Elevations of affordable housing and private housing.

Glossary

Affordable housing: housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

a) **Affordable housing for rent:** meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

b) **Starter homes:** is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.

c) **Discounted market sales housing** is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

d) **Other affordable routes to home ownership:** is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

Air quality management areas: Areas designated by local authorities because they are not likely to achieve national air quality objectives by the relevant deadlines.

Ancient or veteran tree: A tree which, because of its age, size and condition, is of exceptional biodiversity, cultural or heritage value. All ancient trees are veteran trees. Not all veteran trees are old enough to be ancient, but are old relative to other trees of the same species. Very few trees of any species reach the ancient life-stage.

Ancient woodland: An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. It includes ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS).

Annual position statement: A document setting out the 5 year housing land supply position on 1st April each year, prepared by the local planning authority in consultation with developers and others who have an impact on delivery.

Archaeological interest: There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

Best and most versatile agricultural land: Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.

Brownfield land: See previously developed land.

Brownfield land registers: Registers of previously developed land that local planning authorities consider to be appropriate for residential development, having regard to criteria in the Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Registers) Regulations 2017. Local planning authorities will be able to trigger a grant of permission in principle for residential development on suitable sites in their registers where they follow the required procedures.

Build to Rent: Purpose built housing that is typically 100% rented out. It can form part of a wider multi-tenure development comprising either flats or houses, but should be on the same site and/or contiguous with the main development. Schemes will usually offer longer tenancy agreements of three years or more, and will typically be professionally managed stock in single ownership and management control.

Climate change adaptation: Adjustments made to natural or human systems in response to the actual or anticipated impacts of climate change, to mitigate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

Climate change mitigation: Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Coastal change management area: An area identified in plans as likely to be affected by physical change to the shoreline through erosion, coastal landslip, permanent inundation or coastal accretion.

Community forest: An area identified through the England Community Forest Programme to revitalise countryside and green space in and around major conurbations.

Community Right to Build Order: An Order made by the local planning authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) that grants planning permission for a site specific development proposal or classes of development.

Competent person (to prepare site investigation information): A person with a recognised relevant qualification, sufficient experience in dealing with the type(s) of pollution or land instability, and membership of a relevant professional organisation.

Conservation (for heritage policy): The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

Decentralised energy: Local renewable and local low-carbon energy sources.

Deliverable: To be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years. In particular: a) sites which do not involve major development and have planning permission, and all sites with detailed planning permission, should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that homes will not be delivered within five years (for example because they are no longer viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans). b) where a site has outline planning permission for major development, has been allocated in a development plan, has a grant of permission in principle, or is identified on a brownfield register, it should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within five years.

Design code: A set of illustrated design requirements that provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area. The graphic and written components of the code should build upon a design vision, such as a masterplan or other design and development framework for a site or area.

Designated heritage asset: A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.

Designated rural areas: National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and areas designated as 'rural' under Section 157 of the Housing Act 1985.

Developable: To be considered developable, sites should be in a suitable location for housing development with a reasonable prospect that they will be available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged.

Development plan: Is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and includes adopted local plans, neighbourhood plans that have been made and published spatial development strategies, together with any regional strategy policies that remain in force. Neighbourhood plans that have been approved at referendum are also part of the development plan, unless the local planning authority decides that the neighbourhood plan should not be made.

Edge of centre: For retail purposes, a location that is well connected to, and up to 300 metres from, the primary shopping area. For all other main town centre uses, a location within 300 metres of a town centre boundary. For office development, this includes locations outside the town centre but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange. In determining whether a site falls within the definition of edge of centre, account should be taken of local circumstances.

Entry-level exception site: A site that provides entry-level homes suitable for first time buyers (or equivalent, for those looking to rent), in line with paragraph 71 of this Framework.

Environmental impact assessment: A procedure to be followed for certain types of project to ensure that decisions are made in full knowledge of any likely significant effects on the environment.

Essential local workers: Public sector employees who provide frontline services in areas including health, education and community safety – such

as NHS staff, teachers, police, firefighters and military personnel, social care and childcare workers.

General aviation airfields: Licenced or unlicensed aerodromes with hard or grass runways, often with extensive areas of open land related to aviation activity.

Geodiversity: The range of rocks, minerals, fossils, soils and landforms.

Green infrastructure: A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

Habitats site: Any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites.

Heritage asset: A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Heritage coast: Areas of undeveloped coastline which are managed to conserve their natural beauty and, where appropriate, to improve accessibility for visitors.

Historic environment: All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

Historic environment record: Information services that seek to provide access to comprehensive and dynamic resources relating to the historic environment of a defined geographic area for public benefit and use.

Housing Delivery Test: Measures net additional dwellings provided in a local authority area against the homes required, using national statistics and local authority data. The Secretary of State will publish the Housing Delivery Test results for each local authority in England every November.

International, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity: All international sites (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, and Ramsar sites), national sites (Sites of Special

Scientific Interest) and locally designated sites including Local Wildlife Sites.

Irreplaceable habitat: Habitats which would be technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity. They include ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, blanket bog, limestone pavement, sand dunes, salt marsh and lowland fen.

Local Development Order: An Order made by a local planning authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) that grants planning permission for a specific development proposal or classes of development.

Local Enterprise Partnership: A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, established for the purpose of creating or improving the conditions for economic growth in an area.

Local housing need: The number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in national planning guidance (or, in the context of preparing strategic policies only, this may be calculated using a justified alternative approach as provided for in paragraph 60 of this Framework).

Local Nature Partnership: A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, established for the purpose of protecting and improving the natural environment in an area and the benefits derived from it.

Local planning authority: The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area. All references to local planning authority include the district council, London borough council, county council, Broads Authority, National Park Authority, the Mayor of London and a development corporation, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities.

Local plan: A plan for the future development of a local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. A local plan can consist of either strategic or non-strategic policies, or a combination of the two.

Main town centre uses: Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres,

indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

Major development: For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m² or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Major hazard sites, installations and pipelines: Sites and infrastructure, including licensed explosive sites and nuclear installations, around which Health and Safety Executive (and Office for Nuclear Regulation) consultation distances to mitigate the consequences to public safety of major accidents may apply. Other than for the specific purposes of paragraphs 172 and 173 in this Framework.

Minerals resources of local and national importance: Minerals which are necessary to meet society's needs, including aggregates, brick clay (especially Etruria Marl and fireclay), silica sand (including high grade silica sands), cement raw materials, gypsum, salt, fluorspar, shallow and deep-mined coal, oil and gas (including conventional and unconventional hydrocarbons), tungsten, kaolin, ball clay, potash, polyhalite and local minerals of importance to heritage assets and local distinctiveness.

Mineral Safeguarding Area: An area designated by minerals planning authorities which covers known deposits of minerals which are desired to be kept safeguarded from unnecessary sterilisation by non-mineral development.

National trails: Long distance routes for walking, cycling and horse riding.

Natural Flood Management: managing flood and coastal erosion risk by protecting, restoring and emulating the natural 'regulating' function of catchments, rivers, floodplains and coasts.

Nature Recovery Network: An expanding, increasingly connected, network of wildlife rich habitats supporting species recovery, alongside wider benefits such as carbon capture, water quality improvements, natural flood risk management and recreation. It includes the existing network of protected sites and other wildlife rich habitats as well as and landscape or catchment scale recovery areas where there is coordinated action for species and habitats.

Neighbourhood Development Order: An Order made by a local planning authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) through which parish councils and neighbourhood forums can grant planning permission for a specific development proposal or classes of development.

Neighbourhood plan: A plan prepared by a parish council or neighbourhood forum for a designated neighbourhood area. In law this is described as a neighbourhood development plan in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Non-strategic policies: Policies contained in a neighbourhood plan, or those policies in a local plan that are not strategic policies.

Older people: People over or approaching retirement age, including the active, newly retired through to the very frail elderly; and whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.

Open space: All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

Original building: A building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.

Out of centre: A location which is not in or on the edge of a centre but not necessarily outside the urban area.

Out of town: A location out of centre that is outside the existing urban area.

Outstanding universal value: Cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations. An individual Statement of Outstanding Universal Value is agreed and adopted by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee for each World Heritage Site.

People with disabilities: People have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and that impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. These persons include, but are not limited to, people with ambulatory difficulties, blindness, learning difficulties, autism and mental health needs.

Permission in principle: A form of planning consent which establishes that a site is suitable for a specified amount of housing-led development in principle. Following a grant of permission in principle, the site must receive a grant of technical details consent before development can proceed.

Planning condition: A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

Planning obligation: A legal agreement entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

Playing field: The whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Previously developed land: Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.

Primary shopping area: Defined area where retail development is concentrated.

Priority habitats and species: Species and Habitats of Principal Importance included in the England Biodiversity List published by the Secretary of State under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Ramsar sites: Wetlands of international importance, designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention.

Renewable and low carbon energy: Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and

also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

Rural exception sites: Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local planning authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

Safeguarding zone: An area defined in Circular 01/03: Safeguarding aerodromes, technical sites and military explosives storage areas, to which specific safeguarding provisions apply.

Self-build and custom-build housing: Housing built by an individual, a group of individuals, or persons working with or for them, to be occupied by that individual. Such housing can be either market or affordable housing. A legal definition, for the purpose of applying the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended), is contained in section 1(A1) and (A2) of that Act.

Setting of a heritage asset: The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

Significance (for heritage policy): The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance.

Special Areas of Conservation: Areas defined by regulation 3 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which have been given special protection as important conservation sites.

Special Protection Areas: Areas classified under regulation 15 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds.

Site investigation information: Includes a risk assessment of land potentially affected by contamination, or ground stability and slope stability reports, as appropriate. All investigations of land potentially affected by contamination should be carried out in accordance with established procedures (such as BS10175 Investigation of Potentially Contaminated Sites – Code of Practice).

Site of Special Scientific Interest: Sites designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Spatial development strategy: A plan containing strategic policies prepared by a Mayor or a combined authority. It includes the London Plan (prepared under provisions in the Greater London Authority Act 1999) and plans prepared by combined authorities that have been given equivalent plan-making functions by an order made under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (as amended).

Stepping stones: Pockets of habitat that, while not necessarily connected, facilitate the movement of species across otherwise inhospitable landscapes.

Strategic environmental assessment: A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Strategic policies: Policies and site allocations which address strategic priorities in line with the requirements of Section 19 (1B-E) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Strategic policy-making authorities: Those authorities responsible for producing strategic policies (local planning authorities, and elected Mayors or combined authorities, where this power has been conferred). This definition applies whether the authority is in the process of producing strategic policies or not.

Supplementary planning documents: Documents which add further detail to the policies in the development plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.

Sustainable transport modes: Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking

and cycling, low and ultra low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

Town centre: Area defined on the local authority's policies map, including the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. References to town centres or centres apply to city centres, town centres, district centres and local centres but exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance. Unless they are identified as centres in the development plan, existing out-of-centre developments, comprising or including main town centre uses, do not constitute town centres.

Transport assessment: A comprehensive and systematic process that sets out transport issues relating to a proposed development. It identifies measures required to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel, particularly for alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport, and measures that will be needed deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the development.

Transport statement: A simplified version of a transport assessment where it is agreed the transport issues arising from development proposals are limited and a full transport assessment is not required.

Travel plan: A long-term management strategy for an organisation or site that seeks to deliver sustainable transport objectives and is regularly reviewed.

Wildlife corridor: Areas of habitat connecting wildlife populations.

Windfall sites: Sites not specifically identified in the development plan.

Recommendations of the Grant Working Party: November 2019 - Community Chest 2020/21

Report No:	CAB/WS/20/007	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	14 January 2020
Leader of the Council:	Councillor John Griffiths Leader of the Council Tel: 01284 757001 Email: john.griffiths@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Robert Everitt Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities Tel: 01284 769000 Email: robert.everitt@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Chair of the Grant Working Party:	Councillor Jim Thorndyke Tel: 01359 250271 Email: jim.thorndyke@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Davina Howes Assistant Director (Families and Communities) Tel: 01284 757070 Email: davina.howes@westsuffolk.gov.uk	

Decisions Plan: Due to previously allocated funding, some recommendations constitute a Key Decision; however, some recommendations are subject to the budget setting process, which is a decision of Council.

The decision made as a result of this report will usually be published within 48 hours and cannot be actioned until five clear working days of the publication of the decision have elapsed. This item is included on the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: All wards

Recommendations: It is recommended that:

1. the allocation of Community Chest funding for 2020/2021, as previously approved in 2018/2019 as part of two-year funding agreements, be noted, (papers EXC/SA/18/013 and 014 refer) namely:

a.	Bury Drop in	£12,288
b.	Fresh Start – New Beginnings	£11,600
c.	Gatehouse	£10,000
d.	Haverhill Community Trust <i>(separate project to that listed in (2)(l) below.)</i>	£25,168
e.	REACH <i>(separate project to that listed in 3(a) below)</i>	£9,360
f.	Relate <i>(separate project to that listed in 3 (b) below.)</i>	£2,000
g.	Suffolk Accident Rescue Service (SARS)	£5,000
h.	The Voluntary Network – Community Transport <i>(separate project to that listed in 4 (u) below.)</i>	£15,800
i.	The Voluntary Network – Connect and Support <i>(separate project to that listed in 4 (u) below.)</i>	£17,961

2. the allocation of Community Chest funding for 2020/2021, be approved, namely:

a.	Befriending Scheme – Haverhill Community Kitchen	£4,420
b.	Second Chance Stroke Group	£3,500
c.	Steel Bones	£3,500
d.	Suffolk Mind	£4,500
e.	Sharing Parenting – Special Needs <i>(separate project to that listed in 4(j) below)</i>	£17,000

f.	Suffolk Cruse Bereavement Care	£8,000
g.	Alumah CIO	£5,870
h.	West Suffolk Citizens Advice – across West Suffolk <i>(separate project to that listed in 4(k) below)</i>	£240,000
i.	HomeStart Mid and West Suffolk – Sensory <i>(separate project to that listed in 4(m) below)</i>	£14,000
j.	Our Special Friends	£3,500
k.	Bury Theatre Workshop	£4,000
l.	Haverhill Community Trust <i>(separate project to that listed in 1(d) above)</i>	£14,750
m.	Newmarket Day Centre CIO	£10,000
n.	The Erskine Centre, Chedburgh	£5,000
o.	The Turner Hall, Newmarket	£5,000

3. Subject to the budget setting process for 2021/2022, and subject to the satisfactory submission of evidence-based reports detailing the benefits and success of each individual project in 2020/2021, the allocation of Community Chest funding for 2020/2021 and 2021/2022, be approved, namely:

	<u>2020/21</u>	<u>2021/22</u>
a. REACH <i>(separate project to that listed in 1(e) above)</i>	£10,000	£10,000
b. Relate <i>(separate project to that listed in 1 (f) above)</i>	£4,500	£5,000

4. No Community Chest funding for 2020/2021 be awarded to:

a. **Art Branches;**

- b. Castle Fields Pre-School;**
- c. Fine not Fine;**
- d. Memories and Golden Community Hub;**
- e. St Nicholas Hospice Care;**
- f. Suffolk Young People's Health Project;**
- g. The Reader;**
- h. Best Before;**
- i. EPIC Dad;**
- j. Sharing Parenting – Community Outreach** *(separate project to that listed in 2(e) above);*
- k. West Suffolk Citizens Advice – Outreach** *(separate project to that listed in 2(h) above);*
- l. Green Light Trust;**
- m. Home-Start Mid and West Suffolk – Volunteering** *(separate project to that listed in 2 (i) above);*
- n. The Resume Foundation;**
- o. Basketball Outreach;**
- p. Clare Swimming Club;**
- q. Couch Casters;**
- r. Mildenhall Girl Guides;**
- s. The Kinetic Science Foundation;**
- t. The Tree Appreciation;**
- u. The Voluntary Network** *(separate project to that listed in 1(h) and (i) above);*
- v. West Suffolk Hive CIC;**
- w. All Saints Church – Cornerstone;**
- x. Fledglings Pre-School, Brandon;**
- y. Horringer Pre-School;**
- z. Lakenheath Peace Memorial Hall;**
- aa. Racing Centre, Newmarket; and**
- ab. Risby Village Hall Charity Trust.**

1. Background / Context

- 1.1 Community Chest funding supports voluntary and community groups, who contribute towards improving the quality of life for residents across West Suffolk.
- 1.2 In accordance with the previously approved transitional arrangements in relation to the creation of West Suffolk Council, the recently appointed Grant Working Party met on three occasions in November 2019 where it thoroughly considered a number of applications submitted for Community Chest funding in the 2020/21 financial year. In some cases, applicants applied for two years of funding (2020/21 and 2021/22).

2. Proposals

- 2.1 Community Chest has £466,733 available for allocation for 2020/21. £109,177 was allocated in 2018/19 for two-year projects, leaving **£357,556** available for these applications.
- 2.2 The closing date for applications was 30 September 2019 and 45 applications, totalling **£911,806.33** were received.
- 2.3 There are a number of potential synergies between the applications and as such they were grouped as follows:

Health and Wellbeing

- App. 1 Art Branches
- App. 2 Befriending Scheme – Haverhill Community Kitchen
- App. 3 Castle fields Pre-School
- App. 4 Fine Not Fine
- App. 5 Memories and Golden Community Hub
- App. 6 Second Chance Stroke Group
- App. 7 St Nicholas Hospice Care
- App. 8 Steel Bones
- App. 9 Suffolk Mind
- App. 10 Suffolk Young People’s Health Project
- App. 11 The Reader

Family Support

- App.12 Best Before Project
- App.13 EPIC Dads
- App.14 Sharing Parenting – Community Outreach
- App.15 Sharing Parenting – Special Needs

Counselling

- App.16 Cruse Bereavement
- App.17 Alumah CIO

Advice and Advocacy

- App.18 REACH
- App.19 Relate (Norfolk and Suffolk Area)
- App.20 West Suffolk Citizens Advice - Core, across west Suffolk
- App.21 West Suffolk Citizens Advice – Outreach

Support Groups/ Support Services

- App.22 Green Light Trust
- App.23 Home-Start Mid and West Suffolk - Sensory
- App.24 Home-Start Mid and West Suffolk – Volunteering
- App.25 Our Special Friends
- App.26 The Resume Foundation

Arts, Sports and Young People

- App.27 Basketball Outreach
- App.28 Bury Theatre Workshop
- App.29 Clare Swimming Club
- App.30 Couch Casters
- App.31 Mildenhall Girl Guides

Community Activities

- App.32 Haverhill Community Trust
- App.33 The Kinetic Science Foundation
- App.34 The Tree Appreciation
- App.35 The Voluntary Network
- App.36 West Suffolk Hive CIC

Community Buildings

- App.37 All Saints Church - Cornerstone
- App.38 Fledglings Pre-school Brandon
- App.39 Horringer Pre-school
- App.40 Lakenheath Peace Memorial Hall
- App.41 Newmarket Day Centre CIO
- App.42 Racing Centre, Newmarket
- App.43 Risby Village Hall Charity Trust
- App.44 The Erskine Centre, Chedburgh
- App.45 The Turner Hall, Newmarket

- 2.4 Each application had been summarised within the appropriate category listed above as shown in Appendix 1 attached to this report, with the full applications attached as appendices to the Grant Working Party report. Each application was required to be evaluated in accordance with the eligibility and selection criteria provided to the Grant Working Party, and was considered in turn.

3. Consideration of grants and recommendations: summary

3.1 One Year Funding

The Working Party considered the following applications fully met the eligibility and selection criteria and supported the allocation of the full amount for each project in 2020/21, as applied for. However, following thorough consideration of all applications, it was ascertained that provisional allocations meant the Community Chest funding budget for 2020/21 had been exceeded. The Working Party therefore made difficult decisions to reduce each of the grants which they felt warranted full funding, whilst maintaining a fair and equitable approach to all and basing their rationale on the quality of the application and the amount of funding applied for. Members also considered that the proposed reduction would not impact on the organisation's ability to deliver the project:

- a. Steel Bones – from £3,600 to £3,500;
- b. Suffolk Mind – from £5,000 to £4,500;
- c. Sharing Parenting: Special Needs – from £17,560 to £17,000; and
- d. Haverhill Community Trust – from £15,000 to £14,750.

In respect of application (d) above, this organisation had applied for funding for 2020/21 and 2021/22; however, the Working Party considered that a grant should be allocated for 2020/21 only in order to fully ascertain the success of their project and to encourage this organisation to find alternative funding sources.

Whilst generally falling within this category, a specific discussion was held on West Suffolk Citizens Advice, as detailed in paragraph 3.4 below.

- 3.2 The Working Party considered the following applications fully met the eligibility and selection criteria and supported an allocation of funding; however, it felt the amount it applied for could not be granted in full in 2020/21 (or 2021/22 if applicable), for the reasons given below:

3.2.1 Befriending Scheme – Haverhill Community Kitchen

Following further investigation, it had been ascertained that this organisation had the ability to apply for alternative funding sources and that the actual costs required to fund this project amounted to £4,420. This reduced amount from £11,950 was subsequently agreed by the Working Party to be recommended for approval. Two-year funding had been applied for; however, in order to fully determine the success of their project and to encourage this organisation to find alternative funding sources, it was agreed to recommend an allocation for 2020/21 only.

3.2.2 Second Chance Stroke Group

Following investigation and further discussions with the organisation, officers had ascertained that there was a shortfall between the subscription

base for this organisation and its outgoings of approximately £3,400. The Working Party agreed that a grant of a reduced rate of £3,500 from the requested of £8,127 would appropriately support the delivery of this organisation's project in 2020/21.

3.2.3 **Suffolk Cruse Bereavement Care**

Following further investigation and discussions with the organisation, which is based in Ipswich, officers had ascertained that two fifths of the project was directly for the benefit of residents in West Suffolk. This amounted to £8,203. It had also been confirmed that the organisation would also receive match funding of £10,400.

The Working Party considered a reduction in grant from £20,508 to £8,000 was acceptable and would not prevent the delivery of this project in 2020/21.

3.2.4 **Alumah CIO**

Following further investigation and discussions with the organisation, officers had ascertained that the actual project cost amounted to £5,870. The funding that had been requested (£11,000) includes resourcing staff and other costs; however, as the Working Party needed to make some difficult choices, it agreed that it could only recommend funding to cover the cost of the project itself and agreed to fund £5,870.

3.2.5 **Home-Start Mid and West Suffolk – Sensory**

The Working Party acknowledged that this organisation had submitted two applications for funding from the 2020/21 Community Chest. It was supportive of the work of Home-Start, but also recognised that it needed to make some difficult decisions given the limited funding available. As the organisation had previously received funding amounting to a total of £109,000 from the former Forest Heath District and St Edmundsbury Borough Councils, a reduced amount of £14,000 has been recommended for this project from the requested £19,334. No funding has been recommended for its other Volunteering project. Members considered that a £14,000 allocation towards enabling one project to be delivered should be granted rather than dividing the grant between the two which could risk neither project coming to fruition. It was also anticipated that the proposed reduction would encourage the organisation to seek alternative funding sources.

3.2.6 **Our Special Friends**

Following further investigation and discussions with the organisation, officers had ascertained that it had been successful in achieving £15,700 funding from an alternative source. This created a shortfall for the project of approximately £3,400 therefore the Working Party considered it appropriate to round this figure up to a grant of £3,500.

3.2.7 **Bury Theatre Workshop**

This organisation had applied for £4,930 funding for two years. The Working Party considered that an allocation of £4,000 for 2020/21 was acceptable to still enable the project to be delivered in the first year. As it was a relatively small amount, the organisation was to be encouraged to fundraise themselves or seek alternative sources, to fund the second year.

3.2.8 **Newmarket Day Centre CIO**

Following further investigation and discussions with the organisation, officers had ascertained that the organisation was looking to add a reasonable amount of funding towards this project from its own reserves, which reduced the shortfall required. It was also anticipated that a significant number of users would pay for the meals on offer and sources of other funding could be explored through discussions with organisations that operated similar schemes. A reduced amount of £10,000 has therefore been recommended from the original application of £56,000.

3.2.9 **The Erskine Centre, Chedburgh**

Following further investigation and discussions with the organisation, officers had ascertained that the organisation was anticipated to be awarded a £7,000 grant. This created a shortfall for the project of £8,000; however, upon closer consideration of the application and its allowance for contingencies, but also recognising the benefits of the proposal, Members felt that a grant of £5,000 from the requested £15,000 was acceptable.

3.2.10 **The Turner Hall, Newmarket**

Following further investigation and discussions with the organisation, officers had clarified to Members that The Turner Hall was fully inclusive of all religions and provided a networking space on an interfaith basis. Grants were anticipated to be received from other sources and signposting would be given to others as well. A reduced amount of £5,000 was considered acceptable to enable project delivery from the amount applied for of £10,000.

3.3 **Two Year Funding Agreements**

The Working Party considered that the following applications met the eligibility and selection criteria and were satisfied that funding should be recommended to be allocated for 2020/21 and 2021/22:

3.3.1 **REACH, Haverhill**

The Working Party was very supportive of the work of REACH and its fundraising efforts; however, it also recognised that it needed to make some difficult choices given the limited funding available. The organisation had previously received significant funding from the former St Edmundsbury Borough Council and has other options available to them to apply for funding, therefore considered that a reduced amount of £10,000 should be

recommended for this project in 2020/21 and 2021/22. The Working Party would allow the organisation to reapply for additional funding in 2021/22 for this project from the Community Chest grant scheme, should it need to do so.

3.3.2 **Relate (Norfolk and Suffolk Area)**

The Working Party considered this application fully met the eligibility and selection criteria and supported the allocation of the full amount for each project in 2020/21 and 2021/22, as applied for; however, as referred to in paragraph 3.1 above, the funding recommended for 2020/21 has been reduced to £4,500 with a full allocation of £5,000 for 2021/22.

3.3.3 In respect of the above two organisations, they would be asked to submit an evidence-based report (in addition to the usual monitoring reporting), detailing the benefits and success of their individual project in 2020/21 so a re-assessment can be made before releasing funding for 2021/22.

3.4 **Citizens Advice West Suffolk – across West Suffolk**

3.4.1 The Working Party fully supports the work of Citizens Advice (CA) and its valuable benefits to the community and the Council but recognises the need for ongoing resilience funding required for it to operate. The Working Party considered this is potentially an issue which requires lobbying of central government for statutory funding.

3.4.2 Whilst the Cabinet had recently approved the recommendations emanating from its separate Grants to External Organisations Review Group (Report No: CAB/WS/19/042) which retained the ability for applications from CA to be considered within the Community Chest funding scheme, the Working Party expressed some concern whether this scheme should be utilised in the future for year-on-year core funding for this organisation, particularly given the amount of funding requested.

3.4.3 As previously discussed in paragraph 3.1, that given the provisional allocations exceeded the Community Chest budget and acknowledging the work of all the other projects it had recommended funding, the Working Party were able to fund £240,000 of the requested £257,000 (6.6% less), as this would not significantly adversely impact the CA's ability to operate, albeit recognising that it would need to be supported by alternative funding sources.

3.5 **Recommendations for no funding in 2020/21**

The following applications were not supported on this occasion and have therefore not been recommended for funding:

- a. Art Branches;
- b. Castle Fields Pre-School;
- c. Fine not Fine;
- d. Memories and Golden Community Hub;
- e. St Nicholas Hospice Care;

- f. Suffolk Young People's Health Project;
- g. The Reader;
- h. Best Before;
- i. EPIC Dad;
- j. Sharing Parenting – Community Outreach;
- k. West Suffolk Citizens Advice – Outreach;
- l. Green Light Trust;
- m. Home-Start Mid and West Suffolk – Volunteering;
- n. The Resume Foundation;
- o. Basketball Outreach;
- p. Clare Swimming Club;
- q. Couch Casters;
- r. Mildenhall Girl Guides;
- s. The Kinetic Science Foundation;
- t. The Tree Appreciation;
- u. The Voluntary Network;
- v. West Suffolk Hive CIC;
- w. All Saints Church – Cornerstone;
- x. Fledglings Pre-School, Brandon;
- y. Horringer Pre-School;
- z. Lakenheath Peace Memorial Hall;
- aa. Racing Centre; and
- ab. Risby Village Hall Charity Trust.

3.6 Reasons for this included:

- not meeting the eligibility and selection criteria;
- the quality of the application;
- lack of justification for the amount of funding requested and how it would be utilised;
- similar projects already existed in West Suffolk, therefore some projects could be consolidated with other existing organisations through effective collaborative working;
- whether the objectives of the project would benefit sufficient numbers of the community; and
- projects could be funded by alternative funding sources, signposting for which would be provided by officers where possible.

If the Working Party's recommendations are approved by the Cabinet, the officers will provide individual feedback to those applicants that have been unsuccessful and to those where funding has been reduced.

To further assist with organisational support, officers are engaged with external agencies to expand the profile of grant making platforms and wish to provide training opportunities for West Suffolk organisations via a writing funding application course and delivering a Crowdfunding Workshop.

4. Alternative options

- 4.1 The Council could choose not to provide any grant funding; however, it is recognised that some support to the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector is required. The Community Chest also enables the Council to commission services to support the delivery of its priorities.

5. Consultation and engagement

- 5.1 The Grant Working Party had prior sight of the applications via email and spent several hours considering each application in turn. The Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities has attended meetings and his views and comments have been sought throughout the process.
- 5.2 Officers provided the Grant Working Party with research of local and national funders and information of internal West Suffolk Council departmental grants to provide rationale for each application.

6. Risks

- 6.1 Organisations are not aware of our approach to grants, which equates to a medium risk. Control – to implement a wide-ranging communication plan.
- 6.2 Requests for funding exceed the amount of money available, equates to a medium risk. Control – eligibility criteria and evaluation scoring matrix to be used to identify best fit and value for money.

Implications arising from the proposal

- 7.1 Financial
Funding for grants are contained within existing budgets.
- 7.2 Personal Data Processing
As a non-decision making body, the meetings of the Grant Working Party were not held in public. Part B of Community Chest Application (containing personal contact details), were in any event, removed and not circulated within the appendices to the Working Party.
- 7.3 Equalities
The Council's approach to grants has been subject of an Equality Impact Assessment and no negative consequences have been identified.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Summary of Applications and Amounts of Funding Requested.

9. Background documents

- 9.1 Shadow Executive (Cabinet) report on 27 November 2018: [EXC/SA/18/015](#)
Cabinet report on 25 June 2019: [CAB/WS/19/007](#)
Cabinet report on 26 November 2019: [CAB/WS/19/042 Appendix C](#)

Grant Working Party: 7 November 2019 - Appendix 1

Community Chest Applications Summary

Organisation	Project	2020/21	2021/22
Health and Wellbeing			
Art Branches	Extend services to Barrow cum Denham, Clare and Mildenhall. To improve people's physical and mental health and wellbeing through creative projects.	£10,948.00	£10,120.00
Befriending Scheme – Haverhill Community Kitchen	Current funding coming to an end and they wish to extend and continue the project, in order to invite more vulnerable people to attend and participate. Opportunities include developing friendships, learning for vulnerable and isolated people. This includes those with mental health needs and learning disabilities.	£11,950.00	£11,950.00
Castle Fields Pre-School	Funding to run additional nutritional education workshops for parents on low incomes. The school currently provides catering for 37 children, with potential to cater for over 50. A third of the children at this school receive deprivation funding.	£2,000.00	0.00
Fine Not Fine	Sensory boxes to address the gap between local provision of practical support for young people and families facing mental health issues.	£27,199.00	0.00
Memories and Golden Community Hub	Funding to provide a sensory garden for those living with dementia who access the hub. Providing a safe environment to enjoy the outdoors and in turn strengthen families.	£13,800.00	0.00
Second Chance Stroke Group	Grant to cover all our expenses for the next 12 months. Filling the gap of care services provided after discharge from hospital, members range from mild to severe disabilities with various ranges of mental and emotional disabilities.	£8,127.00	0.00
St Nicholas Hospice Care	Funding to roll out Life's Questions, a new initiative to support groups of school-age children, from primary school age to teenagers. Promoting relief for persons who suffer from chronic or terminal illness or disability or disease attributable to old age.	£15,112.32	£15,616.96
Steel Bones	Funding to expand operations to satisfy demand with amputee families helped by supportive peer community. The support empowers the amputees and their family and friends. They also provide comfort and help in moments of stress and crisis to overcome the trauma of amputation.	£3,600.00	0.00
Suffolk Mind	Funding needed to provide Get up and Grow' for another year. Eco therapy will deliver weekly 3-hour sessions offering local people a safe supportive group with an understanding of mental health problems.	£5,000.00	0.00
Suffolk Young People's Health Project	Funding will provide a young person-focused, specialist counselling service to improve the social, emotional, mental, and physical health and wellbeing of young people, aged 12-25. Known as '4YP', filling gaps in local provision for young people.	£10,000.00	0.00

The Reader	Funding to provide training, development and create a peer network of support for 12 local people to become Volunteer Reader Leaders. Targeting library services, F&C Officers, dementia, support services, social prescribing services, to reach those with a range of needs, with small reading groups.	£14,865.03	£13,954.85
Family Support			
Best Before	Project Co-ordinator for day-to-day running of the shop, where surplus food/items that are past their 'best before' date are available to the public at a minimum charge.	£14,805.00	£14,180.00
EPIC Dads	Funding for a new room to support, empower and transform families' through social and educational events. Helping fathers and their children spend time together, learning new skills and developing existing ones.	£15,848.00	£0.00
Sharing Parenting – Community Outreach	Funding request for two part time Outreach Workers who will be focusing on addressing the needs of the vulnerable, isolated parents, mental health, early intervention and avoiding the escalation of family crisis	£31,007.00	0.00
Sharing Parenting – Special Needs	Funding request for a SEN Project Worker who will provide SEN parent support around West Suffolk. Focusing on prevention and children in their primary years.	£17,560.00	0.00
Counselling			
Cruse Bereavement	Request for an employee on a Contact-line and expenses incurred by the volunteers travelling and to promote the wellbeing of those who struggle with bereavement. The objective of the organisation is to enable people to understand their grief and learn to cope with their loss.	£20,508.00	0.00
Sumah CIO	Funding to for two elements: Shine programme for young women educating them in self-value, boundaries and relationships. Strength programme aimed at boys/young men teaching them self-awareness, decision-making/problem solving skills and to build courage.	£11,000.00	0.00
Advice and Advocacy			
REACH	Funding to help poverty restore, encourage, action in the Community. The aim of the organisation is to uncover and resolve the root issues of the people we see and lift them out of poverty, restoring dignity and reviving hope.	£19,038.00	£18,198.00
Relate (Norfolk and Suffolk Area)	Funding will enable further provision for relationship support, fostering a thriving society. Helping people improve their relationships, delivering an inclusive, relevant and high-quality service and improve their understanding of relationships.	£5,000.00	£5,000.00
West Suffolk CAB - Core, across west Suffolk	Provision of information, advice and advocacy across the West Suffolk area, including financial capability work in the wider community (our clients divide 67%/33% between urban/rural from last year's figures).	£257,000.00	£257,000.00
West Suffolk Citizens Advice – Outreach	Improvement and development of outreach service to enable clients to access support in their local area. Free, confidential, impartial, non-judgmental, and independent information, advice and advocacy is available through this outreach.	£19,032.00	0.00

Support Groups/Support Services			
Green Light Trust	Funding for a manager to develop a stage 2 working party programme for all participants who have already been on several woodland education courses. Opportunity to develop and build confidence through woodland management tasks.	£9,980.00	0.00
Home-Start Mid and West Suffolk - Sensory	To facilitate an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) support group worker providing peer support to parents and a support group in Haverhill, where referrals have been much greater.	£19,334.00	0.00
Home-Start Mid and West Suffolk - Volunteering	Recruit a new member of staff to work within the team to recruit volunteers to support families within West Suffolk.	£15,633.00	0.00
Our Special Friends	Funding for a dedicated full-time practitioner who to work with vulnerable adults offering support and animal companionship tailored to the client's needs. We support vulnerable people in West Suffolk from animal companionship.	£19,060.00	0.00
The Resume Foundation	Set up costs to establish two Hubs to promote employment, enterprise and self-employment, focusing on marginalised people, championing 'inclusive employment'.	£25,000.00	£25,000.00
Arts, Sports and Young People			
Basketball Outreach	To continue tackling issues such as anti-social behaviour, loneliness, health and wellbeing. Providing a positive impact on lives of young people between the ages of 10 through to 19	£29,223.00	0.00
Bury Theatre Workshop	The admission fee to be subsidised to ensure that people attend a monthly workshop that recruits and empowers people, identifying their strengths in a community setting. They make friends which reduces feelings of social isolation, improves health and wellbeing and builds self-confidence.	£4,930.00	£4,930.00
Hare Swimming Club	Provides a service for all ages, becoming increasingly popular year-on-year and would like to upgrade the pool facilities so that it can serve an even greater proportion of the community.	£16,500.00	0.00
Couch Casters	Funding needed to hold a unique event bringing together people to discuss, learn and celebrate the talents of those in the video game and entertainments industry	£10,000.00	£10,000.00
Mildenhall Girl Guides	Would like to provide a fun day for Guiding and Scout groups and community groups across Forest Heath and Bury St Edmunds.	£3,500.00	0.00
Community Activities			
Haverhill Community Trust	Funding a Volunteering Coordinator for the Peoples Bank, to work across agencies and organisations across the town to encourage volunteer activity and opportunities.	£15,000.00	£15,000.00
The Kinetic Science Foundation	Event funding for the Science festival, where they aim to have 20,000 visitors engaging. This year's event the "Museum of the Moon" in the Apex visitors were mostly within a 10-mile radius of Bury	£3,000.00	0.00
The Tree Appreciation	A large water storage tank with a 3000 Litre capacity is needed for protecting and caring for trees, creating a planting program, identifying potential green corridors to connect fragmented pockets of natural habitat to form 'wildlife highways'.	£9,060.00	0.00

The Voluntary Network	We want to develop our befriending scheme by working in partnership with various primary schools across west Suffolk. Intergenerational schemes have evidenced great benefits and would extend the Day Centre's links with the community.	£12,639.00	£12,639.00
West Suffolk Hive CIC	Funding to host a bi-annual green fair, providing an opportunity for eco-friendly local businesses and community projects to share their knowledge and skills. Family-centred community space to foster a connection with nature, improve wellbeing and share skills and knowledge.	£5,000.00	0.00
Community Buildings			
All Saints Church - Cornerstone	Install new toilet facilities, including baby-changing facilities and allow access for the disabled and those with dementia for use by various support groups and as a social hub for many age groups.	£50,000.00	£50,000.00
Fledglings Pre-school Brandon	There is only one adult-sized toilet for 27 children and need three child-sized toilets with individual cubicles. We are a non-profit charity working with multi agencies and outside professionals	£6,519.98	0.00
Horringer Pre-school	Funding to renovate an old building, with poor insulation and limited accessible facilities. Improvements needed for a modern community building that will bring the generations together to learn and play.	£12,000.00	0.00
Lakenheath Peace Memorial Hall	Funding towards a "drop-in" centre aimed at the elderly, vulnerable and isolated residents of the village. To provide a centre for them to come together to socialise and make new friendships.	£8,000.00	0.00
Newmarket Day Centre CIO	Funding for major kitchen upgrade with modern approach to food service to allow an increase in hot meals service Monday to Friday. Helping to reduce loneliness and isolation	£56,000.00	0.00
Racing Centre	Would like to create a youth programme in Newmarket, aimed at young people in the community, which will increase their physical and mental health and allow them to interact socially.	£18,805.00	0.00
Risby Village Hall Charity Trust	Funding to repair and refurbish the facilities, which offers a wide-range of functions that have been focused at age groups from toddlers to those over 90. It offers a kitchen, outdoor space with a Multi-Use Games Area facility, children's play area, cricket pitch, football pitch and a pentangle court.	£4,262.00	0.00
The Erskine Centre, Chedburgh	Funding to replace our thermally inefficient, and leaky, roof. To enable community projects and fetes to fundraise for the benefit of the hall and small local groups.	£15,000.00	0.00
The Turner Hall, Newmarket	Seeking to improve facilities looking to revise and modernise the washroom facilities, entrance and kitchen areas in order to provide a disabled toilet and a shower. This is a well-used amenity with various local community groups.	£10,000.00	0.00
Total		£911,845.33	£463,588.81

Previously allocated funds			
Bury Drop In	Provides food and support to homeless vulnerable people - funding to develop a project and write fundraising strategy.	£12,288.00	0.00
Fresh Start – New Beginnings	One to one and group counselling for young people (0-21) who have experienced sexual abuse.	£11,600.00	0.00
Gatehouse	To extend and develop services at the Dementia Hub in Bury St Edmunds.	£10,000.00	0.00
Haverhill Community Trust	Provide free and subsidised cooking courses and workshops at The Haverhill Community Kitchen.	£25,168.00	0.00
REACH	To launch a social enterprise in the form of an online retail offering - First steps in making REACH more sustainable to ensure services (Debt advice, food bank, etc.) can continue.	£9,360.00	0.00
Relate	Relationship Counselling services	£2,000.00	0.00
Suffolk Accident Rescue Service (SARS)	Equipment and training costs for solo and team responders	£5,000.00	0.00
The Voluntary Network – Community Transport	Running costs of Dial a Ride and a community car service in Haverhill and Bury St Edmunds.	£15,800.00	0.00
The Voluntary Network – Connect and Support	Running costs of Dial a Ride and a community car service	£17,961.00	0.00
	Total application value (new applications)	£911,845.33	£463,588.81
	Budget	£466,733.00	
	Carried over funds	£109,177.00	
	Total Budget (minus previously allocated funds)	£357,556.00	

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West Suffolk Rural Taskforce: Final Recommendations

Report No:	CAB/WS/20/008	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	14 January 2020
Portfolio Holder	Councillor John Griffiths Leader of the Council Tel: 07958 700434 Email: john.griffiths@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Taskforce Chair	Councillor Mike Chester Tel: 01284 850000 Email: mike.chester@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	David Collinson Assistant Director (Planning and Regulatory) Tel: 01284 757306 Email: david.collinson@westsuffolk.gov.uk	

Decisions Plan: The decisions made as a result of this report will usually be published within 48 hours and cannot be actioned until five clear working days of the publication of the decision have elapsed. This item is included on the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: All Rural Wards

Recommendations: It is recommended that:

- 1. Cabinet adopts the recommendations proposed by the West Suffolk Rural Taskforce, as attached at Appendix A to Report No: CAB/WS/20/008; and**
- 2. Cabinet agrees to receive a report in six months to understand the actions that have been undertaken in respect of the Rural Taskforce's work.**

1. Background

- 1.1 In June 2019, the Cabinet announced a rural taskforce with a view to making recommendations back to Cabinet on how best to ensure the different issues facing residents, communities and businesses in more rural areas (villages and outlying dwellings), as opposed to more urban areas, are taken into account by West Suffolk Council in all of its relevant future activities and decision making.
- 1.2 In September, Cabinet received an update on the work of the West Suffolk Rural Taskforce. This outlined the communication and engagement plan the Taskforce had agreed, and the Taskforce's initial emerging priorities.

2. Work of the Taskforce

- 2.1 In line with its terms of reference, the Taskforce has undertaken a thorough review of the challenges faced by rural communities, as follows:
- 2.2 Seeking evidence from officers on the challenges faced by different communities in West Suffolk, including demographic evidence, examples of good practice and national level strategic documents.
- 2.3 A survey was produced for both residents and community groups. This was accompanied by a robust communications plan to raise awareness of the Taskforce and encourage people to complete the survey.
- 2.4 In total, completed responses were received from 309 residents and 30 community groups. These were analysed and the full results have been considered by the Taskforce. A summary of the results is attached at Appendix B.
- 2.5 A key element of the survey was the questions relating to what residents and groups felt should be a priority for the Taskforce. Public transport accessibility was a key theme across both residents and groups; in addition, speeding and traffic calming; footpaths and cycleways; affordable housing; better communications; activities for younger people and support for older residents were also strongly supported.
- 2.6 All local members were encouraged to discuss the work of the Taskforce with their parishes and the opportunity was provided to residents, groups and local members to attend four workshops which took place in September 2019 at Freckenham, Stanton, Chedburgh and Kedington.
- 2.7 In October, the Taskforce held a roundtable discussion with four key organisations who provide support to rural communities across the District, namely Suffolk Association of Local Councils, Community Action Suffolk, the Rural Coffee Caravan and West Suffolk Citizens Advice Service.
- 2.8 Collectively, this work assisted the Taskforce in gaining insight to the challenges faced by rural communities; the work already ongoing within rural communities to address such challenges, and the priorities for further action

to take forward. Taking all of the feedback into account, the Taskforce identified three theme areas in which to focus further work:

	Theme	What do we want to see in the future?
1	Digital Connectivity, Access to Health and Transport	Better connected rural places, where people are able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stay safe, healthy and well • build relationships and community • be trained and engage in meaningful work
2	Appropriate and Affordable Housing	A wider variety of housing in rural areas that is suitable and affordable for a range of local people, located in developments that the local community support.
3	Communication, Working Together across Communities and Young People	Strong rural communities that are integrated, informed, equipped and empowered.

2.9 For each theme area, a dedicated workshop was held with guests invited from a wide range of relevant organisations including transport and infrastructure providers, public sector partners, housing associations and community groups. This enabled the taskforce to focus on the specific challenges and priority areas for action.

2.10 This has ultimately culminated into the Taskforce’s action plan, as attached at Appendix A to this document

3. The Rural Taskforce Action Plan

3.1 The Taskforce have been mindful of their terms of reference in forming their action plan. In particular, the Taskforce was requested by Cabinet to:

- develop options as to how to address the key issues identified by rural communities, and
- advise on how rural considerations can be included in future Council processes and decision making.

3.2 In terms of the first aspect, developing options for addressing the key issues, the Taskforce have worked to identify a wide range of potential areas of actions, but recognise that there a number of service providers and organisations involved in making improvements in these areas.

3.3 This was particularly apparent in the Digital Connectivity, Access to Health and Transport theme, where West Suffolk Council can influence other organisations but is not directly responsible for providing services. It is important that further conversations are held with the partner organisations to understand the full extent of their work and how we can work together to build upon / raise awareness of what is being done already or work to



address gaps where these exist. Following this further dialogue specific, SMART actions / objectives can be formed.

- 3.4 A particular theme arising was the need to ensure rural communities understand the range of support available to them. For example, concerns about speeding was a key issue raised across West Suffolk rural areas. The Suffolk Roadsafe partnership have led on developing a strategy to tackle community speeding and there is the potential for discussions with the Roadsafe partnership to understand how the Council, its Councillors and its Towns / Parishes can support work to raise the profile of the partnership's initiatives.
- 3.5 The second aspect of the Taskforce's work (taking rural considerations into account in future decision making) was particularly apparent in the Appropriate and Affordable Housing theme. West Suffolk Council is developing a new local plan, and the Taskforce have identified a number of actions they consider should be taken forward as part of the plan such as space standards, design standards, housing mix and tenure, and sustainable heating solutions.
- 3.6 The Taskforce recognise the important role local members have in encouraging positive relationships between local rural communities and West Suffolk Council. Fostering a sense of trust helps encourage communities to positively engage with our initiatives.

4. Review

- 4.1 As highlighted above, there are a range of ways in which the Taskforce's actions can and should be implemented. In some areas, further work needs to be undertaken.
- 4.2 With this in mind, the Taskforce have suggested that a progress review should be undertaken to assess how their work is being embedded into service delivery and the specific actions are being taken forward. It is recommended that this is considered by Cabinet in six months' time, after which a decision can be made on further assessment.

5. Thanks

- 5.1 The Rural Taskforce wish to take the opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to their work and developing the actions, and in particular those who have taken the time and trouble to respond to the surveys, consultation events and subsequent focus sessions.

6. Alternative options

- 6.1 The taskforce action plan has been developed to take into account the findings of the work by the Taskforce. As such, no alternative options are being presented at this stage.

7. Consultation and engagement

- 7.1 The consultation and engagement plan undertaken by the Rural Taskforce has been outlined in section 1 above and in the Taskforce's report to Cabinet in September 2019. The outcomes of the consultation have been taken into account in developing the action plan.

8. Risks

- 8.1 No specific risks are identified.

9. Implications arising from the proposal

Please note that the implications below focus on the outcomes of the action plan at present. As more detailed actions are developed (where appropriate) specific assessment will need to be undertaken to evaluate the implications of each action.

- 9.1 Financial – there are no specific financial implications arising from this report.
- 9.2 Equalities – the Taskforce expect that equality impacts should be positive as a result of their work, however this would need to be subject to further assessment based on each action.
- 9.3 Crime and Disorder – the Council has a duty to consider the potential impact of its decisions on crime and disorder. It is hoped that the recommendations of the Taskforce will have a positive impact on the potential for reducing crime and disorder in rural areas but again, assessment would be required based on each action
- 9.4 Environmental or sustainability – The taskforce have taken into account environmental considerations in the formation of their recommendations. It is hoped that the recommendations may have a positive impact on the environment, for example encouraging greater use of public transport in rural areas, but further assessment would be required based on each action
- 9.5 Impact on other organisations – the taskforce recommendations specifically state potential partner organisations that will need to be involved with implementing recommendations. Officers have made partner organisations aware of the nature of the recommendations to Cabinet and will communicate on a more formal basis after the Cabinet meeting.

10. Appendices

- 10.1 Appendix A – Rural Taskforce Action Plan
Appendix B – Outcomes of the Rural Taskforce Survey

11. Background documents

- 11.1 CAB/WS/019/006 – Proposal to establish a Rural Taskforce
CAB/WS/019/028 – Update on the work of the Rural Taskforce

WEST SUFFOLK RURAL TASKFORCE - RECOMMENDED ACTIONS (December 2019)

Outcome	Themes	Actions	Associated activities	Lead team / commissioner	Partners	Timescale	West Suffolk resources	
DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY, ACCESS TO HEALTH AND TRANSPORT								
Better connected rural places, where people are able to stay safe, healthy and well, build relationships and community and be trained and engage in meaningful	Improving rural transport and access to services	T1. Initiate a review of rural transport options across West Suffolk and then co-ordinate a plan to fill in any gaps, including exploring the potential alternative options to address these	a) Review timetabling and whether it meets the needs of customers b) explore taxi buses	Economic Development and Growth Team	SCC, Parish councils, Community transport, F&C team			
		T2. Review how all existing transport services and alternative transport methods are publicised and consider improvements	a) Include consideration of a single point of contact for transport information (whether improving existing or creating new)	Economic Development and Growth Team	SCC, Transport operators, Parish councils, Community transport, F&C team, Comms team			
		T3. Work with the business community to assess the commercial viability of cross-funded services to provide transport to rural areas		Economic Development and Growth Team	Businesses, SCC, transport operators, F&C team			
			T4. Explore with bus companies the viability of incorporating stops at key locations eg West Suffolk Hospital, Western Way for buses to Bury St Edmunds		Economic Development and Growth Team	SCC, transport operators, NHS		
		Enabling more walking and cycling around rural settlements, safe from speeding vehicles	T5. Review availability of information about rural foot and cycle paths (maps, signage etc), encouraging parish councils to publicise these		Leisure	SCC, Parish councils		
			T6. Promote use of cycle and footways for both recreation and purposeful journeys		Leisure	SCC, F&C team. PC's, Health		
			T7. Explain the process/criteria that are available to parish councils to influence speed limits		Legal and Democratic	SALC, SCC, Police, F&C team		
			T8. Continue to co-ordinate support for Community Speedwatch from the police		Families and Communities Team	Police, community groups		
			T9. Explore with SCC/Police/Suffolk Roadsafe the potential for a rural road safety / driver behaviour change campaign to tackle speeding in villages	a) explore ANPR use	Families and Communities Team	SCC, Police, Comms Team		
		Improving digital connectivity in rural areas	T10. Work with SCC/Suffolk Broadband to understand existing provision and planned improvements, including not -spots and plans to target them	a) aim for 100% coverage	Economic Development and Growth Team	SCC		

Outcome	Themes	Actions	Associated activities	Lead team / commissioner	Partners	Timescale	West Suffolk resources
DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY, ACCESS TO HEALTH AND TRANSPORT							
		T11. Establish what improvements are required to data speeds for health service centres in rural areas to promote access to local provision, minimising travel and maximising use of technology		Economic Development and Growth Team	CCG, F&C team		
		T12. Lobby Government to influence policy on further funding to support rural area rollout of superfast broadband / mobile		Economic Development and Growth Team	MHCLG, MPs, LEP		
		T13. Ensure clear and realistic provision of information to community groups on local (short term) solutions to broadband data speeds and access to funding	a) Provide information / support to communities on how they can access land for self-dig provision of ducting to enable improved pace / cost of infrastructure provision b) engage open reach fibre project	Economic Development and Growth Team	SCC, F&C team		

WEST SUFFOLK RURAL TASKFORCE - RECOMMENDED ACTIONS (December 2019)

Outcome	Themes	Actions	Associated activities	Lead team / commissioner	Partners	Timescale	Resources
APPROPRIATE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING							
A wider variety of housing in rural areas that is appropriate and affordable for a range of local people, located in developments that the local community support	Community engagement with future planning and development	H1. Increase the involvement of local communities and parish councils in new housing development	a) Proactively inform and engage with communities and parishes on the need for local growth and affordable housing	Strategic Planning	Strategic Housing, F&C Team		
		H2. Improve communications and relationships between West Suffolk and Parish Councils, through consistent engagement via Ward members (with F&C team support)		Ward Members	Strategic Housing, Strategic Planning, Comms Team, F&C team, Parish Councils, SALC		
		H3. Support the development of the Eastern Community Homes Hub (a tool for the Parish Councils that are interested in Community Land Trust / community led housing)		Strategic Housing	CAS, Strategic Planning, F&C Team		
	Establishing an evidence base to guide future development	H4. Develop a compendium of approaches to understanding need and developing local housing plans	a) Become an enabler of housing needs surveys that establish FUTURE housing need (including looking at local land availability) and are supported by communications with local communities	Strategic Housing	Strategic Planning, CAS, Parish Councils		
			b) Encourage housing needs surveys alongside Neighbourhood Plans	Strategic Housing	Strategic Planning		
	Ensuring the planning and infrastructure frameworks are appropriate	H5. Develop a policy that reflects housing need based on future demographics	a) factors are age and ability	Strategic Planning	Strategic Housing		

Outcome	Themes	Actions	Associated activities	Lead team / commissioner	Partners	Timescale	Resources
APPROPRIATE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING							
		H6. Review / update the Affordable Housing guide (following Local plan adoption) and promote it with Councillors and Parish Councils		Strategic Housing	Strategic Planning		
		H7. Explore possibility of designating land as Rural so as to allow affordable housing in developments of <10 dwellings		Strategic Housing	Strategic Planning		
		H8. Set new local plan policies to cover the following issues:	a) Review settlement boundaries in our rural settlements to allow, where appropriate, small scale growth	Strategic Planning	Strategic Housing		
			b) Introduce / develop design standards that promote sustainable places where people want to live	Strategic Planning	Strategic Housing		
			c) Explore mechanisms for requiring sustainable technologies e.g. Air/Ground Source Heat Pumps	Strategic Planning	Environmental Health Team, Building Control, Strategic Housing		
			d) Retain single storey homes in villages where appropriate (not within gift of council - can be dealt with through Lifetime Homes)	Strategic Planning	Strategic Housing		
			e) Provide for sustainable and flexible housing types (both tenure and lifetime homes). e.g. revise settlement hierarchy to include more types of place to support growth in rural areas	Strategic Planning	Building Control, Strategic Housing		
			f) Revise exception site policy to enable more exception sites delivered across West Suffolk where there is an identified Housing Need				
			g) Introduce space standards into housing / planning requirements	Strategic Planning	Strategic Housing		

Outcome	Themes	Actions	Associated activities	Lead team / commissioner	Partners	Timescale	Resources
APPROPRIATE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING							
		H9. Enable provision of homes for people with a local connection through Affordable Housing SPD policy, based on evidence of local housing need (through survey). This would include Registered Provider-led housing		Strategic Housing	Strategic Planning		
		H10. provision of rural infrastructure by supporting communities to plan for future needs which will support targeted help		Economic Development and Growth	Strategic Planning, SCC, F&C, CAS		
		H11. Explore HMOs / Temp accommodation in hard to let properties (on a case by case basis, depending on suitability, e.g. transport)		Strategic Housing	Housing Options, Strategic Property		
		H12. Explore opportunities around church and charitable land		Economic Development and Growth	Strategic Housing, F&C Team, Parish Councils		
	Changing the wider economic model for housing development	H13. Lobby Government for greater funding to support building rural housing		Strategic Housing	MPs, MHCLG		

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WEST SUFFOLK RURAL TASKFORCE - RECOMMENDED ACTIONS (December 2019)

Outcome	Themes	Actions	Associated activities	Lead team / commissioner	Partners	Timescale	Resources	
COMMUNICATION, WORKING TOGETHER ACROSS COMMUNITIES; AND YOUNG PEOPLE								
Strong rural communities that are integrated, informed, equipped and empowered.	Supporting long term planning by communities to identify need / support	C1. Support communities with appraisal / plans for their future	a) Gain a better understanding of people in communities (their capability and capacity) and assets	Ward Members	F&C Team, Parish Councils, VCS (Voluntary and Community Service providers)			
				F&C Team	Ward Members, Parish Councils, VCS			
		C2. Review the toolkit / compendium of guidance to help communities obtain targeted and proactive support from VCS / Councils						
	Supporting and nurturing volunteering		C3. Work with the VCS on flexible and creative approaches to engaging people in volunteering, including young people and businesses. (for example, information in GP surgeries, shops, workplaces, libraries and pubs)	a) Encourage employer-supported volunteering schemes, encouraging businesses to support volunteering initiatives in communities or undertake volunteering initiatives themselves	F&C Team	SALC, CAS, Parish Councils, Business, Economic Development and Growth Team, HR		
				b) Support new volunteers through mentoring	F&C Team	SALC, CAS		
				c) Support volunteering by enabling local people to just get on and do the things they are passionate about to help others	F&C Team, Ward members	SALC, CAS		
				d) Tackle understanding/myths about red tape associated with volunteering	F&C Team, Ward members	SALC, CAS		
				e) Work with parish councils to myth bust about what being a parish councillor involves	F&C Team	SALC, CAS, Parish Councils		
Helping communities access funding		C4. Provide local communities with information and support on accessing funding	a) Share information with local councillors and community champions	F&C Team	CAS			
			b) Ensure training and development for parish councillors includes material on accessing funding and is promoted	F&C Team	SALC			

Outcome	Themes	Actions	Associated activities	Lead team / commissioner	Partners	Timescale	Resources
COMMUNICATION, WORKING TOGETHER ACROSS COMMUNITIES; AND YOUNG PEOPLE							
			c) Promote the funding portal / help to apply	F&C Team	CAS		
	Improving knowledge of and access to information and advice	C5. Improve how existing VCS resources are communicated to communities	a) Further develop the network of community connectors / champions that can be go-to supporters	F&C Team	Ward Members		
			b) Understand and communicate who partners are and what their offer is	F&C Team	Ward Members		
			c) Share best practice and learning from successes/failures	F&C Team	Ward Members		
		C6. Promote and develop use of networking resources such as "Next Door" to enable individual engagement in supporting community needs		F&C Team	Ward Members		
		C7. Explore with SALC the development of an app to communicate with parish councils	a) Share information on opportunities for development of assets (churches, village halls and other buildings)	F&C Team	SALC		
	Identifying and nurturing assets	C8. Raise awareness of the value that community assets offer		F&C Team	Parish Councils, Ward Members		
	Bringing all together in supporting rural communities	C9. Promotion of parish council clustering where appropriate to share approaches		F&C Team	Parish Councils, Ward Members		
		C10. Explore approaches to clustering assets e.g. village halls to simplifying management		F&C Team	Parish Councils, Ward Members		
		C11. Explore combining SALC and WSC Parish liaison		F&C Team	Parish Councils, Ward Members, VCS		
		C12. Continue linking up Good Neighbour Schemes		F&C Team	CAS, Parish Councils, Ward Members, Good Neighbour Schemes		

APPENDIX B: RURAL TASKFORCE: SURVEYS OF RESIDENTS AND GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS

FINAL SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

1. This report updates the Taskforce on the results of the surveys following the close of the survey on 13 October 2019. It replaces the previous interim report that was presented to the Taskforce and gave the summary picture at 1 October 2019.
2. Please note:
 - This summary report covers both the residents survey and the groups and organisations survey. Each is dealt with in turn in the sections below.
 - All answers are listed in descending order of importance (except equality monitoring questions which remain in standard categories)
 - A large part of the survey was made up of free text responses. These have been analysed using standard manual techniques for free text analysis, which while highly effective are unable to eliminate any degree of judgement or subjectivity.
 - The top three responses have been highlighted in yellow in each section below.
 - The raw data behind each of the questions can be shared with the Taskforce (please note the report runs to 117 pages)

A: About the respondents

a) Resident Survey:

3. 309 completed surveys were submitted and included as part of this analysis. A further 34 surveys were partially completed but not included as they were not ultimately submitted by the respondent. Duplicate, identical responses from the same IP address were also removed from the analysis.

Gender

4. The survey was completed by more females than males, with women accounting for 58% of the respondents, compared to 38% who were male. The remainder of respondents did not disclose their gender.

Age and health/disability

5. The age breakdown (see chart 1) demonstrated a larger proportion of older people completing the survey; 82% were aged over 45. There is no representation of those aged under 18 in this survey, with very few 18-24-year olds also. 17.5% of respondents also said they had a long-term disability or illness, which could correlate with an aging population seen in rural West Suffolk who have responded to this survey.

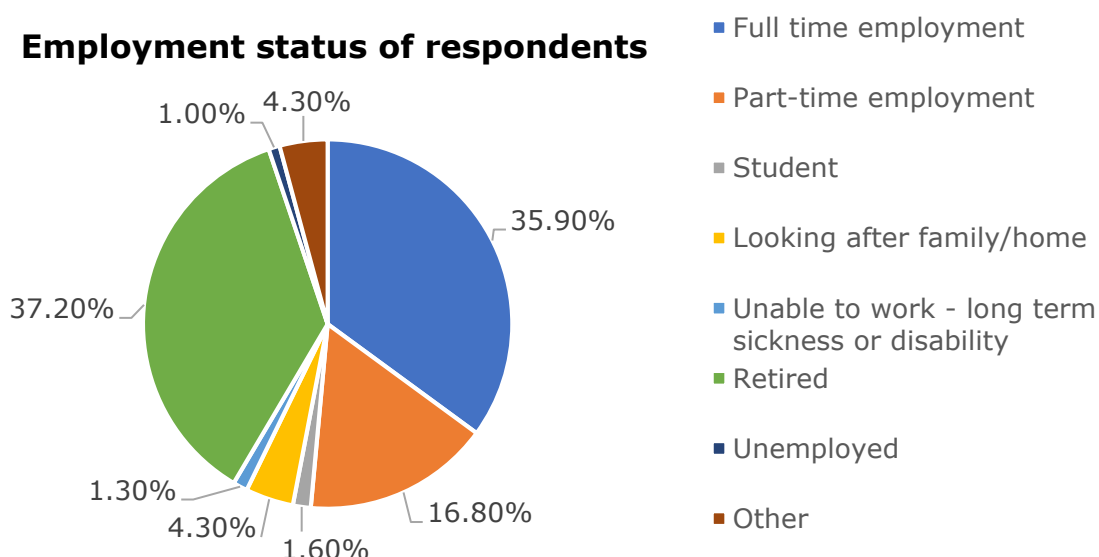
Chart 1 – Age breakdown of respondents

Age categories	% in each age category	West Suffolk % (2018)
0-17	0%	21.1%
18-24	1.3%	7.7%
25-34	4.6%	13.8%
35-44	11.9%	11.5%
45-59	35.6%	19.5%
60-69	26.0%	10.9%
Over 70	20.5%	15.5%

Employment status

6. The employment status of respondents showed that 37% were retired, closely followed by 35% in full time/part time employment. Only 1% of respondents are unemployed, which is below the West Suffolk average of 2.7% (ONS).

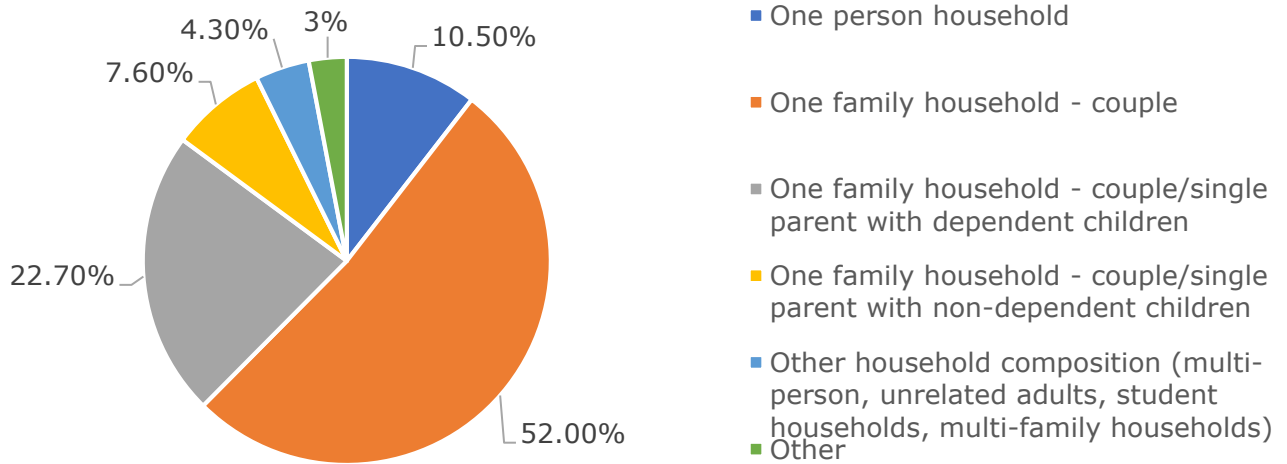
Employment status of respondents



Household composition

7. The survey also collected information about the household composition of each respondent. 52% were part of a couple in a one family household, with the West Suffolk average being 53.5%. One in 10 people lived alone, compared with a West Suffolk average of 27.2% one person households. 22% were living as a single family with dependent children, in comparison to the 28.5% across West Suffolk.

Household composition of respondents



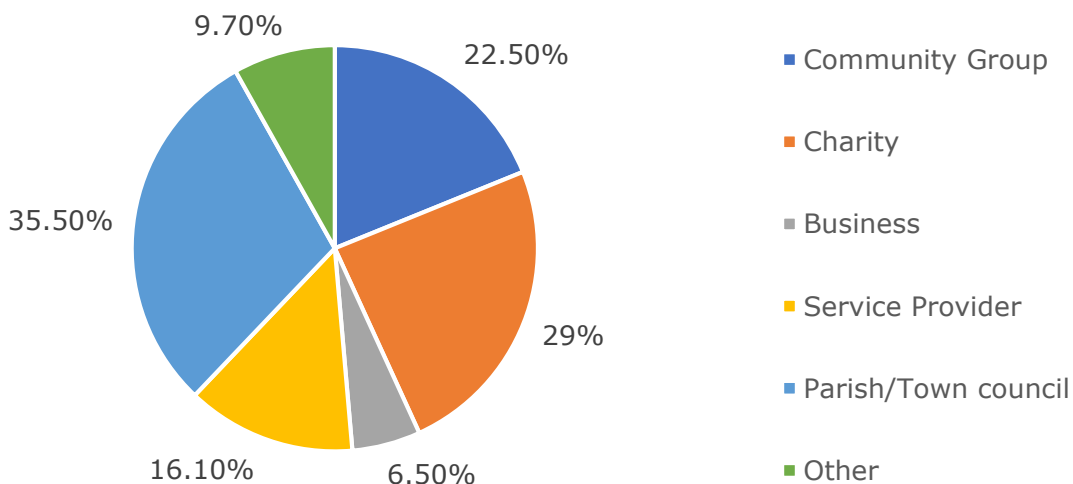
Ethnic background

8. Of the survey respondents, 96% identified as white British/Irish with the remaining identifying themselves as other (white) and British/mixed race. The white British/Irish response rate is therefore higher than in West Suffolk as a whole, where this group make up 87.1% of the population as a whole.

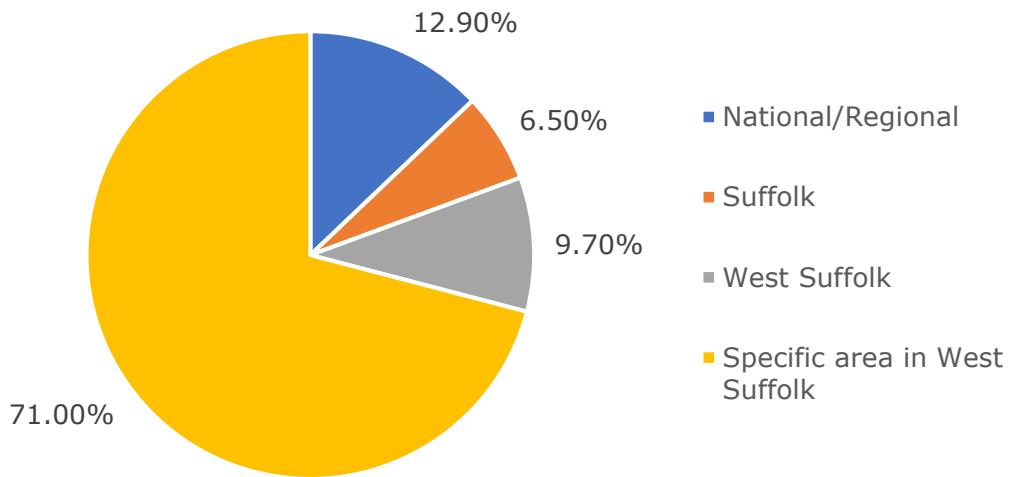
b) Groups/organisations survey:

9. 30 groups and organisations submitted responses. The most popular organisation type was Parish/Town councils which cover a specific area of West Suffolk. 12% of responses were from national and regional organisations, compared to 71% that covered only specific areas of West Suffolk, demonstrating a range in scale of groups/organisations.

Type of Organisation



Area that the Organisation Covers



B. Living and working in West Suffolk:

a) Residents

10. Residents were asked to consider what it is like to live in their local area and to describe their rural living and community context. First, they were asked what they valued most about living in their local area, using a free text response. Please note the number of mentions of key words or phrases exceeds the number of overall survey responses as respondents may have replied with more than one answer.

QR2 - What do you value most about living in your local area?	Frequency of inclusion
Views of the Countryside/Rural life/Country living	115
Peaceful/quiet	85
Sense of belonging in a community	63
Green open spaces	53
Access to shops, services and facilities	49
Friendly local people/neighbours looking out for each other	40
Safety/Security/Lack of crime	30
Access to urban areas and main roads	28
Undeveloped/Unspoilt	20
Lack of cars and main roads	15
Community Events	13
Lack of pollution/fresh air	11
Clean and maintained environment	7
Footpaths	7

11. Next, respondents were asked about how safe they felt in their local area.

QR3 - How safe do you feel in the local area?	Frequency of inclusion
Always feel safe	107
Normally feel safe	183
Sometimes feel safe	13
Seldom feel safe	2
Never feel safe	1

12. 94.7% of respondents to this question stated that they always or normally felt safe in their local area, with only one saying they never felt safe. These figures were reinforced by an open text reason for their answer; 56 responses indicated that respondents felt safe because they lived in a low/no crime area, with a further 37 stating it was because they knew and trusted their neighbours and lived in a friendly community.

13. Conversely, 36 responses said there had been occasional incidents in their village so they could not always feel safe in their local area and 28 cited a lack of policing. 18 said incidences of antisocial behaviour and gangs of young people made them feel less safe in their community. Eleven respondents stated that either they or a close next-door neighbour had been burgled in the past.

QR3 -Reasons for feeling unsafe	Frequency of inclusion	QR3 - Reasons for feeling safe	Frequency of inclusion
Occasional incidents (so cannot always be safe)	36	No reason to feel unsafe as it is a low/no crime area	56
Lack of policing	28	Knowing and trusting neighbours/friendly community	37
Gangs of young people/antisocial behaviour	18	Quiet and remote area	12
Burglary of own property/close neighbour	11	Personal/property security measures	10
Increase in rural crime	11	Visible policing	2
Speeding	11		
Unknown people in the local area	8		
Knife crime/drugs/countryside	7		
Being alone at night outdoors	5		
Cold calling	5		
Need more street lighting	4		

14. To evaluate the level of community connections and cohesiveness within settlements, resident survey respondents were asked what the key meeting spaces were in their local area. 169 responses cited the local pub as a key meeting space in their locality, although some responses said they were sad that

their local pub had closed in recent years or was under a complicated process of moving from landlord to landlord so was often closed. A village hall or 'hub' of the community was also an important meeting space, with 161 responses saying it was a space to meet other members of the village and get involved with community activities.

15. On the other hand, 31 responses said there was no specific physical space in which to meet in their local area, however some respondents said they met up with each other just on dog walks or walking around the local area.

QR4 - What are the key meeting spaces in the local area?	<i>Frequency of inclusion</i>
Pub	169
Village hall/hub	161
Church	88
<i>Community centre</i>	53
<i>Shops</i>	50
<i>Parks/Green spaces/Playgrounds</i>	36
<i>School</i>	33
<i>Nothing in village</i>	31
<i>Local clubs and groups</i>	18
<i>Café/tearoom/coffee shop</i>	16
<i>Post Office</i>	15
<i>Hairdressers</i>	12
<i>Walking around the area</i>	11
<i>Library</i>	9
<i>Locally organised events</i>	9
<i>Leisure centre</i>	4
<i>Garden centre</i>	4
<i>Allotments</i>	4
<i>Doctors</i>	3
<i>Market</i>	3

16. Residents were questioned about how well connected they felt with one another in their local area. The majority said there was some or a strong sense of community and was followed up with reasons for their responses. Firstly, the top table (QR5a) describes a multiple-choice response from a set of predetermined categories. QR5b, QR5c and QR5d describe the thoughts and opinions from within a free text response. These have been categorised to analyse the key ideas of the responses.

QR5a - How well are people connected to one another in your local area?	Number of responses
Strong sense of community	109
Some sense of community	139
Little sense of community	42
No sense of community	5
I don't know	7

QR5b - Well connected, free text responses:	Frequency of inclusion
Regular social events	31
A village website/social media/newsletter	16
Neighbours willing to help each other out	16
Neighbours knowing each other	14
Friendly neighbours	13
2-3 community events a year	6
Many clubs/groups/committees to get involved in	5
Local support fund/charity/community project	4
Village all connects the community	3

QR5c - Some connections, free text responses:	Frequency of inclusion
A divided community (those who are working/retired, not a traditional village atmosphere anymore)	23
Minority of residents have a strong connection if involved	16
Not as strong as it used to be	11
Events/groups for those who want to	5

QR5d - No connections, free text responses:	Frequency of inclusion
Nowhere to be sociable/connect	14
No/very little connection with neighbours or village	11
Events are not well supported, and people do not want to get involved	9
New communities are not connected/RAF bases changing residents regularly	8
Spread out settlements (increasing connectivity needed to access)	6
No activities or events	5

17. The most common means of feeling well connected was through attendance at regular social events, in order to be able to meet up and socialise with other local people (31 responses). 16 responses also referred to feeling connected by local communication methods, such as a village newsletter, to find out what is happening in the local area/village. Others also said they felt well

connected through knowing and having friendly neighbours who were willing to help each other out.

18. On the other hand, 23 of the responses that said there was some sense of community cited an issue with the divide that has occurred within rural areas, between those who are newer residents who work full time and those who have been life-long residents and are retired. Alternatively, respondents said their sense of community has reduced over time, but a strong connection is possible if you are immersed in village life and the Parish Council. This community connection is increased through communication methods within a local area.

19. Residents were also asked about their main methods of communication.

QR6 - What are the main ways of communication you use within your local area?	No. of responses
Village/Town magazine	224
Word of mouth	166
Social media	119
Community website/online message board	95
Email	79
Phone calls – landline	27
Texts/instant messaging	25
Phone calls - mobile	12

20. These results indicate the importance of communication within rural communities. A village magazine was the most common way of communicating, with 224 of 309 overall responses referring to this method. Mobile phone calls were least likely to be used. Other methods were described also, with the NextDoor app being cited by many respondents as a popular way to keep in contact with neighbours.

21. Residents were asked what their community had achieved over the past ten years.

QR7 - What has your community achieved in the past 10 years?	Frequency of inclusion
Refurbished/new village hall/community centre	46
New/Refurbished play parks/spaces/recreation areas	36
Supporting community events	30
Don't know	27
Fundraising activities	24
Nothing	23
Litter picking groups	20
Cricket club/sports clubs	18
Maintaining environment/footpaths	15
Social gatherings and support	14
Speed watch/cameras	12
Village fete/fun day	12
Starting up different clubs	12

WW1 events	11
Campaign against developments	11
Defibrillator	8
Community woodland	8
Community cinema	7
Preparing a neighbourhood plan	7
Christmas celebrations	6
The Shed' Allotments	6
Fireworks event	5
Memorials	5
Monthly market	5
Post Office/local shop campaign	4
Thriving community	3
Summer BBQ	3
Bus shelters	3
Carols on the Green	3
Winning awards/competitions	3
Magazine	3
Phone box - book exchange	2
Increased communication/ NextDoor App	2
Dog bins	2
Monthly village café	2
BMX track	1
Low crime figures	1
New church clock face	1
Broadband	1
Car park renovations	1
Saved school closure	1
Saved bus service	1

22. A wide range of activities, achievements and outcomes were cited by local residents, most commonly the refurbishment of community facilities and green play spaces. Fundraising activities have taken place within the local area to support these improvements and have involved community fun days and events to raise money. 27 respondents said they did not know what the community had achieved. Some of these respondents were new to the area and were not aware of previous accomplishments. 23 said their local area had achieved nothing.

b) Groups/organisation in West Suffolk:

23. Groups and organisations were asked about the strengths they see from the local area(s) they work in within West Suffolk. The results are shown below:

QG&05 - What are the strengths of the local area(s) in West Suffolk you work in?	Frequency of inclusion
Community spirit	14
Countryside/rural location	6
Road links	5
Volunteers	3
Links with other partners/organisations	3
Opportunities for young people	2
Skilled workforce	1
Public transport	1
Local activities and social events	1
Infrastructure	1

24. The rural groups and organisations who responded to the survey described what were some of the specific challenges to their work. The most common challenge with 14 mentions, was the lack of public transport and hence a lack of accessibility to services and facilities. Respondents indicated that it is difficult to operate over a vast rural area where there are limited opportunities to travel to other places. 12 responses also mentioned a need for more support and funding to be able to complete their work, which is ultimately resulting in a loss of services. Other common challenges include a lack of community engagement, little affordable housing and a lack of mobile phone and broadband coverage for rural businesses.

QG&06 - What are the top three challenges you face as a group/organisation?	Frequency of inclusion
Lack of public transport	14
Needing more support and funding from Government	12
Lack of services and infrastructure	10
Poor roads/paths conditions	7
Different needs of the villages, impacts of deprivation	7
Rurality/isolation of area	6
Lack of community engagement	6
Speeding/traffic/parking	4
Overdevelopment	4
Lack of mobile/broadband signal	3
Affordable housing	3
Use of land for energy production (Sunnica)	2
Less focus on rural areas compared to urban centres	2

25. Groups and organisations were also asked about the benefits of working in rural West Suffolk. 11 responses said they liked the supportive community living that is evident as well as being in a nice countryside location. Others liked the collaboration and connections between different services both in the public and private sector and the relationships with local people.

QG&08 - Benefits of working/operating in the local area(s) in West Suffolk	Frequency of inclusion
Nice area, supportive community living	11
Links with schools and other services	4
Close support and cooperation from Local Authority	4
Good relationships and communication with local people	3
Access to locations/transport links	2
Local knowledge	1

26. Additionally, respondents were able to add their own opinion and comments about working and operating in West Suffolk; the majority of these commented on a lack of funding and help available from West Suffolk Council, with an apparent opinion of being ignored in favour of urban centres.

QG&07 - Anything else to add about working/operating in West Suffolk?	Frequency of inclusion
Lack of funding/Being ignored by West Suffolk Council/Needing more funding, to equal urban areas	14
Having a spread-out community can be isolating and difficult to provide services/facilities	4
Difficulties with lack of public transport	3
Friendly communities	2
Overdevelopment and lack of facilities is occurring	1
A need for affordable housing is evident	1

C: Priorities for the Rural Taskforce

27. Both residents and groups/organisations were asked what they thought local people would like to achieve in their local area.

28. The most common improvement **residents** wished to see in their local area was to public transport services, with 40 residents saying this is what they would like to achieve.

29. Residents also expressed a desire for speeding and traffic calming measures to be implemented alongside better roads and traffic management.

QR8 - Resident responses: What would people like to achieve in the future to make their local area better?	Frequency of inclusion
Access to public transport	40
Speeding/traffic calming measures	27
Footpaths/cycle paths	24
Better roads and traffic management	21
Less development of housing	21
More services e.g. shops/cafes	20
Activities for children and young people	15
Keeping village tidy/free of litter	15
Better sense of community	15
Police presence	15

A village hall/ community centre to socialise	14
Upgrading/improvements to current community buildings	13
Better mobile reception / broadband	12
Don't know	12
Stopping Sunnica developments	10
Affordable housing	8
A pub	7
Enhance/maintain what is already there	6
Investment in play spaces, parks and open spaces	6
Tree planting/promoting environment	6
Improved access and better doctors/health centres	6
Better Parish Council	5
Reducing antisocial behaviour	5
Community garden/allotment etc	5
Support for volunteers	5
Sports facilities	4
Better/accessible parking	4
School transport	4
Road edge cutting	4
Village plan	4
Community communication	4
More facilities in housing growth areas	4
Improved housing policies	4
Removal of homelessness/social housing	3
Regular village events	3
Street lighting issues (more and less)	3
Work opportunities	2
Less crime/vandalism	2
Increase safety	2
More for elderly/lonely people	2
Reducing congestion	2
Defibrillator	1

30. Meanwhile, as well as prioritising transport (9 responses), **groups and organisations** thought local people would prioritise suitable affordable housing, totalling 4 responses. However, this sample size is small in comparison to the residents' survey so can be difficult to directly compare.

QG&O9 - Groups/organisations responses: What do you think people would like to achieve in the future to make their local area(s) in West Suffolk better?	Frequency of inclusion
Better public transport	9
Affordable housing/sustainable development	4
Better communication	3
More community groups to reduce isolation	3
Better road links	3
Activities and support for young people	2
Increased collaboration	2

Better mobile signals and broadband	2
Support for community volunteer schemes	2
Improved paths and cycleways	2
Keeping services and facilities open	2
No energy developments	1
Police presence	1
More funding	1
A voice within West Suffolk Council	1
A directory of services	1
Reducing Anti-social behaviour	1

31. Residents and groups/organisations were both asked to identify their top five priorities for the rural taskforce to work towards, from a set of predetermined themes. Free text options of 'other' were also allowed, however the majority of these were repetitions of other themes, so have not been added to the original categories.

32. It is also important to consider the differences between the priorities of a group compared to a resident so they cannot be combined. Something that is important to a resident, such as improving access to healthcare, may not be as important for groups and organisations, who may require support for business start-ups.

a) Residents

QR9 - Which of the following themes would you most like the West Suffolk Rural Taskforce to focus on in terms of how our local areas might be strengthened (select a maximum of 5 choices)

Themes	Number of responses	As a % of responses (308)
1. Improving transport links and roads (including walking and cycle routes)	205	66.5%
2. Protecting and enhancing the environment	177	57.5%
3. Supporting older people to continue to live in the community	156	50.7%
4. Improving broadband and mobile phone coverage	136	44.2%
5. Encouraging more activities for young people	136	44.2%
6. Improving access to high quality healthcare and wellbeing services	120	39.0%
7. Improving affordability and choice of housing for local residents	97	31.5%
8. Helping the community plan its own future	78	25.3%

9. Helping the community take action to bring about change in the local area	66	21.4%
10. Supporting communities to promote healthy living	52	16.9%
11. Improving access and upkeep of community meeting spaces	51	16.6%
12. Improving jobs and access to training in the local area	40	13.0%
13. Other	30	9.7%
14. Supporting new business start ups	29	9.4%
15. Reducing fuel poverty	24	7.8%
16. Improving the quality of housing for local residents	16	5.2%

b) Groups and organisations

QG&O11 - Which of the following themes would you most like the West Suffolk Rural Taskforce to focus on in terms of how our local areas might be strengthened (select a maximum of 5 choices)

Themes	Number of responses	As a % of responses (30)
1. Improving transport links and roads (including walking and cycle routes)	21	70.0%
2. Encouraging more activities for young people	19	63.3%
3. Improving affordability and choice of housing for local residents	14	46.6%
4. Helping the community plan its own future	13	43.3%
5. Improving access to high quality healthcare and wellbeing services	13	43.3%
6. Protecting and enhancing the environment	12	40.0%
7. Improving broadband and mobile phone coverage	11	36.6%
8. Supporting older people to continue to live in the community	11	36.6%
9. Improving access and upkeep of community meeting spaces	10	33.3%
10. Helping the community take action to bring about change in the local area	9	30.0%
11. Supporting communities to promote healthy living	6	20.0%
12. Improving the quality of housing for local residents	5	16.6%
13. Improving jobs and access to training in the local area	4	13.3%
14. Supporting new business start ups	4	13.3%
15. Other	3	10.0%
16. Reducing fuel poverty	1	3.3%

Update on the Work of the West Suffolk Environment and Climate Change Taskforce

Report No:	CAB/WS/20/009	
	Cabinet	14 January 2020
Cabinet Member:	Councillor John Griffiths Leader of the Council Tel: 01284 757001 Email: john.griffiths@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Chair of the West Suffolk Environment and Climate Change Taskforce:	Councillor Rachel Hood Tel: 07713 211555 Email: rachel.hood@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Jill Korwin Director Tel: 01284 757252 Email: jill.korwin@westsuffolk.gov.uk	

Decisions Plan: The decisions made as a result of this report will usually be published within 48 hours and cannot be actioned until five clear working days of the publication of the decision have elapsed. This item is included on the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: All wards

Recommendations: It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1. Notes the progress made by the Taskforce to date and confirms support for the approach being taken, including the following proposals under consideration outlined in section 1 of Report No: CAB/WS/20/009:**
 - a. Explore ways we can reduce and measure our carbon use through systems used in the sector such as carbon budgeting, considering the aim to become a carbon neutral authority by 2030;**
 - b. Explore and embed where possible new ways of working and processes that are more environmentally friendly that could have wider benefits, such as cost savings or health improvements.**
- 2. Considers the following initial recommendations:**
 - a. Agree that the Taskforce Terms of Reference are updated to better reflect the working of the Taskforce and link to Council's declaration of a climate emergency and awareness of environmental challenges, as laid out in section 3;**
 - b. Agree to advise the Barley Homes Shareholder Advisory Group regarding future recommendations of the Taskforce;**
 - c. Agree the proposed objectives and amendments for the West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2020-24, as laid out in section 4;**
 - d. Agree that the West Suffolk Local Plan should include a specific strategic objective regarding the environment and climate change challenges, as laid out in section 4;**
 - e. Consider, and approve as appropriate, recommendations for the 2020/21 budget, as set out in Section 5, specifically for up to £18,000 to be available from the Medium Term Financial Strategy Reserve to meet the additional cost of purchase of electric vehicles.**

1. Background / Context

- 1.1 In July 2019, Cabinet set up a taskforce to review environment and climate change issues with the purpose of making recommendations back to Cabinet on the further actions the Council could take to address climate change, including the potential for the Council to use its role to bring about lasting change across West Suffolk. The Taskforce was charged with taking an evidence-based approach and bringing recommendations back to Cabinet, as laid out in the terms of reference.
- 1.2 The Taskforce continues to meet and its final report, due later in 2020, will include further specific detailed costed recommendations of practical steps the Council can take to address climate change and biodiversity loss and a full report on the options and implications of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.
- 1.3 All recommendations of the Taskforce aim to continue and build on existing good practice and innovative projects, such as those outlined in the appendix to the terms of reference report agreed by Cabinet in July 2019. The Council has a strong track record for protecting the environment and reducing its impact on the climate as shown in the Annual Environmental Statement (Appendix B). It has one of the biggest council-owned solar farms and is a national leader in helping businesses reduce their impact by installing solar panels on their roofs. Up to the end of last year its Community Energy Plan (CEP) alone has invested £1.48 million into renewable energy projects across West Suffolk and generated carbon dioxide savings of around 1,000 tonnes.
- 1.4 This interim report updates Cabinet on the progress made by the West Suffolk Environment and Climate Change Taskforce, setting out the issues and opportunities it is exploring, making recommendations to "*shape the direction of the Local Plan and Strategic Framework*" together with initial specific recommendations on purposeful actions the Council can take now.
- 1.5 In addition to these recommendations, the Taskforce has requested that services explore:
 1. The opportunity for the Council to adopt powers to enforce Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards for Private Rented Properties
 2. Review of Council performance against the British Standard BS855 as a basis for development of an environmental management system to track our environmental progress

2. Update on work of the Taskforce

2.1 Governance

The Taskforce is formed of eleven (ten since December 2019) councillors and reflects a mix of political groups as required by the terms of reference. One member of the Taskforce is from a rural ward.

2.2 The Taskforce has met four times and has agreed four principles for the way in which it should focus its efforts, given the scope and complexity of the challenges it is responding to and having regard to the Terms of Reference. They are:

1. Focus on West Suffolk area and work with Suffolk Partners to influence wider Suffolk action
2. Consider the Council's unique role as West Suffolk Council and the actions that only the Council can do, such as influencing others
3. Build on the visibility of existing valuable work of the Council
4. Develop recommendations that can be built into the existing work of the council.

2.3 **Assumptions and methodology**

The Taskforce agreed new ways of working at the first meeting and has been presented with the latest information on climate change and environment challenges in West Suffolk, Suffolk, nationally and internationally. Members agreed to take accountability for the development of ideas under the topics below.

1. Travel and transport
2. Renewables
3. Housing
4. Green spaces and Biodiversity
5. Accreditation and measurement
6. Waste

2.4 All workstreams are considering the possible ways to deliver, lead or influence long lasting change given the roles the Council undertakes being:

1. A community leader and influencer
2. An employer
3. A consumer/buyer of goods and services
4. A deliverer of services
5. A regulator and policy maker

2.5 The Taskforce is currently considering a range of options and will develop these into final proposals for Cabinet later in 2020. Initial recommendations are set out in Section 3, 4 and 5.

2.6 **Reducing carbon use and emissions**

Carbon neutral is defined by the Collins English Dictionary as an organisation or lifestyle that "does not cause an increase in the overall amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere." This term is commonly used alongside the ambition to become 'net zero', which for an organisation means that their total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions would be equal to or less than the emissions they removed from the environment. This can be achieved by a combination of emission reduction and carbon off setting.

2.7 A commonly used approach for tracking an organisation's net emissions is developing a 'carbon budget' (a presentation tool rather than a financial budget as such) to measure the cumulative amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions permitted over a period of time, balanced with the reductions in atmospheric carbon from any carbon off-setting activities, to keep within a certain temperature threshold. This threshold is defined by the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. One of the reasons this is preferred over other carbon reduction strategies is that all ambitions outlined are associated with a numerical value. This allows an organisation to set a baseline, identify the contribution of carbon-offsetting activities and break any agreed emissions target down into yearly cycles.

2.8 The Taskforce is currently exploring how a carbon budget could be developed in order to support any agreed emissions targets for West Suffolk Council and develop a carbon budget for 2020/21 initially. This will help the Taskforce meet the requirement in the Terms of Reference to '*develop and appraise options for the actions the Council would have to take to be net-zero carbon by 2030*'.

2.9 **Ways of working**

There are additional positive steps the Council can take through looking at the ways members and officers work. For example, the Taskforce are keen to explore how processes to support decision making, such as report-writing style and webcasting, can be adapted to support more digital working. This would support the ambition for West Suffolk Council meetings to become paperless in the future. The Taskforce will explore the implications so that any future recommendations for adapting ways of working are supported by evidence about how this could work. The Taskforce is also looking at how the Council can maintain biodiversity and deliver measurable biodiversity net gain within West Suffolk, delivering both environmental and health benefits.

2.10 **Community Engagement**

A 'Communications and Engagement' workstream was also agreed by the Taskforce to:

1. Support the implementation of recommendations from other workstreams, including any consultation to support decision-making
2. Build on the Council's existing work to raise awareness about climate change and environment issues across West Suffolk, and any social or economic co-benefits
3. Support ward members to have conversations with local residents and businesses about the priorities for their locality

2.11 The headline message for any communications is that the Council is stepping up and working with communities looking for the best way to respond to the emergency and challenges climate change, biodiversity and the environment face, referencing the best available evidence. The Taskforce wants to find

out the key local issues for residents, communities and businesses to support its work. There are a number of actions that can support this:

1. Targeted workshops with stakeholders – workshops on particular themes agreed important by the Taskforce.
2. Ward member toolkit: support ward members to have broad conversations with their communities – a toolkit to assist members with engaging with residents within their wards in respect of simple measures that they could do to help make a difference.
3. Public survey to support ward member engagement - to bring forward ideas/initiatives – environmental attitudes survey with separate questions for residents and businesses/groups/organisations.
4. Invite speakers from key community groups, charities or industry experts – are there any groups we should invite to speak to the Taskforce, or community groups that Taskforce members could engage with, such as through attending one of their meetings.
5. Promote existing work: showing what the Council is doing and what others are doing through ongoing press releases and a dedicated part of our website for these updates.
6. Ongoing internal communications campaign to make sure environmental issues and benefits highlighted in projects when publicising them.

Some specific recommendations to support this are included at Section 5.1.

2.12 **Suffolk-wide approach**

The Taskforce has linked up with the taskforces that have been set up by the other Suffolk councils to share learning, evidence and explore ways in which a collaborative Suffolk approach could deliver better outcomes. Supported by funding from the Suffolk Transformation Challenge Fund, initial work is being undertaken to undertake analysis of existing, publicly available data and related tools to provide a clear, evidence-based baseline of carbon emissions in Suffolk and develop indicative emissions reduction pathways in the context of the aspiration to make the county of Suffolk carbon neutral by 2030.

3. Recommendations: Proposed changes to the Terms of Reference

3.1 Meeting arrangements

Operational principles were agreed at the first meeting of the Taskforce and it is proposed that the 'Governance' section of the Terms of Reference is updated to reflect the following changes to meeting arrangements (see Appendix C):

1. Taskforce meetings shall continue to be scheduled to take place at council offices, *however members are welcome to join meetings via videoconference or Skype to reduce member journeys required.*

2. Meetings will be 'paperless' where it is possible for members to access the relevant reports and information online. Papers will only be sent to members when specifically requested.

3.2 **Climate Emergency**

Since the Cabinet decision to set up the Taskforce, the Council declared a Climate Emergency on 19 September 2019. This is not currently set out in the Taskforce Terms of Reference, but Council agreed that the Taskforce have responsibility for making recommendations to Cabinet about how it responds to this emergency and other environmental challenges. It is recommended that Cabinet consider the following text to be added to the 'Purpose of the group' section of the Terms of Reference:

'As set out at the Council meeting on 19 September 2019, the Taskforce recommendations will be the first part of the Council's response to declaring a Climate Emergency across West Suffolk'

- 3.3 A motion was also presented to Council on 19 September to consider all challenges for the environment and biodiversity across West Suffolk. This was also referred to the Taskforce for consideration and has been factored into the approach described above.

4. **Recommendations: Policy and Reporting**

4.1 **Environmental Statement 2018/19**

To support the environmental stewardship ambitions set out in the Terms of Reference, it is important that the Council is transparent about its current environmental performance and trajectory of key measures, such as carbon emissions, recycling rates, staff mileage claims, renewable energy generation and green flag status of our parks.

- 4.2 Previously, environmental performance has been published as a report to the Performance Audit and Scrutiny Committee. The Taskforce feel it is an important statement of the Council's progress and recommends that Cabinet note the draft Environmental Statement 2018/19, attached in Appendix B and in following years the Environmental Statement is included in the Council's Annual Report, starting with the 2019/20 Annual Report.

4.3 **Barley Homes**

The Taskforce Housing and Renewables workstreams have both identified the opportunity the Council has to work with Barley Homes (and other house builders) to explore what is possible at each new site in terms of building greener homes. As a local authority owned building company, there are opportunities to drive lasting change in terms of the inclusion of renewable technology and environmentally sustainable planning features that benefit not just the environment but residents too.

- 4.4 As set out in the Barley Homes Business Plan 2019, future sites could be evaluated under the emerging themes of the current Council Taskforces,

including identifying how sites can be developed in the most environmentally sustainable way. The Taskforce seeks Cabinet's commitment to consider final recommendations in 2020 to advise the Barley Homes Stakeholder Advisory Group, supporting Barley Homes' existing approach to increase building efficiency by maximising the performance of the components and materials that make up the building fabric itself. The Taskforce recognises that Barley Homes is a separate legal entity that needs to balance a variety of factors when considering what is possible in terms of green credentials of new housing.

4.5 **West Suffolk Strategic Framework**

It is recommended that environment and climate change should be a key part of the West Suffolk Strategic Framework. The Taskforce supports the proposed revision to the Council's vision to reference the environment and the proposed inclusion of a specific way of working of being "environmentally responsible". To add to this, the Taskforce recommends that the following objectives be included in the Strategic Framework, being considered by Cabinet on 14 January 2020 (Report No: CAB/WS/19/010).

4.6 Under the strategic priority "Growth in West Suffolk's economy for the benefit of all our residents and UK plc", add the objective: explore how we can work with developers, businesses and partners to ensure that we improve the green credentials of any new development.

4.7 Under the strategic priority "Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active" add the objective: maintain and enhance the green infrastructure in West Suffolk to deliver improved biodiversity and air quality and support the health and wellbeing of our local communities.

4.8 Under the strategic priority "Increased and improved provision of appropriate housing in west Suffolk in both our towns and rural areas", add the objective: support the development of more environmentally sustainable homes and communities throughout West Suffolk, in a measurable way. This will include working with housebuilders and influencing the local plan and development control processes.

4.9 In addition to these initial recommendations, the Taskforce may suggest further detail to support and strengthen environmental references as they develop their work.

4.10 **West Suffolk Local Plan**

It is recommended that the Local Plan includes strategic objectives relating to:

1. Climate change adaption
2. Climate change mitigation
3. Environmental protection and enhancement

This can be developed further as the plan develops but it is important that the Council sets out its ambition at this early stage to address these issues through the local plan process.

5. Recommendations: West Suffolk Council 2020/21 Budget

5.1 Whilst the majority of recommendations from the Taskforce are under development, the following proposals have been identified to consider as part of the budget process for the financial year 2020/21. Given the urgent nature of responding to climate change and environmental concerns, the Taskforce don't want to delay action that can be taken now. A summary of the proposals is included in Appendix A, indicating where it is possible to offset additional cost through savings in reduction in consumption. These initial costs are marginal and should be met from existing budgets or external funding sources but are summarised below to show the positive actions the Council can take now. These are all in addition to work already planned such as installation of vehicle charging points and solar for business, and inclusion of renewables in new projects such as Mildenhall Hub.

It is recommended that the Council:

a. Purchases electric fleet vehicles

1. In addition to the planned purchase of an ex-demonstration vehicle using receipts from sales of existing vehicles, it is proposed that another two electric cars or vans are purchased to replace existing vehicles that are coming to the end of normal working period. These vehicles will be based at West Suffolk Operational Hub and West Suffolk House.
2. This will deliver a reduction in carbon emissions from vehicle use and the Council will benefit from the reduction in running costs in the long term.
3. The additional cost of purchase of two electric vehicles over diesel vehicles will be £21,000 together with branding costs of £800; where possible the cost will be met from existing budgets and receipts from vehicle sales but it is recommended up to £18,000 is allocated from the Medium term Financial Strategy Reserve to fund the additional cost of these new vehicles.
4. Electric vehicles are expected to have an initial six-year life with the cost savings of at least £3,000 over this period. The GHG emissions are therefore expected to total 5.6 tonnes of CO₂e over that period.

b. Purchases green electricity for our buildings

1. The purchase of electricity generated from renewable source would require an additional £2000 and removes 885 tonnes of CO₂ per annum; assuming consumption stays the same. However, there are investment proposals in the emerging budget that would facilitate a reduction in the Council's annual consumption of electricity, which

means the move to green electricity should be accommodated within existing budgets.

2. The Council purchases energy through the Laser Framework so the change could be made by simply requesting that Laser purchase green energy on behalf of the Council.

c. Plant additional trees on Council land

1. In order to increase tree cover in West Suffolk, the Taskforce proposes that a new woodland area or tree planting schemes are established on Council-owned land. The Taskforce is currently looking at potential sites, and having regard to the funding that is available, it is working on the optimum site or sites where a plantation could be established. A specific proposal will follow but Cabinet is asked to support the concept of increasing tree cover in West Suffolk.
2. In addition, the Council will look to work with landowners across West Suffolk to identify other opportunities to increase tree cover.

d. Community engagement – develop a Councillor toolkit

1. As set out in paragraph 2.11, it is proposed that a set of materials and an online survey are developed to support ward members consult their localities. This can be carried out in house with the support from the Corporate Policy and Communications teams.
2. The toolkit would include production and design of promotional materials for local members, parish councils or communities to display to raise awareness about this engagement. This would include any social media design materials and films, if required, possible case studies highlighting the themes or actions people can take; Frequently asked Questions explaining what the Council is trying to achieve and how it declared a Climate Change Emergency; how people can get involved; blogs for local members as a template and designs for posters to be used locally explaining how people can engage or pass on their own ideas and tips.
3. It is expected this will help generate ideas for small to medium scale community schemes with an interest in protecting the environment or mitigating or reducing climate change impact. These ideas could then be shared with the relevant ward member to requests in their area to consider action going forward.
4. It is recommended that media and marketing production is developed as part of the Suffolk wide approach, and this recommendation forwarded to the Climate Change Partnership to develop further with costs being met through the Transformation Challenge funding.
5. These ideas could then be shared with the relevant ward member to requests in their area to consider as part of their locality budget or community groups could be signposted to other sources of funding, such as Community Action Suffolk.
6. It is recommended that Cabinet remind members that they have the opportunity to fund environmental related actions in their local community through locality budgets.

e. Community engagement – hold a Greener housing forum

1. The Taskforce is keen to engage housebuilders to raise awareness about the environmental agenda and the examples for good practice as well as the Council's ambitions on what environment aware development should be. An invite-only event could be held as part of a wider dialogue with the industry around delivery of homes, development and the Council's vision. The purpose of holding this targeted event is to further the environmental outcomes the Council wishes to see around development and bringing the housing industry into that process.
2. Raise awareness about the environmental agenda and how it is gaining momentum and outline potential opportunities for house builders such as being able to offer buyers more efficient homes, and;
3. Support the wider engagement around the local plan and the Council's aim to support the delivery of managed growth.
4. Invite ideas from industry experts about how West Suffolk Council can support building of new housing to higher environmental standards, aside from planning policy. At the same time hear from developers and housing industry about their challenges and opportunities and so better develop our policies.
5. Highlight the emerging vision we have of what good environmental practice looks like for development and how this may be encouraged through our planning process.
6. Showcasing exemplar practice elsewhere and how these may be introduced in West Suffolk.
7. This will be delivered as part of a series of Developer Forum events, and the costs met from existing budgets.

f. Buy recycled paper

1. The Taskforce would like to explore how the Council could reduce its impact on the environment from paper use. It is proposed that Council switch to more eco-friendly paper as an initial step towards this.
2. Due to the way paper use is recorded, the figures are currently produced from ratios recorded at West Suffolk House, as it represents 85% of paper usage in 2018. The Council spent £6,157.44 on A4 and A3 paper for West Suffolk House in 2018, amounting to 12,156.51 kg of carbon emissions.
3. It is proposed that different paper is sourced that has a reduced carbon footprint. To buy the eco-friendly, recycled paper there would be a 60.6% increase in the cost of paper, amounting to an additional £3,698.43 per year. However, this would reduce carbon emissions produced from paper use by 2 Tonne CO₂ per annum or 17% of emissions relating to paper.

6. Alternative Options

6.1 There are alternative options for some of the recommendations. These are explained under the relevant headings below:

6.2 Terms of Reference:

The Environment and Climate Change Taskforce Terms of Reference could remain unchanged and Cabinet could simply note the updated ways of working, link to the Climate Emergency.

6.3 Environmental Statement:

The 2018/19 Statement could only be viewed by the Taskforce and then a recommendation about the 2019/20 Statement could follow when the Taskforce makes its final recommendations.

6.4 Budget Proposals:

These initial Taskforce recommendations for the budget could be omitted from the budget proposals for 2020/21 so all proposals are delivered at one time as part of the final Taskforce report. However, this conflicts with the urgent nature of responding to the Climate Emergency, as declared by the Council in September 2019. Specific alternatives for these proposals are set out below:

1. The Council could continue to purchase non low-emission vehicles but misses the opportunity to reduce emissions from our fleet when going through the normal replacement of vehicles reaching the end of their usable life.
2. Council buildings could continue to be powered from standard energy and save money, until it is in a position to generate renewable energy itself. However, there are no guarantees if or when this would be achievable.
3. The Council could consult through the normal means with standard levels of promotion on websites, however this may mean that feedback is limited and the Council could miss out on key feedback on this cross-generational issue.
4. Do not hold a forum to engage housebuilders and focus efforts on lobbying government to review the National Planning Policy Framework instead.

7. Risks

7.1 The overarching risk of making recommendations early in the duration of the Taskforce is they could be misinterpreted as representations of the priority areas for the Taskforce's final recommendations. Paragraph 2.5 sets out the methodology which should clarify that the Taskforce is considering a wide-range of options under thematic workstreams, which are in no way limited to the themes of governance, target-setting, measuring progress, existing housing energy efficiency and sustainable new homes discussed above.

8. Implications arising from the proposals

- 8.1 The implications for Barley Homes initiatives and the development of a Carbon Budget will be addressed in the later reports to Cabinet. The implications for the rest of the proposals are set out under the following headings where relevant:
- 8.2 **Environmental:** it is expected that the recommendations either have a positive impact or create an opportunity for a future positive impact.
- 8.3 **HR / Staffing:** there are no direct staffing changes at this stage, although the Taskforce are keen to take into account any resource implications when evaluating options for final the final recommendations in 2020.
- 8.4 **Financial:** the budget recommendations impact the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, as outlined in paragraph 5.1 and further detailed in Appendix A. It is expected that these recommendations will be considered as part of the budget setting process for the 2020/21 financial year.

9. Appendices

- 9.1
Appendix A - Supporting information for budget proposals
Appendix B - West Suffolk Environmental Statement 2018/19
Appendix C - Updated Terms of Reference Environment and Climate Change Task Force

10. Background documents

- 10.1 Proposal to Establish a West Suffolk Environment and Climate Change Taskforce: ([Report No: CAB/WS/19/016](#))

[West Suffolk Council Environmental Project List: CAB.WS.19.016 Appendix A](#)

International Panel on Climate Change: Global warming of 1.5°C:
<https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/> (November 2018):

New evidence outlined in this report suggests that “the window of opportunity for action is almost closed.” and describes the “enormous harm” that a 2°C global temperature rise will have compared a 1.5°C rise. Research summarised in the Panel’s report sets out that action within the next 12 years could limit the rise to 1.5°C. Leading climate scientists warn that even an extra 0.5°C rise on top of this could significantly worsen the risks of drought, floods, extreme heat and poverty for hundreds of millions of people.

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Appendix A – Budget proposals: further information

Proposal	Environmental Case	Financial Case	Other benefits/Comms message
<p>1. Replace 2 vehicles due for renewal in 20/21 with Electric Vehicles (EV) instead of diesel vehicles. alternative purchase with a marginal cost for the investment in the alternative EV</p>	<p>Carbon saving expected over 4 year period: 5.6 tCO₂e</p>	<p><u>Additional Cost</u> of purchase for both Electric vehicles: £21,000 Branding would cost another £800 Revenue savings over 6 years due to reduced running costs £3,000</p> <p>Additional funding would need to be requested from the MTFs reserve, if cannot be met from existing vehicle renewals budget.</p>	<p>Clear demonstration of a positive move to reducing carbon. Opportunities to brand vehicle to publicise its environmental credentials.</p> <p>Note: this is subject to ensuring that the vehicles will meet operational need.</p>
<p>2. Purchase “green” energy moving from existing suppliers/deals to support ambition to reduce carbon footprint.</p>	<p>Carbon saving for converting to carbon neutral green electricity is 885 tCO₂e.</p> <p>Calculations for converting to carbon neutral green gas are ongoing.</p>	<p>The cost of converting to carbon neutral green electricity is £1,968.00 per annum (£2.22 per tonne).</p> <p>Alternatively, the Council could reduce its electricity consumption by 13 % or 131,846 kWh – the cost saving would off set the increased cost of green energy.</p> <p>The investigation into the cost of converting to carbon neutral green gas is ongoing.</p>	<p>Clear demonstration of a positive move to reducing carbon.</p>
<p>3. Plant additional trees on Council land <i>Support the Council’s objective to support improved biodiversity and respond to the climate emergency by increasing tree cover on</i></p>	<p>Carbon sequestration: example based on planting 40,000 new trees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planting trees Young trees are expected to take up 238,950kg CO₂e and after 	<p>The taskforce is currently looking at potential sites, and having regard to the funding that is available, it is working on the optimum site where a large plantation could be established, rather than small tree planting initiatives that do not attract significant funding.</p>	<p>Increasing tree cover in West Suffolk so that a new woodland is established on Council-owned land.</p> <p>The Council will also work with landowners across West Suffolk</p>

<p><i>Council owned land that with sequester carbon dioxide.</i></p>	<p>10 years this will increase to 891,000kg CO₂e</p> <p>Increase bio-diversity in West Suffolk and to create new wildlife habitats.</p>		<p>to identify other opportunities to increase tree cover.</p>
<p>4 Develop an engagement toolkit to support members in engaging with community and exploring environmental opportunities.</p>	<p>Carbon savings/environmental benefits from initiatives undertaken with communities can be measured</p>	<p>One off costs of £2000 to develop marketing material.</p> <p>It is hoped to work with the wider Suffolk Climate Change Partnership on this initiative so no direct costs to the Council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds on the Council's families and communities approach. • Active engagement with citizens to develop solutions. • Members have the opportunity to fund environmental related actions in their local community through locality budgets.
<p>5. Hold a Greener Housing Forum/Roundtable to encourage the construction of more efficient and low carbon homes</p> <p><i>As part of the Developer Forum series, hold a specific event on energy efficient to explore opportunities to improve the green credentials of new housing in West Suffolk (Summer 2020)</i></p>	<p>No immediate direct environmental impact expected – it is difficult to measure impact resulting from increased public/business awareness. However, there is the potential for this to encourage investment in improved environmental standards of new housing, therefore reducing energy emissions from new builds in West Suffolk</p>	<p>Venue - £0 (If WSH) Catering – £500 (but could secure sponsorship) Speakers - £1500-£2000</p> <p>Total cost: £2500 (or less)</p> <p>Funding for the additional cost would be met from existing budgets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for cost savings for West Suffolk residents in the long term: • Funding options will be communicated to attendees • Helping in the delivery of the West Suffolk Local Plan – a statutory duty
<p>6. Move to using recycled paper – in West Suffolk House initially. Develop</p>	<p>Switching from our current paper to recycled Xerox paper would reduce the annual carbon emissions from paper</p>	<p>Move to recycled Xerox paper per annum for A4 and A3 paper. Total: £9,855.87</p>	<p>Longer term potential for cost savings if paper usage is reduced.</p>

<p>proposals for roll out of recycled paper to other Council buildings.</p>	<p>use by 2,053.28kg per annum. Representing a change of 17%, from 12,156.51kg to 10,103.23kg CO2e per annum.</p>	<p>Increase annual cost of £3,698.43</p> <p>Initially this would be a direct budget cost. Opportunity to offset this cost through reduced paper consumption</p>	<p>This is 100% post-consumer waste reliable paper.</p>
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West Suffolk Environmental Statement 2018/19



Environmental Statement at a glance



Greenhouse gas emissions down by **22.7%** since 2010



Renewable energy generated by us up **14%**



Mileage down **9%** since last year, **34%** since 2010



Water consumption down **14%** since 2010



Recycled **9%** more of our waste - **52.4%** in total



5 national Green Flag status awards helping biodiversity

Introduction

This environmental statement reflects activity of the former Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council. On 1 April 2019 a new district council, West Suffolk Council, was formed replacing the two councils.

This report summarises the activities West Suffolk Council undertakes to manage and reduce our environmental impacts from our operations during the year ending 31st March 2019.

There is a significant amount of work which contributes to improving the environment carried out by us directly and with our partners which is not covered in this statement. More information can be found via our website - www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/environment.

The report is structured by theme with highlights set out below. For ease, links to the key sections are made in the summary.

Our environmental performance in 2018/19

The Council continues to work to improve environmental performance throughout the year. Areas of key interest are summarised below:

- Combined carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from Council and Abbeycroft Leisure activities have decreased by 4% during 2018/19 compared to the previous year – [see section 1](#).
- This year the Council's gas and grid electricity consumption has decreased which has resulted in CO₂ emissions reductions of 8% from gas and 22% from electricity compared to 2017/18 - [see section 2](#).
- Our solar photovoltaic (PV) schemes have generated more than ever before with an increase in generation of 14% compared to 2017/18 - [see section 3](#).
- It has been a record-breaking year for the solar farm with total generation of 13,195MWh: enough to power around 3,300 homes and offset the CO₂ emissions from 1,500 cars - [see section 3](#).
- Our commercial fleet fuel use has been relatively constant with a 1% rise in consumption compared to 2017/18. During 2018/19 we have reviewed data provision and emissions calculations to improve accuracy - [see section 4](#).
- Staff mileage claimed reduced by 9% compared to 2017/18 - [see section 5](#).
- Combined water consumption for Council owned and Abbeycroft Leisure operated buildings has increased by 5% compared to last year – [see section 6](#).
- Our office recycling rate has improved (to 52.44%) following a variety of effective staff engagement activities last year – [see section 7](#).
- We gained Green Flag status for an additional park bringing our total to 5 public parks being awarded such status – [see section 8](#).

The Council continues to deliver improved environmental performance across a range of impact areas. Delivery is facilitated by communications between teams and via the Environmental Management group. Priority areas for 2019/20 will be: gas consumption, office and park waste streams and establishing our strategy and action plan to continue to address the impacts of Council vehicle and transportation.

More detailed performance against our objectives and targets is set out in the following pages.

Greenhouse gas emissions arising from Council activities

Target: Reduce greenhouse gas (CO₂e) emissions¹ 35%

Target date: 2025

Baseline year: 2010

Baseline (2010 recalculated July 2016):

West Suffolk Council and Abbeycroft Leisure	7,589 tonnes CO ₂ e
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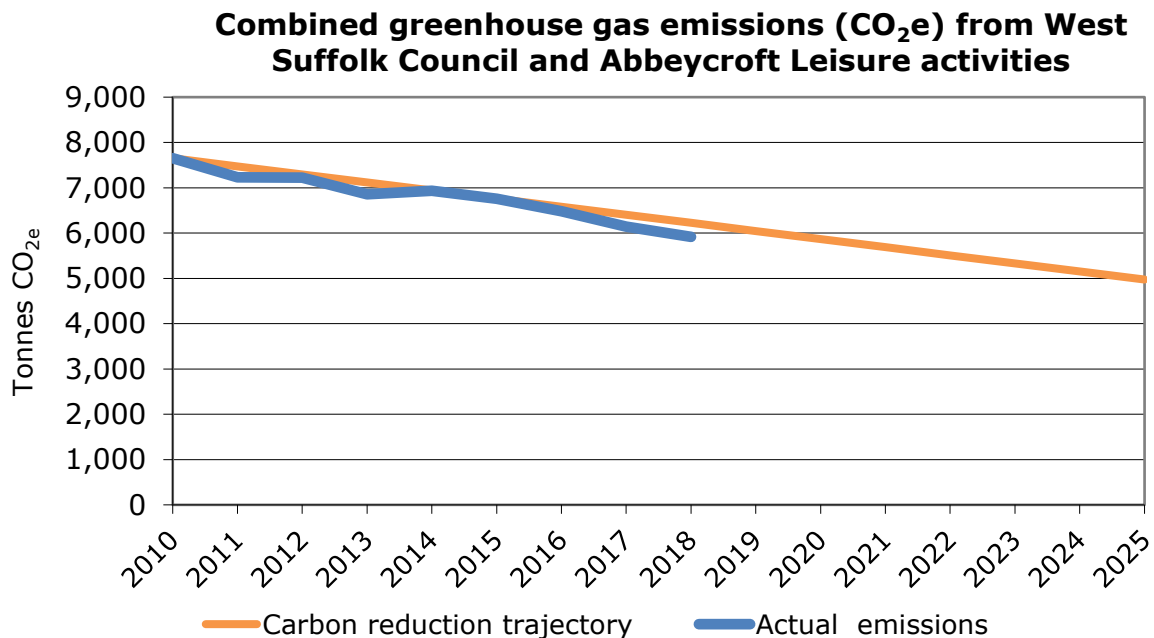
2018/19 performance

West Suffolk Council and Abbeycroft Leisure	5,916 tonnes CO ₂ e
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Comment

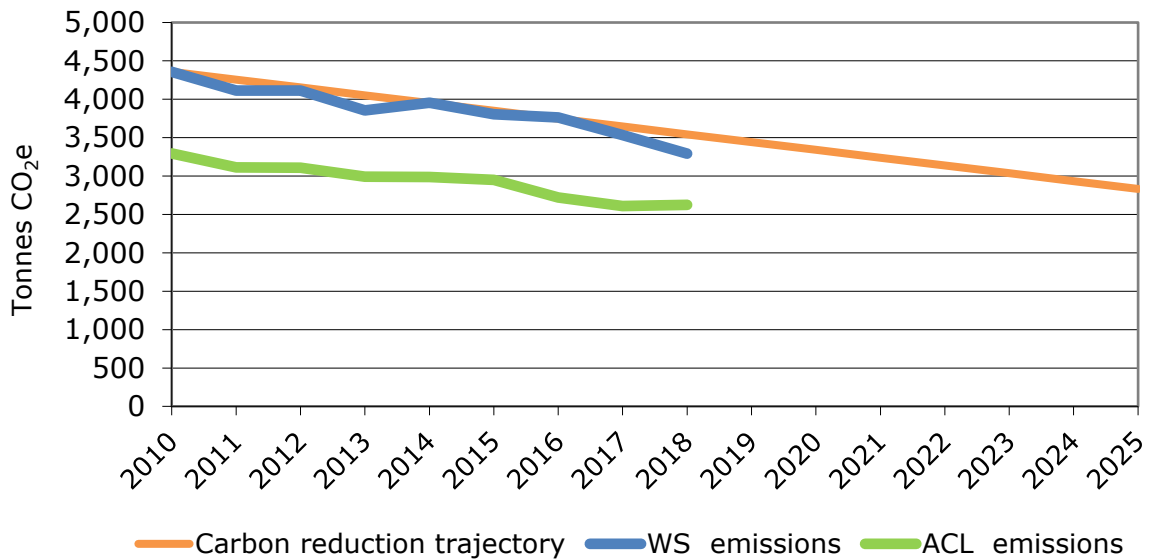
This year the combined emissions from Council and Abbeycroft Leisure activities has decreased by 4% compared to the previous year. This is comprised of a reduction in emissions by 7% from West Suffolk Council and an increase of 1% in emissions from Abbeycroft Leisure activities. The increase in Abbeycroft Leisure emissions is primarily down to a jump in gas consumption at two leisure centres during 2018/19.

We include emissions that arise from buildings and transportation. These include the leisure centres operated by Abbeycroft Leisure and other operational buildings such as the Apex but excludes buildings that we own and are leased to local businesses.



¹ Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e). A universal unit of measurement used to indicate the global warming potential of a greenhouse gas, expressed in terms of the global warming potential of one unit of carbon dioxide. It is used to evaluate the releasing (or avoiding releasing) of different greenhouse gases against a common basis.

Greenhouse gas emissions (CO₂e) by organisation



Key features noted during the year were as follows:

- Emissions from the Council’s public transport (bus, train, taxi) use have fallen by 19% over 2018/19 compared to the previous year.
- Emissions from the Council’s electricity consumption were down by 22% on the previous year – see Note below.
- Emissions resulting from the Council’s gas consumption have fallen by 8% compared to 2017/18.
- Emissions from electricity consumption at Abbeycroft Leisure properties has decreased by 27% compared to the previous year – supported by grid decarbonisation.
- Emissions from gas consumption at Abbeycroft Leisure properties has increased by 19% during the previous year. This is due to a combination of an increase in gas consumption at Haverhill leisure centre and Bury St Edmunds leisure centre due to combined heat and power unit issues as well as billing and meter reading issues. We have since risen awareness of the importance of monitoring gas consumption and (ACL) have put measures in place to help prevent this occurring in the future.

NOTE: The gradual “decarbonisation” of grid electricity is a key component of the UK emissions reduction targets, and therefore helping the Council achieve its emissions reduction target. Emissions arising from grid supplied electricity dropped by 20% in 2018 compared to 2017 data.

Emissions target and progress to date

As the Council operations continue to develop and grow, so do the challenges relating to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and environmental impacts. We have started working more effectively across services to improve monitoring and reporting of consumption and emissions data particularly involving fleet management and Abbeycroft Leisure teams.

Building energy use

Target: Reduce carbon emissions associated with building energy by 2025

Baseline year: 2010 (recalculated July 2016)

West Suffolk Council and Abbeycroft Leisure	5,437 tonnes CO ₂ e
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2018/19 performance

West Suffolk Council and Abbeycroft Leisure	3,924 tonnes CO ₂ e
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Comments

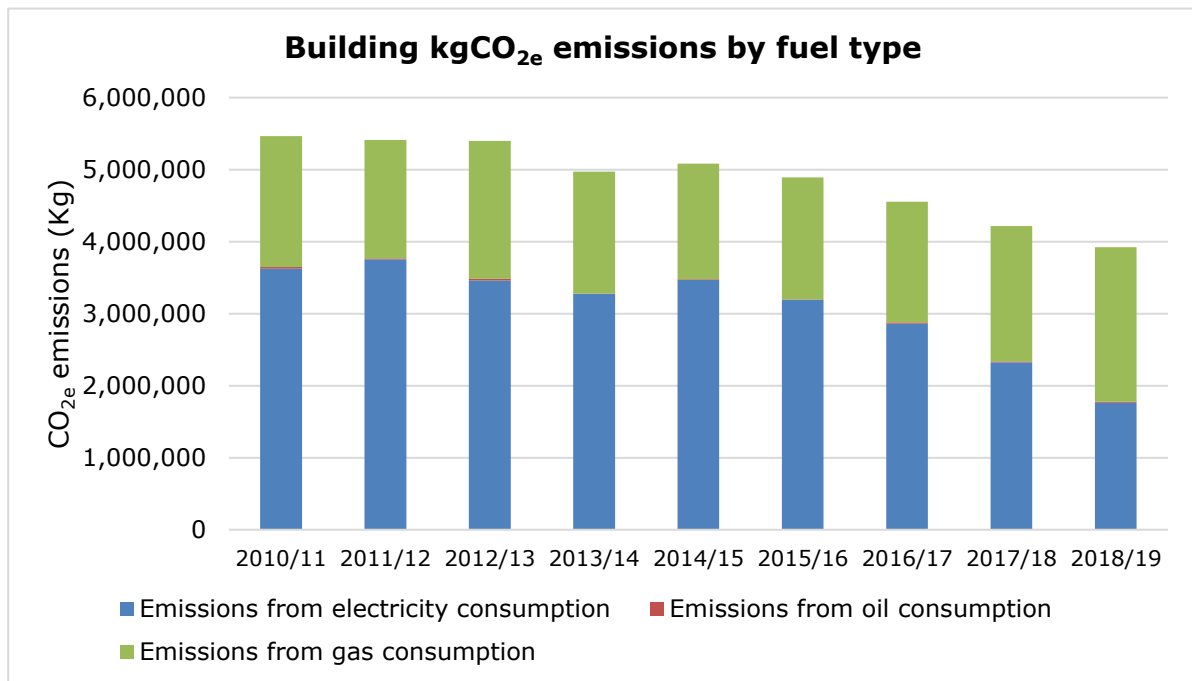
Combined emissions from Council and Abbeycroft Leisure buildings has continued to decrease in line with previous years. In comparison to 2017/18, total emissions from buildings are down by 7%.

Notable progress on utility consumption has been made at the following sites:

- Improvements to West Suffolk House heating controls has resulted in a significant decrease in the gas consumption for the site.
- The heavily used ballroom lamps in the Athenaeum have been replaced with more efficient LED alternatives resulting in electricity savings and contributing to a reduced electricity consumption for the building compared to 2017/18.
- Heating faults in Haverhill Depot caused the sites heating system to run during times of low demand such as the summer months. This was rectified during 2018/19 reducing unexpected gas consumption.

Overall, there has been a decrease in CO₂ emissions from electricity consumption by 24% and oil consumption by 7% (see note). These have helped to outweigh a 14% increase in emissions from gas consumption.

During 2019/20 we shall continue to work across teams to monitor building energy consumption and identify and implement further energy saving opportunities.



NOTE: The red line relates to Oil consumption which is a very small proportion of total greenhouse gas emissions which therefore means it does not show clearly on the chart.

Renewable energy

Target: Increase the amount of renewable energy generated.

Baseline year: 2012/13

Total renewable energy generation	300,220 kWh
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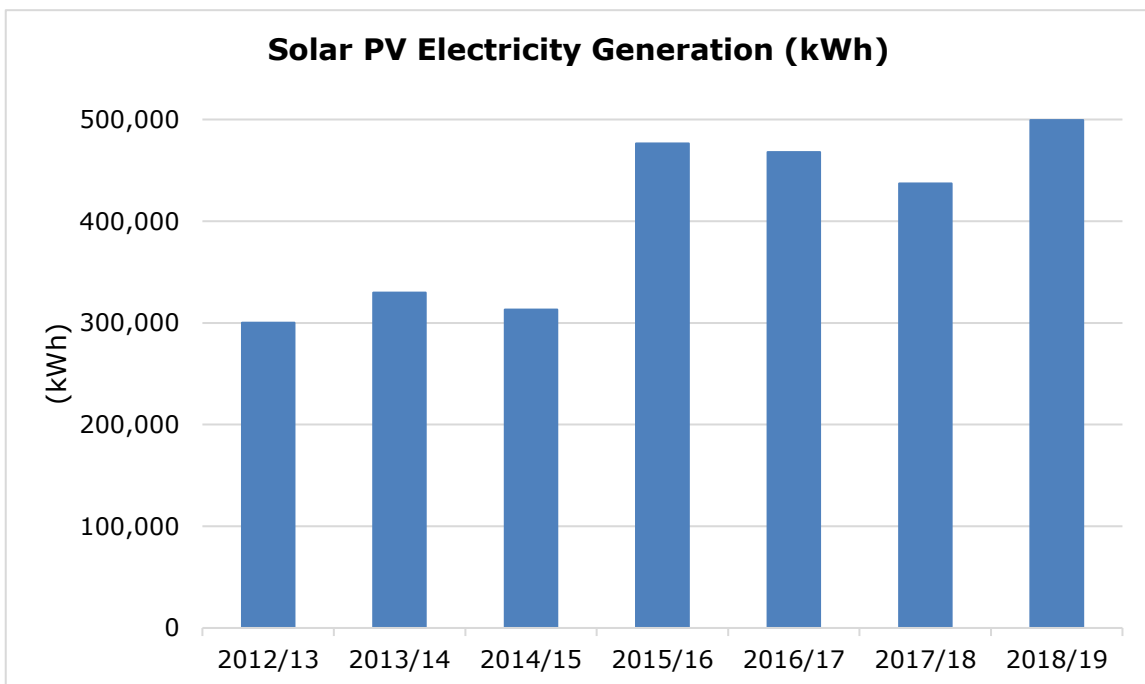
2018/19 Performance

Total renewable energy generation	499,304 kWh
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Renewable energy generation - Buildings

The Council continues to generate power from renewable energy sources, primarily solar photovoltaic on our own property. In 2018/19, 499,304 kWh were generated, enough to power 140 average homes. 2018/19 has seen the highest generation from our solar portfolio to date and represents an increase of 14% compared to last year.

A project to install renewable heat and power generation at West Stow park has gained planning permission and the works are scheduled to start in October and run to January 2020. This is estimated to save 24.9tCO₂e per year which equates to 499tCO₂e over the lifetime of the project.

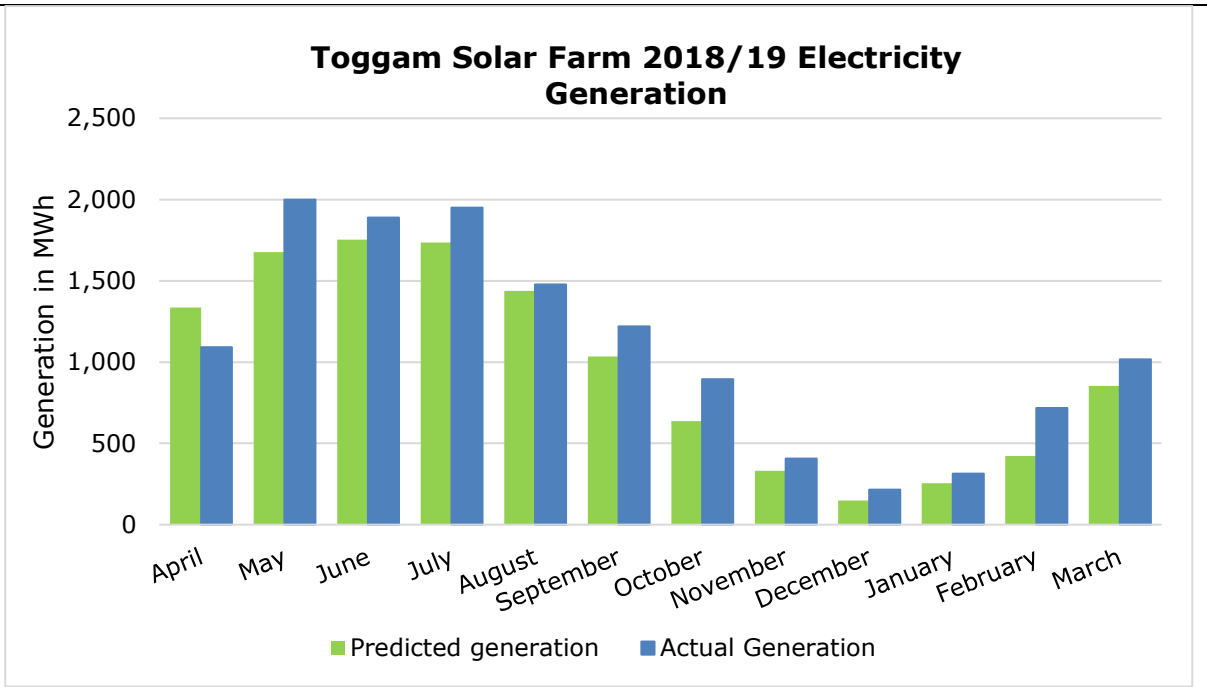


Maintaining good generation performance

Over the past few years we have increased our monitoring of energy generation to ensure that system failures are minimised and rectified as quickly as possible.

Renewable energy generation – Commercial generation

2018/19 was a record-breaking year for electricity generation at the solar farm. Toggam solar farm generated 13,195MWh of electricity compared against a target of 11,623MWh, this equates to a 13.52% uplift. The electricity that is sold into the National Grid is enough to power around 3,300 homes and offset the Carbon Dioxide emissions from 1,500 cars.



Future of Renewable Energy Projects

This year saw the Feed in Tariff that supported renewable energy generation such as solar PV come to an end. Although this does influence the size of projects that are feasible, we shall continue to seek opportunities for installing Solar PV and other renewable forms of energy generation on our buildings.

A new Smart Export Guarantee scheme to support micro generation is due to launch on 1 January 2020. We aim to register our new buildings that have suitable technologies installed with the scheme- such as the new West Suffolk Operational Hub.

Finally, we have used an auction to start selling surplus solar PV electricity from council and commercial installations to generate a new income stream for existing assets.

Commercial vehicle fuel use

Target: Reduce the emissions from commercial vehicle operation

Baseline Year: 2010

Commercial fleet fuel use in baseline year

West Suffolk total	620,442 litres
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2018/19 performance

West Suffolk total	577,423 litres
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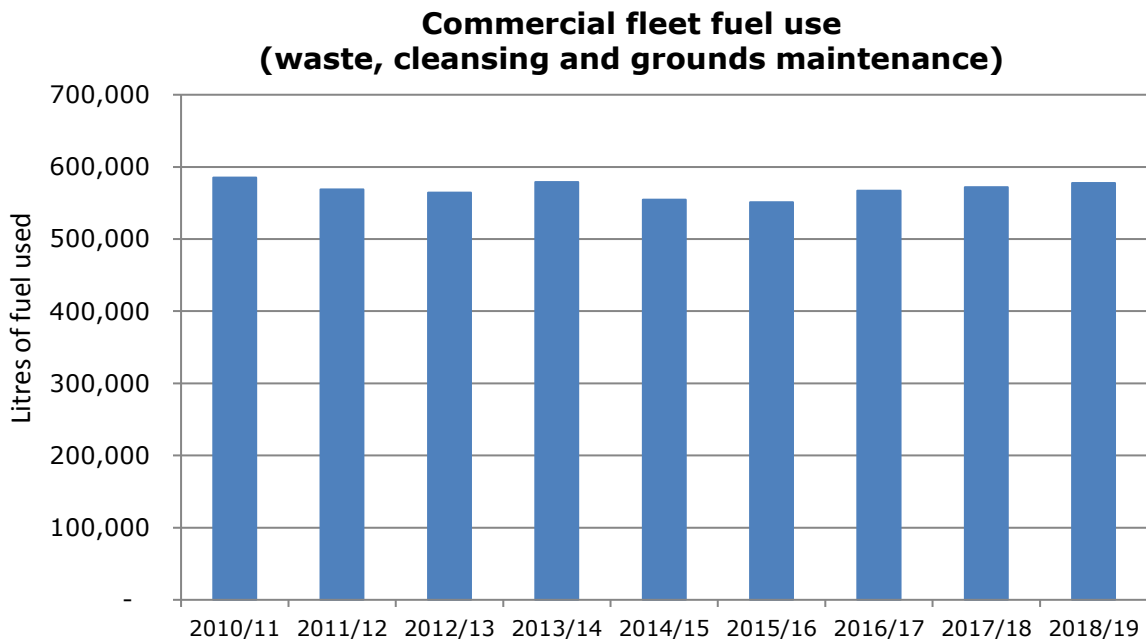
Comments

Commercial vehicle fuel use has increased by 1% during 2018/19. These vehicles include refuse collection trucks, road sweepers, grounds maintenance vehicles, petrol or diesel bought using fuel cards, and industrial mobile machinery.

We have simplified our data analysis by using actual litres used and reduced the need for assumptions of calculations to establish miles, litres or environmental impacts. Overall, this has resulted in a greater level of accuracy and enhanced clarity between teams for reporting purposes.

The environment team and Fleet Management are now working closely to identify opportunities to include alternative fuelled vehicles into our fleet. These would not only reduce fuel consumption, but also contribute to maintaining local air quality. An electric van trial has been scheduled for September 2019.

Moving our fleet to the West Suffolk Operational Hub will result in an opportunity to revise our collection rounds to maximise efficiency. With a change in working practices, we will also focus on fostering a driver culture that recognises the importance of safe and fuel efficient driving therefore, reducing fuel consumption and vehicle wear.



The Council will be working with the Energy Saving Trust to undertake a Green Fleet Review in November 2019.

Business mileage

Target: Reduce the amount of Grey Fleet miles.

Baseline Year: 2014

Business vehicle passenger travel in baseline year:

West Suffolk total	677,073 miles
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2018/19 performance

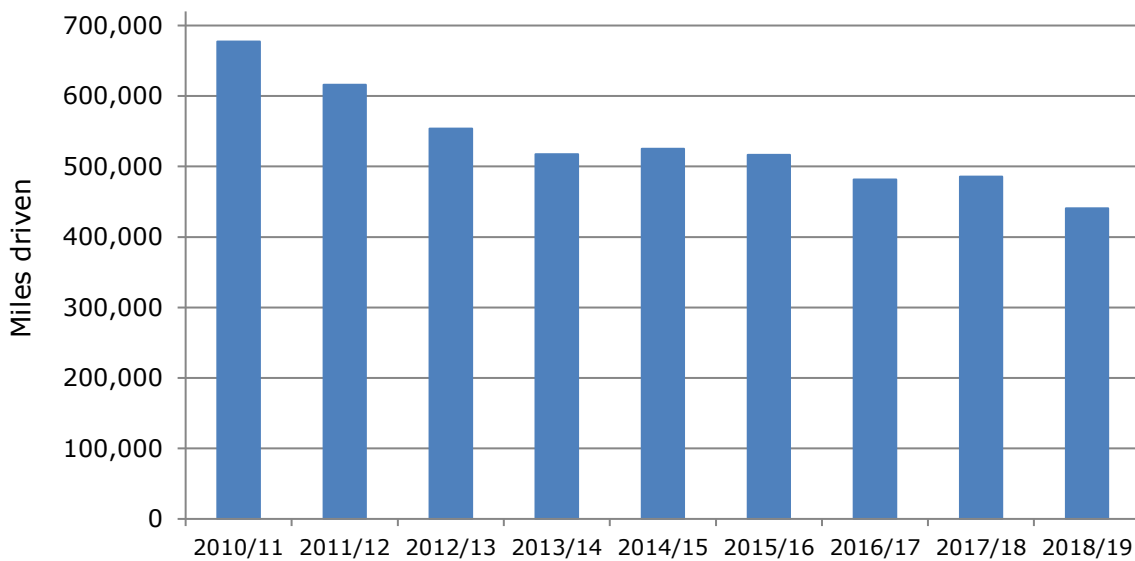
West Suffolk total	440,856 miles
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Comments

Business mileage includes staff and Councillor mileage, pool car use and other owned or leased vehicles.

Business mileage has continued to fall during 2018/19. Staff mileage reduced by 9% compared to 2017/18.

Business passenger miles driven



The reduction in mileage is comprised of a reduction in both pool car use and grey fleet mileage.

The Council now places greater emphasis on fuel efficiency for vehicles included in its employee lease scheme. The update to the policy recommends an emissions cap (110gCO₂/km) and now uses an independent rating system to help staff select vehicles that are more efficient.

This year there has been a reduction in the number of mileage claims by those using bikes to travel to meetings. Therefore, during 2019/20 we shall work to raise awareness of the environmental, physical and mental benefits of active transport and the pool bikes that are currently available.

The emissions ratings of vehicles is continuing to be considered during vehicle procurement. Reducing emissions associated with transport use will continue to be a priority during 2019/20 with a focus on ultra-low emissions vehicles.

Water use

Target: Reduce the amount of water used in Council activities.

Baseline year - 2010 (recalculated June 2014)

Water use in baseline year

West Suffolk Council	23,827 cubic metres
ACL	51,076 cubic metres
Total	74,903 cubic metres

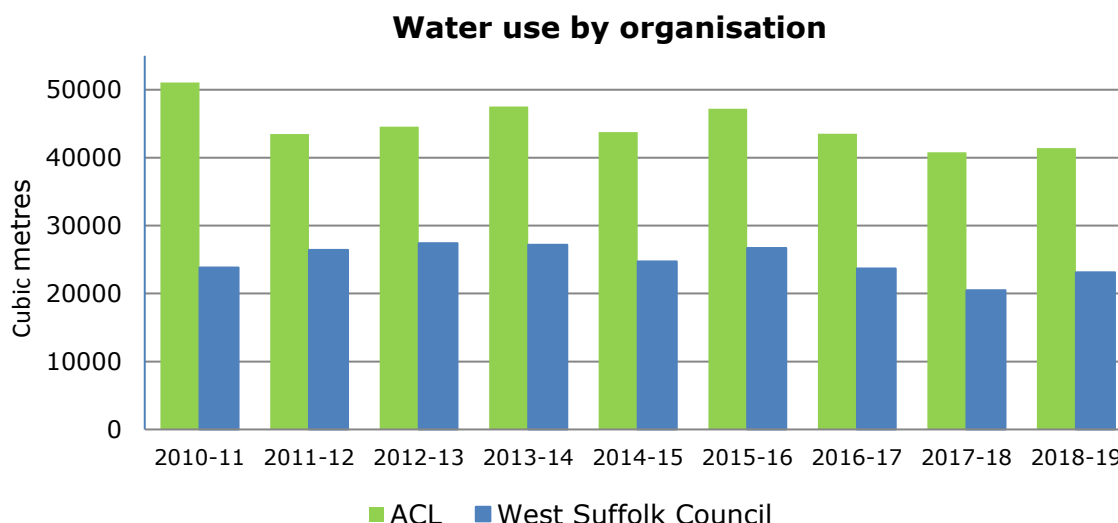
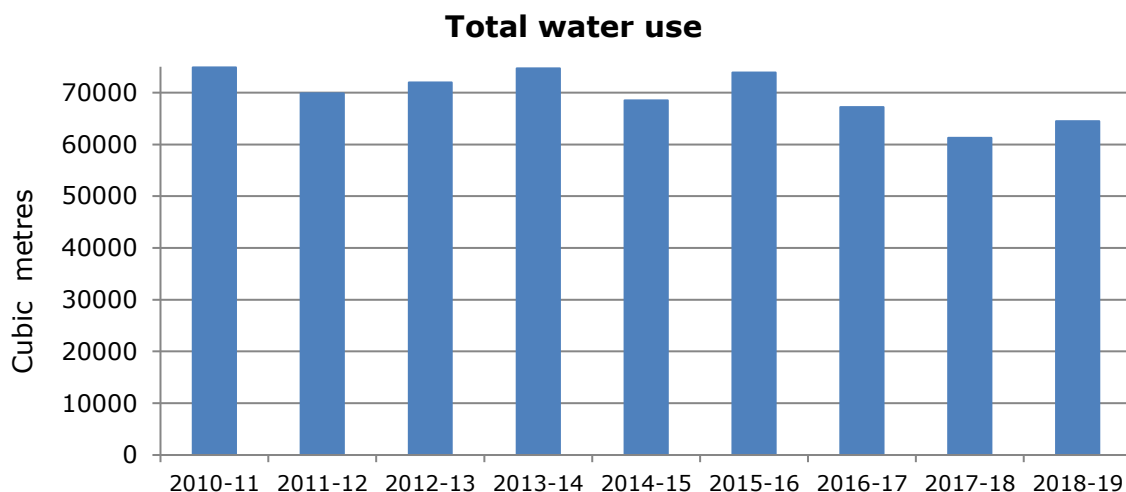
2018/19 performance

West Suffolk Council	23,106 cubic metres
ACL	41,400 cubic metres
Total	64,506 cubic metres

Comments

Total water consumption has increased by 5% with an increase by leisure centres up by 2% and West Suffolk owned property up by 13% compared to the previous year.

The Athenaeum has seen an increase in consumption during 2018/19. The West Suffolk rise in consumption in 2018/19 is thought to be due to some billing errors. We will aim to work with building users to establish opportunities for savings and a benchmark for future use.



We anticipate Abbeycroft Leisure water use increasing next year as data becomes available for the new Skyliner Leisure Centre.

Corporate waste

Target: Recycle/Reuse/Recover 50% or more of each waste stream where safe to do so.

Baseline year - 2010

- 10 waste streams 50% recycled.
- 6 waste streams with potential to increase the recycling rate to 50% or above.
- 7 waste streams are subject to safe disposal only.

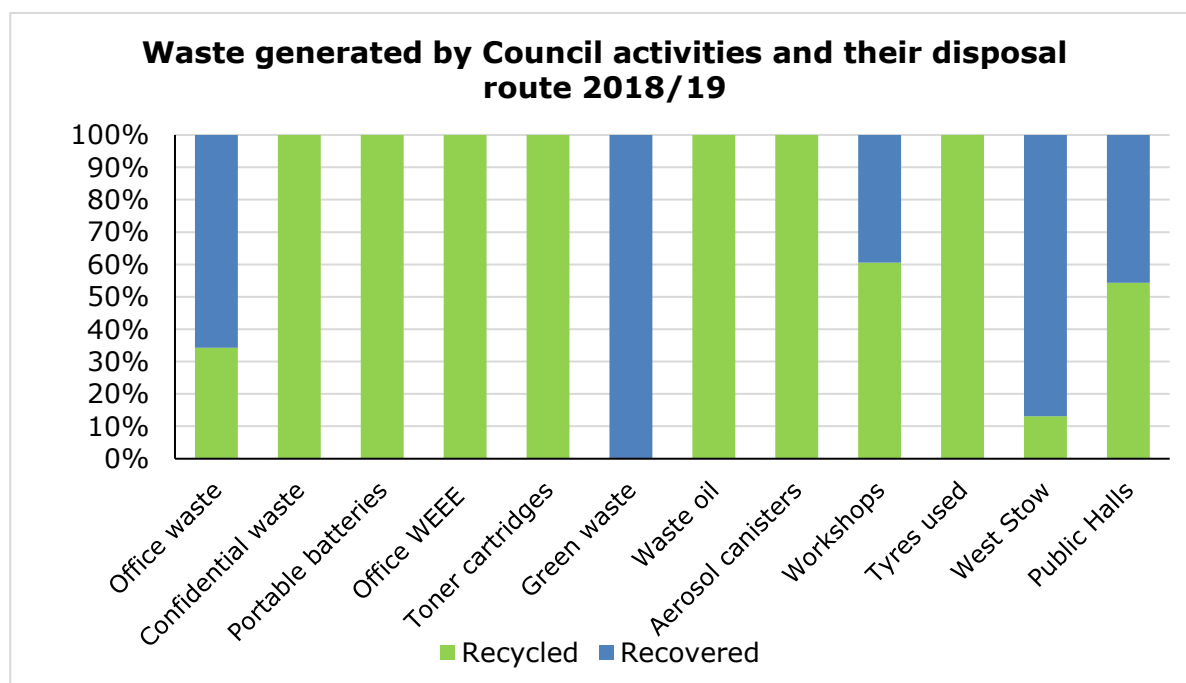
2018/19 performance

- 7 waste streams 100% recycled.
- 4 waste streams with potential to increase the recycling rate to 50% or above.

Comments

The Council continue to ensure legal compliance with respect to the Duty of Care for waste and works to implement new systems and facilities to increase recycling rates of waste generated by our activities.

The following chart sets out current priority waste streams and recycling rates.



West Stow recycling was identified as being below target and a site waste survey was undertaken. This identified an opportunity to address recycled material contamination and bring a new glass waste collection to site. As the biggest visitor groups to the site is schools, the Visitor Centre and education teams have started encouraging schools are encouraged to take their own waste away and not to bring single use plastic to site.

Office Waste Streams

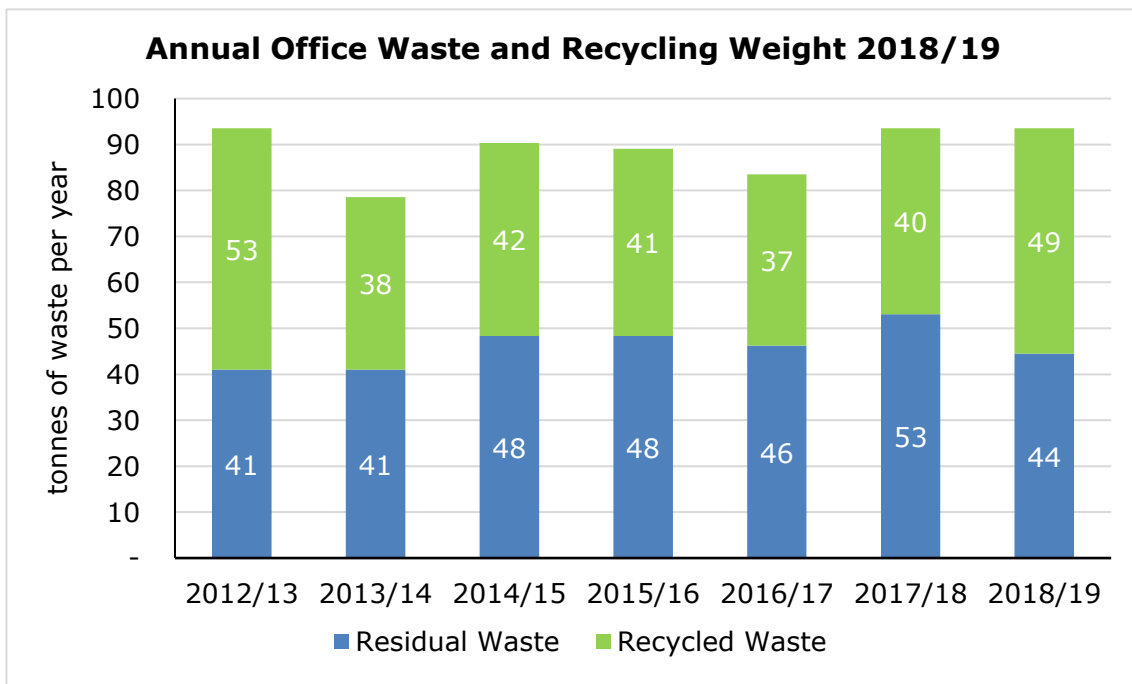
In 2018/19 we continued to raise awareness of waste reduction and correct recycling, by giving a presentation in three staff briefings held in both West Suffolk House and College Heath Road offices. We have also worked with our partner organisation Verse, to reduce single use plastics in the staff café and replace these with glass and aluminium alternatives. These materials can be recycled multiple times without degradation.

In 2018/19, the total amount of waste created was 93 tonnes with residual waste accounting for 44 tonnes and recycled waste 49 tonnes.

Our waste initiatives have contributed to an increase in the amount of office waste recycled by 21% compared to the previous year. The proportion of total waste recycled has increased from 43.27% in 2017/18 to 52.44% in 2018/19.

We shall strive to ensure this trend continues with further engagement with office-based staff particularly those involved in disposing of files when moving to the new Operational Hub.

The chart below shows the annual proportions of recycled and residual waste from office facilities – Note - **Office recycling incorporates office recycling, glass, confidential waste, portable batteries, office WEEE and toner cartridges.*



During 2019/20 we will continue with our work to raise awareness of waste management and conduct an audit of Haverhill House offices.

Biodiversity and parks

Target: To maintain or increase the number of Green Flag accredited sites.

Baseline: - 2016

Park performance against Green Flag criteria:

- Achieve Green Flag status at four parks in West Suffolk

2018/19 performance

The following sites successfully retained Green Flag accreditation during the period:

1. Abbey Gardens, Bury St Edmunds
2. Nowton Park, Bury St Edmunds
3. East Town Park, Haverhill
4. West Stow Country Park, Bury St Edmunds
5. Aspal Close, Mildenhall

During 2018/19 we secured Green Flag status for Aspal Close based on habitat improvements such as translocation of reptile and plant species. In 2019/20 we are aspiring to achieve Green Flag status for Brandon Country Park.

Ongoing Biodiversity and Natural Environment Programmes

Ram Meadow, Bury St Edmunds

RAM Meadow has been improved this year with the installation of stock fencing ready to introduce grazing onto the site. This will improve the meadows conservation value by encouraging wild flowers. Furthermore, we are also working with the Bury Water Meadows Group to improve the sites biodiversity by planting wildflowers and bulbs such as snowdrops.

Habitat enhancement work is also taking place in No Mans Meadow with hedging, meadow and shrub planting improvements and at the Crankles, shown below, improving the Knapweed meadow.

Micro wildflower meadows have also been introduced in the Abbey Gardens to the West nearby the main Abbey Gate entrance and to the East by the river. These areas are beneficial in highlighting the benefits of wildflowers and pollinating plants to a wider audience.



Knapweed meadow at the Crankles



Wildflower meadow alongside the river Lark at the Abbey Gardens

Risbridge Meadows, Kedington

Public access improvements have been made and the habitat is being improved with the aim of it becoming a receptor site for reptiles.

Brecks

The Breaking New Ground Landscape Partnership has now been successful in obtaining £151,100 in stage 1 funding from the Heritage lottery for a new scheme entitled 'Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers'.

This initiative will, if successful during stage 2, include a number of projects to improve the watercourses in the Brecks area.

Environmental compliance

Target: No incidents leading to formal action being taken by regulatory bodies

Target date: Ongoing

Baseline: 100% legal compliance for our operations

2018/19 performance

The Council continued to ensure effective compliance with environmental regulations.

There was one report of a white discharge to surface water that was traced back to the Haverhill Depot in March 2019 by Anglian Water. However, on closer inspection by our Compliance Officer there was no evidence of such discharge in any of the sites drains or three-stage interceptors. Supporting photographs were taken at the time of inspection.

There was no formal action taken by a regulatory body.

In 2019/20 as West Suffolk Operational Hub comes online West Suffolk Council will be reviewing its environmental compliance and health and safety processes to reflect the new operational processes and site management.

Version Control:

Date	Version	Amendments	Officer
12.11.2019	V1.0		O Ingwall King
13.11.2019	V1.1	Minor corrections	O Ingwall King
31.12.2019	V1.2	Text addition	O Ingwall King

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Environment and Climate Change Task Force – Updated Proposal

Proposed title of group: West Suffolk Environment and Climate Change Taskforce

Purpose of group: To make recommendations to Cabinet on West Suffolk Council's future role in protecting and enhancing the environment, both in the way in which it carries out its operations and through specific initiatives.

The review will consider how best to continue to embed environmental considerations into future decision-making, alongside wider social and economic factors. This will be brought together in an informed and considered action plan.

The review will be evidence-led and the recommendations will take account of the key features of West Suffolk as a predominantly rural area, including the existing activities and commitments of partners in these areas.

As set out at the Council meeting on 19 September 2019, the Taskforce recommendations will be the first part of the Council's response to declaring a Climate Emergency across West Suffolk.

Background: A significant amount of West Suffolk Council's activities already actively protect and enhance the environment. However a number of recent reports and events have highlighted the importance of considering further measures to enhance environmental stewardship, not least in the area of carbon emissions and climate change. This includes the recent government target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The review will build on the existing ambitions of the council to ensure we continue to "encourage and invest in ambitious growth that all can access and benefit from, and that is good for local people and the environment", as set out in Strategic Framework. This will require recognising the wider national and global objectives that guide how we operate. We already work with partners to develop our existing shared ambitions, such as those of the Green Suffolk programme through the three existing Suffolk partnerships:

- Climate change
- Waste
- Flood risk management.

The areas of focus for improving environmental stewardship include the following, drawn from 'A Green Future' the Government's 25 year Environment Plan:

- Clean air
- Clean and plentiful water
- Thriving plants and wildlife
- A reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards such as flooding and drought
- Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently

- Enhanced, beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment
- Mitigating and adapting to climate change
- Minimising waste
- Managing exposure to chemicals
- Enhancing biosecurity

The potential for West Suffolk Council to take action splits roughly into five areas:

Internal

1. **Mitigate** the current environmental impact of council activities that deliver services to the communities
2. Put in place measures to **adapt** as far as possible to effects of climate change (such as more extreme weather conditions)

Largely External

3. **Actively support residents, communities and businesses** to make behavioural choices that mitigate or adapt to the impacts of climate change
4. **Investment in energy infrastructure**
5. **Protect and monitor** components of our environment as part of the statutory duties of a local authority

Our internal activities also serve to set an example to our communities.

The role of the Taskforce will be to make recommendations to Cabinet on areas of potential future focus, in response to the evidence of current and future environmental challenges and existing activities.

Terms of reference (ToR):

1. To **review** the evidence base relating to:
 - a. the current priorities for environmental protection and enhancement in West Suffolk and the associated actions that could be agreed by Cabinet to respond to these priority issues
 - b. the long term protection of specific aspects of West Suffolk's natural and built environment and enhancing the health and resilience of our communities when facing environmental threats
This will build upon the statutory obligations and the ambitions already agreed on a national and local level
2. Use the evidence to **identify** the priority areas on which to focus whole-council action at a given time, recognising that there is finite resource, and activities to make West Suffolk greener in the long term cannot all take place at once. This can characterise the amount of focus and actions for:
 - a. The council-wide policy framework
 - b. Specific service areas or public campaigns
 - c. The Council's purchasing decisions, including energy
 - d. Working with specific partner organisations and neighbouring local authorities

- e. Understanding the role of the council to influence and lead behavioural change across West Suffolk

3. To **develop and appraise options** for:

- a. The actions the Council would have to take to be net-zero carbon by 2030; and
- b. How best to address findings from 2 above; and
- c. How environmental considerations can best be included in future council processes, policies and decision making, (including investment decisions) which could include developing an Environmental Policy Statement.

These options will be appraised in terms of their deliverability, affordability and practicality, including their impacts and wider implications.

4. To **make recommendations** to Cabinet for how to take forward the preferred options from 3 above.

Timescale: The Taskforce will take a staged approach to evidence gathering, engagement and focus on key topics, due to the scale of the issues and the importance of engagement with partners and stakeholders. Terms of reference will be presented to Cabinet in July 2019. In order for the Taskforce to shape the direction of the Local Plan and Strategic Framework, initial findings and feedback will be presented to Cabinet in autumn 2019. Final Recommendations will be made to Cabinet in 2020 in order to ensure that community and member feedback can be fully taken into account.

Governance:

Governance arrangements along the lines of the following are proposed. Feedback from Cabinet members on these proposals is particularly welcomed:

The Chair and Taskforce members will be appointed by the Leader of the Council. It is anticipated that the Taskforce will be run in such a way as to include a wider group of Members and other stakeholders.

Taskforce meetings shall be scheduled to take place at College Heath Road in Mildenhall or West Suffolk House in Bury St Edmunds, however members are welcome to join meetings via videoconference or Skype to reduce Member journeys required.

Meetings will be 'paperless' where it is possible for Members to access the relevant reports and information online. Papers will only be sent to members when specifically requested.

Quorum:

The quorum level for the Taskforce shall be 4.

Access to Information:

As a non-decision making body, the normal Access to Information Rules do not apply to the working group.

Officers should endeavour to make clear to members of the Taskforce where matters under discussion are confidential, and should be treated by Members privy to the information as such.

Officer support:

The Corporate Policy Team will provide research and policy development support to the Taskforce. The taskforce will be supported by the Democratic Services Team and a range of other teams who will provide evidence and advice, for example, Growth, Energy and Environment, Waste and Operations and Procurement.

Consultation and engagement:

The Taskforce will take evidence from Councillors and external stakeholders, including partners, stakeholders, community groups, residents and businesses as it considers appropriate. This evidence gathering is likely to include a survey of environmental attitudes.

Draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2020-24

Report No:	CAB/WS/20/010	
Report to and date/s:	Cabinet	14 January 2020
	Council	25 February 2020
Cabinet Member:	Councillor John Griffiths Leader of the Council Tel: 01284 757136 Email: john.griffiths@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Ian Gallin Chief Executive Tel: 01284 757001 Email: ian.gallin@westsuffolk.gov.uk	

Decisions Plan: The decisions made as a result of this report will usually be published within 48 hours. This item will be referred to Council for a final decision and is therefore not subject to call-in. This item is included on the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: All wards

Recommendation: It is recommended that, subject to the approval of Council and the incorporation of Appendix A (Leader's Foreword), the draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2020-2024, as contained in Appendix B to Report No: CAB/WS/20/010 be adopted, taking account of the comments made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

1. Background / Context

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet's approval of the draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework for 2020-24. The document is intended to succeed the West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2018-20.

'Planning for the Future'

- 1.2 The preparation of the new draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework has been taking place as part of a wider piece of work aimed at 'Planning for the Future', in which a joined-up approach is being taken to the Strategic Framework, West Suffolk Local Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 1.3 The advent of the new council and the aligned timetables of the three documents gives a good opportunity for West Suffolk Council to develop a single, coherent narrative and approach to what councillors want to see achieved in West Suffolk in coming years.

Draft Strategic Framework – progress so far

- 1.4 In preparing the draft Strategic Framework, officers began by compiling information on Members' existing and future priorities. This included analysis of the previous Strategic Framework and other council strategies, the Single Council Business case, existing business plans for council services and Ward member priorities, as shared with the Families and Communities Portfolio Holder.
- 1.5 Two workshops were then organised on 11 and 17 September 2019, to which all Members were invited.
- 1.6 At the first workshop on 11 September, Members provided input on the following questions, the feedback from which has been used to inform both the Strategic Framework and the initial scoping of the new West Suffolk Local Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy:
1. What makes West Suffolk unique (that you want to preserve)?
 2. What are the strategic challenges and opportunities for West Suffolk over the next 20 years?
 3. What are the key things you would like to see achieved over the next 20 years?
- 1.7 The second workshop considered in more detail what might be the best approach to achieving growth in West Suffolk in future years.
- 1.8 The input from Members was then combined with the existing commitments and priorities, plus those of partner organisations, to produce a draft Strategic Framework document.
- 1.9 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the draft document on 14 November 2019 and made a number of comments which are set out in section 3 below.

Draft Strategic Framework – structure

- 1.10 As in 2018-20, the document takes the form of a vision, supported by high level strategic priorities, and more detailed actions, as well as some 'ways of working' that outline *how* the council will work to take forward the ambitious set of projects and activities described. A draft Leader's Foreword is also attached to this report at **Appendix A**, for inclusion in the final, designed document following Cabinet approval.

2. Key points to note

- 2.1 **The document is not comprehensive.** The aim of the Strategic Framework document is to provide councillors, staff, partners and interested members of the public with an overview of the councils' strategic direction and its distinctive ways of working, as opposed to a complete description of the activities the councils will be carrying out. The content is therefore necessarily high-level and focused on areas that are changing, with the detail and business as usual activities being fleshed out in individual plans, strategies and service-specific business plans.
- 2.2 **It is proposed that the Council's strategic priorities remain the same.** The draft document reflects an ongoing commitment to the three priorities of Growth, Families and Communities and Housing, while updating the detail of how West Suffolk Council will work to improve the quality of life for West Suffolk residents in these areas.
- 2.3 **West Suffolk's contribution is only part of the picture.** The diagram on page 4 of the draft document shows that West Suffolk's role is not to directly deliver everything referred to in the document but to play a role in influencing, partnering with and working alongside other partners, not least residents and communities.
- 2.4 **The document includes a new emphasis on the Environment and Rural issues.** Space has been left in the draft document to include the emerging priorities of the West Suffolk Environment and Climate Change Taskforce and the West Suffolk Rural Taskforce, and the vision has been revised to reflect the Council's commitment to protecting and enhancing the environment.

3. Input from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 3.1 The following points were raised by members of the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee on 14 November 2019. The proposed handling of these points is shown in the right hand column below:

Input from:	Point raised:	Proposed handling:
Cllr Ian Shipp	Given the evidence that there is a need for one bedroomed properties and bungalows, could	It is proposed that the detail of the size and type of properties to be delivered should be covered in the Local Plan,

	this be made clear in the document?	following the Housing Needs Assessment.
Cllr Diane Hind	The framework should highlight the work that needs to be done to respond to the issues arising from an ageing population and increased prevalence of dementia. The document should also reflect the disparities highlighted in the recent Ward reports, especially around children and educational attainment	The infographics that have now been included in the draft (since the meeting of O&S) highlight these and similar issues. Further, action 2 on p16 of the draft document commits West Suffolk Council to working in partnership to support initiatives that focus on prevention and early intervention, particularly on issues such as health, crime and social isolation.
Cllr Richard Rout	The issue of climate change should be included in the bullets in section 4 of the framework (underpinning the vision)	Revise the first bullet point under the Growth priority to read: "encourage economic growth in West Suffolk that benefits our local economy, our workforce, our families and communities and our global and local environments, in particular by tackling climate change. "
Cllr Stephen Frost	The priority "Drive progress with partners to plan for the infrastructure needed to support our economy" (p15) should include reference to infrastructure that protects and enhances the environment	Revise bullet point 3 on p15 to read: "Drive progress with partners to plan for the infrastructure needed to support our economy, including infrastructure that reduces our impact on the environment, for example, non-car transport "
Cllr Simon Cole	The document should include more detail on the evidence to support the selection of the priorities	The updated version of the document (as attached at Appendix A) includes a range of statistics and infographics.
Cllr Lisa Ingwall-King	The priority of protecting the environment and mitigating the impact of climate change should be integrated more fully in the document. Cllr Ingwall-King had produced a set of drafting suggestions for	Given the scale of the changes proposed by Cllr Ingwall-King, it was agreed that the Environment and Climate Change Taskforce should be invited to consider how to handle them. In discussion with the Chair of the Taskforce it was agreed that the Strategic Framework should be adopted

	inclusion in the document.	with the priorities that had already been recommended by the Taskforce (numbers 8 p15; 7 on p16; and 7 on p17), but that further time and consideration should be given to any further, more detailed, environmental references.
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4. Alternative options

- 4.1 It is not compulsory for councils to have strategic planning documents in place. However, this can result in a lack of strategic direction and agreement on the vision and purpose of the organisation, or the outcomes that councillors and staff are working towards.

5. Consultation and engagement

- 5.1 Discussion by Overview and Scrutiny Committee provided an important input into the draft document as a whole, in addition to the engagement with Members that took place through the September workshops. The more detailed proposals contained in the document have arisen as a result of ongoing engagement by councillors and officers with a wide range of stakeholders, for example, business, residents, communities and voluntary groups. This engagement includes formal consultations, surveys and monitoring of feedback, as well as more informal dialogue.

6. Risks

6.1

Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
	Low/Medium/High*		Low/Medium/ High*
Lack of funding to support full set of projects listed in draft document.	Medium	Finance team involvement in business planning to fully assess value for money of detailed proposals	Low
Future changes in the wider economic environment affect the delivery of economic development and housing objectives	Medium	Ongoing monitoring of local economic conditions. Wider changes in model of service delivery to allow prioritisation of economic and housing priorities	Low
Unable to meet public's expectations of what the councils will deliver	Medium	Effective communications to educate residents about new ways of working	Low

7. Implications arising from the proposal

Financial

- 7.1 The draft strategic framework document is aligned with the Medium Term Financial Strategy and budget setting process for 2020-24.

Equalities

- 7.2 The draft document includes a number of priorities where a particular emphasis is placed on meeting the needs of different groups. Where appropriate, individual policies and projects referred to in the draft Strategic Framework document have already undergone, or will undergo, an Equality Impact Assessment.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Draft Leader’s Foreword to West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2020-24
Appendix B – Draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework document 2020-24

9. Background documents

- 9.1 West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2018-20
www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/strategicframework

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West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2020-24 – Leader’s Foreword

This is the first strategic framework for the new West Suffolk Council. It outlines our vision and the outcomes that we aim to achieve with, and in support of our communities and businesses.

Put simply, our strategic framework is at the heart of all we do. It guides our work and services to make sure our residents, economy and environment continue to prosper in all parts of West Suffolk, with its diverse communities and its mix of market towns and rural areas.

Our vision:

To be ambitious in supporting and investing in our West Suffolk communities, businesses and the environment, and to encourage and manage growth, prosperity and quality of life for all.

This framework builds on the great work of the two previous councils while helping us set a new course to both meet challenges and seize opportunities in the future.

It guides our work building capacity in our communities through our innovative families and communities work. At the same time, it will be a central pillar to our investment and commercial strategies, ensuring we attract an income to support services while helping our communities to achieve more.

It makes sure we focus on challenging areas such as helping people secure the right homes, staying healthy, supporting the most vulnerable and protecting our environment while managing change and growth for current and future generations.

It will help us to ensure that we continue to support business, grow our economy and encourage investment and suitable development while making sure we also have the necessary infrastructure to match these aspirations.

This framework has our residents at the heart of its design. It is part of the way we continue to transform local government and continue to deliver tailored services together with our communities and partners. The strategy reinforces our work with partners in delivering public service hubs in West Suffolk, not only making access to public services easier but delivering more effective results and outcomes.

Under this framework we can continue to look beyond our geographic and organisational boundaries to meet our ambitions around challenging areas such as improving health and wellbeing, skills and education as well as investment in infrastructure and business.

The document highlights the council’s renewed commitment to behaving in an environmentally responsible way and prioritising actions that aim to tackle climate change. It also helps us with our work in rural areas to not only tackle issues but help create opportunities and lobby Government.

Our strategic framework has been created with councillors across the authority and through our ongoing engagement with partners, communities and businesses. It will help us make sure their ambitions remain ours and that we deliver on that vision to continue to improve our prosperity and quality of life.

Footnote:

At the time of writing this we have two taskforces working on environment and climate change as well as rural issues. Some initial actions are included in the body of the framework, under the three priorities of Growth, Families and Communities and Housing, but further actions will be taken forward once the Taskforces have finalised their implementation plans.

Strategic Framework

2020-2024

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1. Leader's foreword

XXXXXX



Councillor John Griffiths
Leader, West Suffolk Council

2. West Suffolk Council’s leadership role

The creation of West Suffolk Council on 1 April 2019 confirmed its status as an organisation that is, on the one hand, small enough to remain deeply embedded within, and connected to local communities; while on the other hand, has sufficient scale to think and act strategically across a larger area.

West Suffolk Council will continue to demonstrate leadership of the local area in a range of ways as set out below. In each of these roles, we will continue to develop and explore ways in which we can enhance our existing partnerships with residents, communities, businesses, the third sector and the wider public sector, in order to work together towards our vision for West Suffolk.

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

Using evidence and insight (see following section) we have identified the most significant challenges and opportunities that are facing West Suffolk’s towns, villages and other rural areas over the next few years. Based on this, and on our vision for what we believe a future West Suffolk should look like, we have identified those areas of West Suffolk Council’s responsibility where we can have the greatest impact and make the biggest difference in our local areas, using the resources that have been entrusted to us.

This document describes this *strategic framework* which will shape our resourcing and decision-making over the period 2020-2024.



3. About West Suffolk: current challenges and opportunities

About West Suffolk

West Suffolk is a predominantly rural area of 1,035 square kilometres in the heart of East Anglia. Well-connected with London, the rest of East Anglia and the Midlands, West Suffolk is a safe and comparatively prosperous place in which to live. West Suffolk has a thriving and diverse economy, embracing a number of business sectors, including horseracing and several that support the two major US Air Force bases at RAF Mildenhall and Lakenheath. It also has some beautiful and accessible countryside areas, including grassland, heath and forest. At the same time, some areas of West Suffolk are facing challenges such as rural isolation, a lack of skills or qualifications, an ageing population in need of more specialist housing or care, poverty, ill-health or deprivation.

The charts and graphs on the following pages summarise some of the attributes of West Suffolk, and the challenges and opportunities faced by residents, businesses, the council and other partners. These statistics have been combined with the information, insights, experiences and other feedback that staff and councillors have gained from year-round work within communities, to build a richer picture of life in West Suffolk. Please note, some figures are for Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury as West Suffolk figures are not yet available.

To see more statistics about life in West Suffolk, please visit: www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/aboutthearea



POPULATION

West Suffolk's population is growing and changing. Across the district, the proportion of the population who are older than working age is increasing, but there are large variations between individual towns and villages.

Population

In 2018, the total population of West Suffolk was

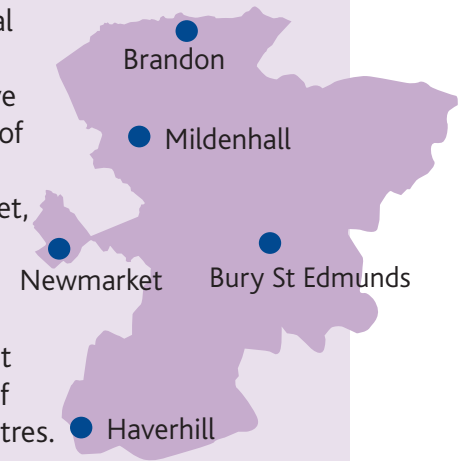
178,881



Source: ONS 2018 Mid Year population estimates

A varied landscape

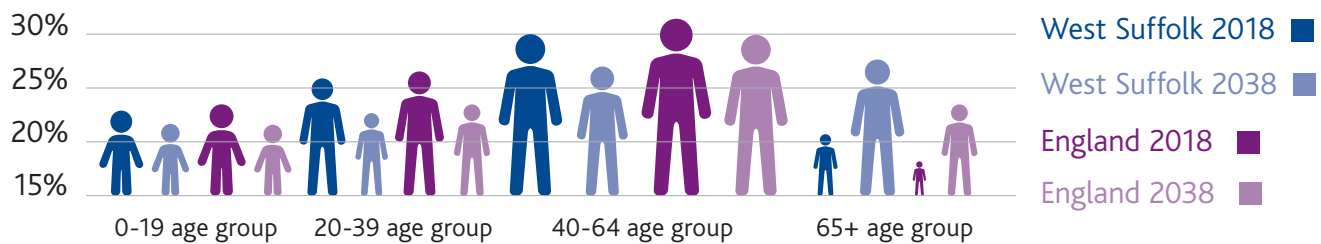
59% of all residential properties in West Suffolk are in the five largest settlements of Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill, Newmarket, Brandon and Mildenhall. These five largest towns make up 3% of West Suffolk's land area of 1,035 square kilometres.



Population change

West Suffolk's population is an ageing population particularly when compared to the national picture.

Percentage of population by age group



The age group 65+ is the only age group projected to increase over the next 20 years. The proportion of people of working age is projected to decline. An increase of 97% is predicted in the population aged 85+ between 2018 and 2038.

Source: ONS Sub-national population projections 2016 based.

Local variations

The proportion of the population aged under 16 varies considerably across the Wards of West Suffolk, from 29% (The Rows Ward) to 14% (Fornhams and Great Barton Ward). Similarly, the proportion of the population aged over 65 years varies from 7% (Iceni Ward) to 35% (The Fornhams and Great Barton Ward). Source: ONS 2017

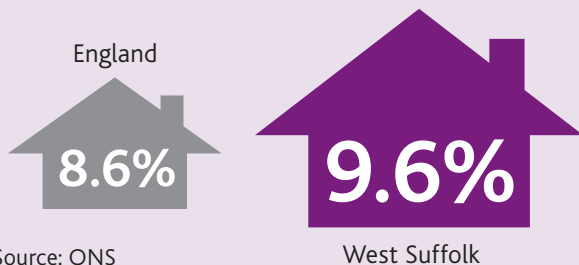


HOUSING

West Suffolk residents face challenges in finding homes that are affordable to rent or buy, given average prices and local wages levels. Homelessness has also increased in recent years, as in other parts of the country. In spite of significant investment in delivering new housing and preventing and relieving homelessness, the challenge is ongoing.

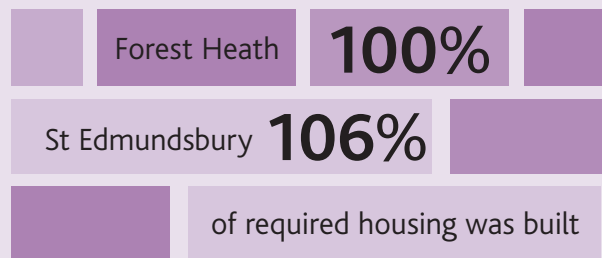
Increasing numbers of households

The number of households in West Suffolk is growing. Between 2006 and 2016, it increased by 9.6% compared to the overall England rate of 8.6%.



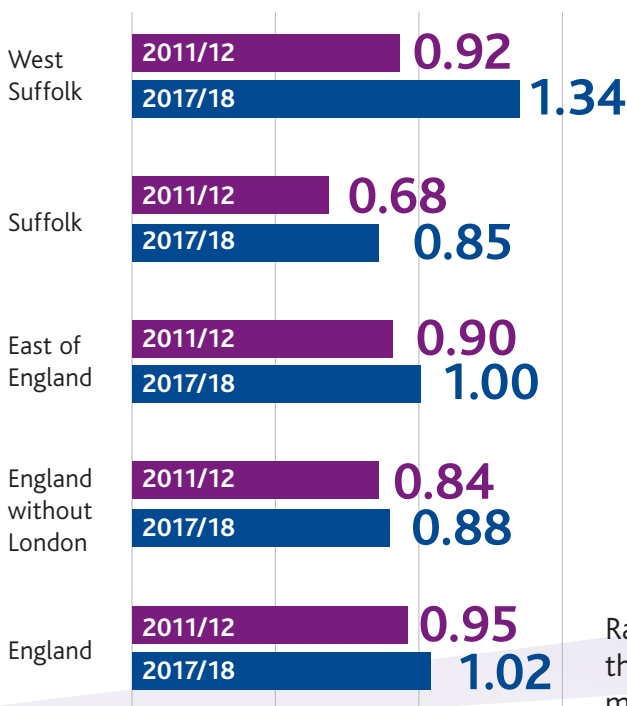
Housing growth

In 2018, West Suffolk met or exceeded its housing delivery targets.



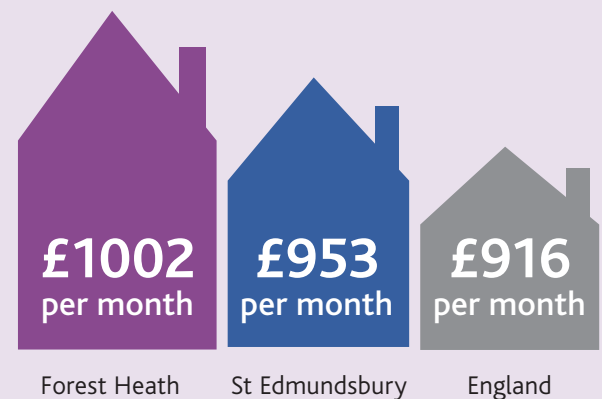
Homelessness

Homelessness acceptances per 1,000 head of population 2011/12 and 2017/18



Rented housing

The average cost of renting a 3 bedroom home in West Suffolk is higher than the England average.



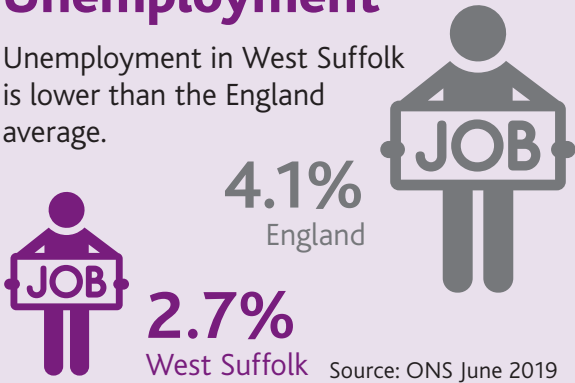
Rates of homelessness in West Suffolk are higher than the regional or national average, and have increased more quickly in recent years.

ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

Unemployment is low in West Suffolk and the economy is diverse. However, average wages and qualification levels are below the national average, leading to a continued focus on attracting high quality jobs and on improving skill and attainment levels.

Unemployment

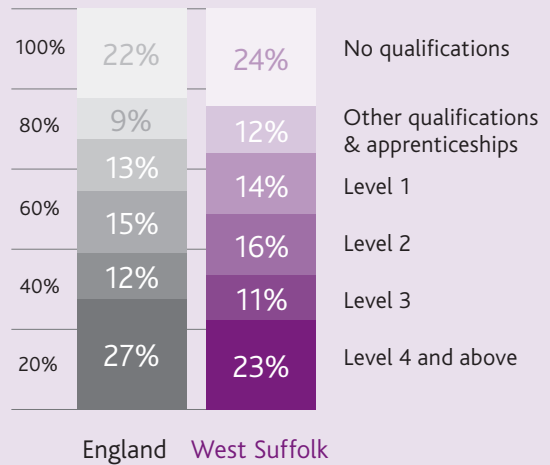
Unemployment in West Suffolk is lower than the England average.



Source: ONS June 2019

Qualifications

A higher proportion of people in West Suffolk have no qualifications than in England as a whole, and a lower proportion hold higher level qualifications.



Source: Census 2011

Attainment

Educational attainment at GCSE is slightly below the national average in West Suffolk.

Percentage of pupils who achieved at least **grade 4** in English and Maths GCSE



Percentage of pupils who achieved at least **grade 5** in English and Maths GCSE

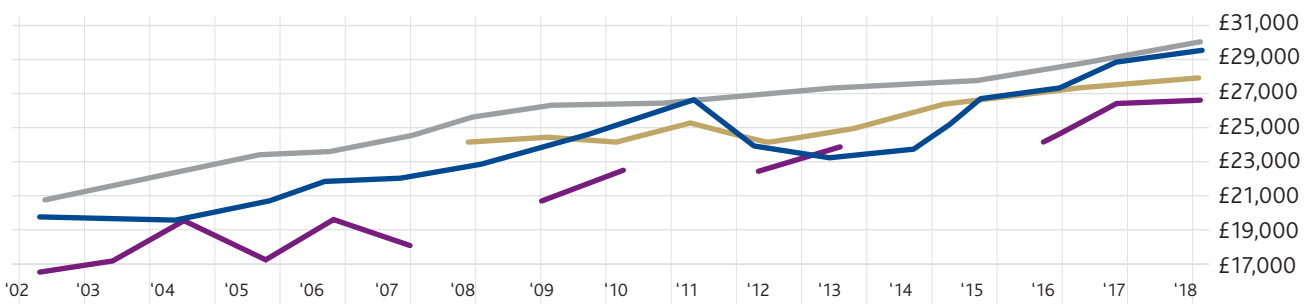


Published results for 2017/18
Source: Department for Education

Average wages in West Suffolk



(shown here as Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Councils)
Average wages are below England levels.



Forest Heath ■ St Edmundsbury ■ Suffolk ■ England ■

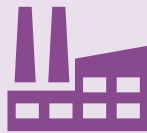
Source: NOMIS annual; survey of hours and earnings - resident analysis

Main industrial sectors

West Suffolk's main industrial sectors are business administration and support services, health and manufacturing.



**Business admin
& support services**



Manufacturing



Health



Retail



**Accommodation
& food services**

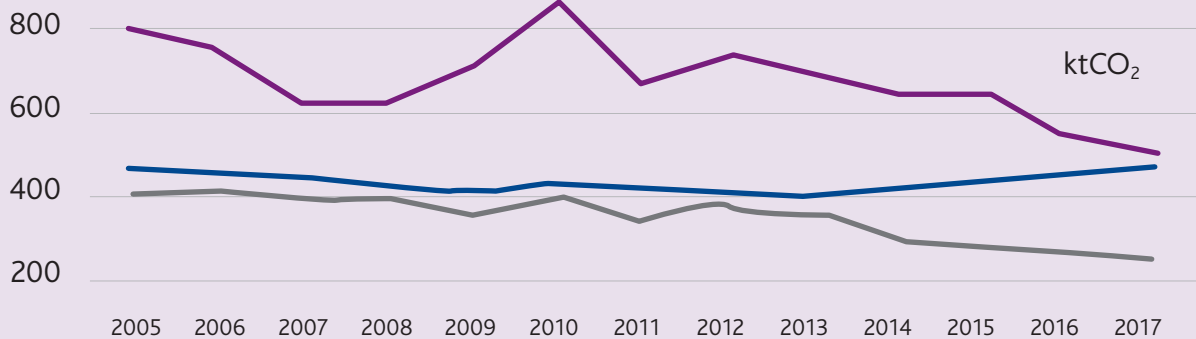
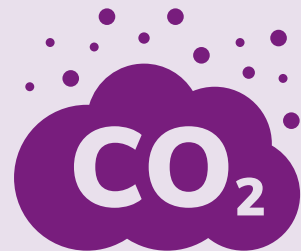
West Suffolk	19.1%	10.6%	11.7%	8.5%	7.4%
England & Wales	9.1%	8.2%	12.9%	9.4%	7.5%

Source: ONS 2018

Emissions

West Suffolk has invested in renewable energy technologies, but a challenge still remains to reduce greenhouse emissions over time.

West Suffolk Emissions estimates by Source 2017



Industry and Commercial Total ■ Domestic Total ■ Transport Total ■

Source: BEIS, 2019

FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

West Suffolk families and communities' daily experiences of health, wellbeing, learning and opportunities vary greatly across different parts of the district. Taken as a whole, the following charts show how the average picture in West Suffolk compares to the national situation. The focus for West Suffolk Council remains on building resilience within families and communities and preventing problems early on.

Social mobility index

The Social Mobility Index 2017 compares the chances that a child from a disadvantaged background will do well at school and get a good job across each of the 324 local authority districts of England.

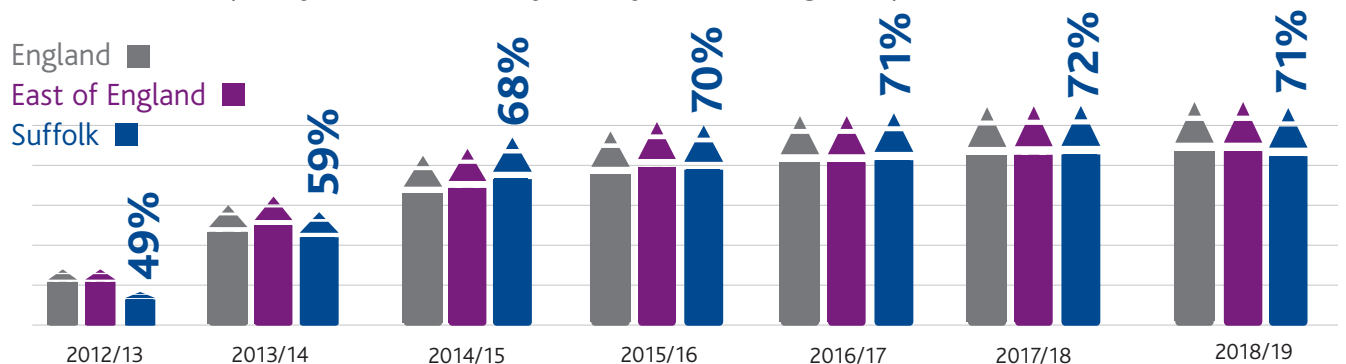
- = Social mobility hotspots
- = Social mobility coldspots.

This means young people from less advantaged backgrounds may experience limited opportunities.

Area	Rank (out of 324)
Mid Suffolk	80
Suffolk Coastal	116
St Edmundsbury	209
Ipswich	261
Forest Heath	264
Babergh	270
Waveney	314

Early Years Foundation stage

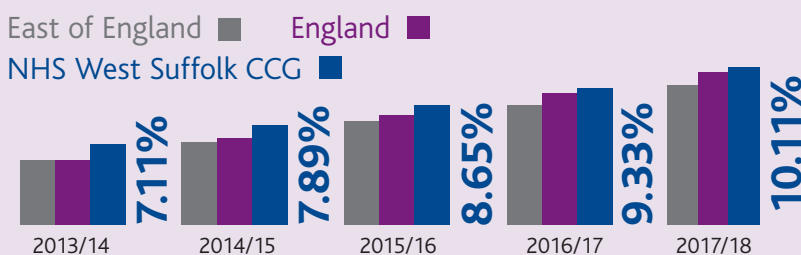
From 2012/2013 to 2017/18, the percentage of children in Suffolk achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception year has increased year on year with a slight drop in 2018/19 to 71%.



Source: Department of Education, EYFS attainment data 18/19 data

Common mental health disorders

Depression recorded prevalence: % of patients on GP practice register recorded as having depression (aged 18+)

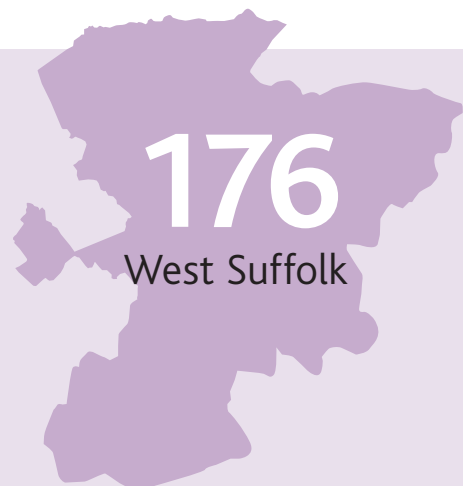


Source: Public Health England, Mental Health and Wellbeing JSNA

10.11% of patients in West Suffolk GP practices were recorded as **having depression** in 2017/18. This is an increase of **42%** since 2013/14. This was **slightly below** the England average of a **52%** increase across the same time period.

English deprivation rankings

1 = Most deprived local authority
317 = least deprived local authority



Source: DCLG Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019

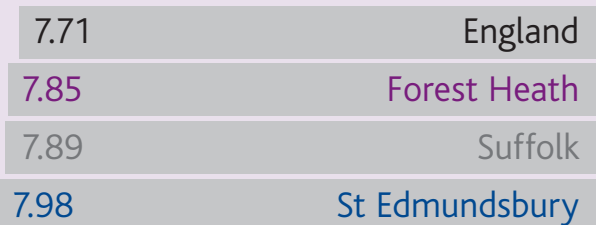
Wellbeing

These figures show the percentage of adults reporting very high levels of life satisfaction, happiness, worthwhileness and high levels of anxiety – 2018/19



Suffolk	37.77%	36.65%	42.74%	17.06%
	Life satisfaction	Happiness	Worthwhile	Anxiety
England	30.56%	35.36%	35.98%	19.72%

How satisfied are you with your life?
(10 = completely satisfied)



How anxious did you feel yesterday?
(10 = completely anxious)



Source: ONS Headline estimates of personal wellbeing April 18 – March 2019

Physically active adults

Percentage of physically active adults that meet Chief Medical Officer recommendations for physical activity.



Levels of activity - active at least 150 minutes a week - active lives survey Nov 17/18

Source: Activelives survey 2017/18

4. Vision and strategic priorities

From 2020-2024, councillors and staff across West Suffolk Council are committed to:

Being ambitious in supporting and investing in our West Suffolk communities, businesses and the environment, to encourage and manage growth in prosperity and quality of life for all.

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

<p>Growth in West Suffolk’s economy for the benefit of all our residents and UK plc.</p>	<p>Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active.</p>	<p>Increased and improved provision of appropriate housing in West Suffolk in both our towns and rural areas.</p>
<p>We will use our influence, investment, partnerships and regulatory and public protection powers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage economic growth in West Suffolk that benefits our local economy, our workforce, our families and communities and our global and local environments in particular by tackling climate change • secure improved infrastructure and facilities to support new and existing communities • invest in our towns, villages and countryside areas by building on their unique strengths. 	<p>We will use our leadership, local connections, commissioning role, investment and assets to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support communities to fulfil their ambitions so as to improve the lives of residents and the local environment • work with partners to build resilience in families and communities, so that problems can be prevented at the earliest opportunity • use our community, leisure, public open space, countryside and heritage assets so that they give maximum benefit to West Suffolk communities. 	<p>We will use our roles as a local housing and planning authority, a regulator, an investor and local influencer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure a variety of new housing is provided in appropriate locations, that meets the needs of current and future generations • improve the quality of housing and the local environment for our residents • support people in accessing suitable housing, including by working in partnership to address their wider needs.

5. Ways of working

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



<p>“The West Suffolk Way”</p>	<p>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 through consultation and engagement, and supporting them to achieve their goals.</p>
<p>Environmentally responsible</p>	<p>In line with the Council’s declaration of a Climate Emergency, we will use the Council’s various roles to protect and enhance, wherever possible, the local and global environment, with a particular focus on reducing carbon emissions to net zero by 2030.</p>
<p>Place focus and subsidiarity</p>	<p>Distinctively local, not generic solutions, that are shaped and delivered locally and reflect the different challenges and opportunities of West Suffolk’s places. As a predominantly rural area, this will include in particular having regard to the challenges and opportunities in our villages and countryside areas. We will also take account of the various roles and ambitions of local organisations, including town and parish councils.</p>
<p>Collaboration and integration</p>	<p>Ambitious and comprehensive cross-system partnerships that join-up resources around communities and individuals and focus on prevention.</p>
<p>Financial self-sufficiency</p>	<p>A shift from reliance on grants to self-generated income, returns on investment, and business rates growth.</p>
<p>Behaving more commercially</p>	<p>Taking a business approach to our operations, within our public service remit.</p>
<p>Digitally enabled</p>	<p>Maximising the potential of data and technology to transform decisions and transactions.</p>

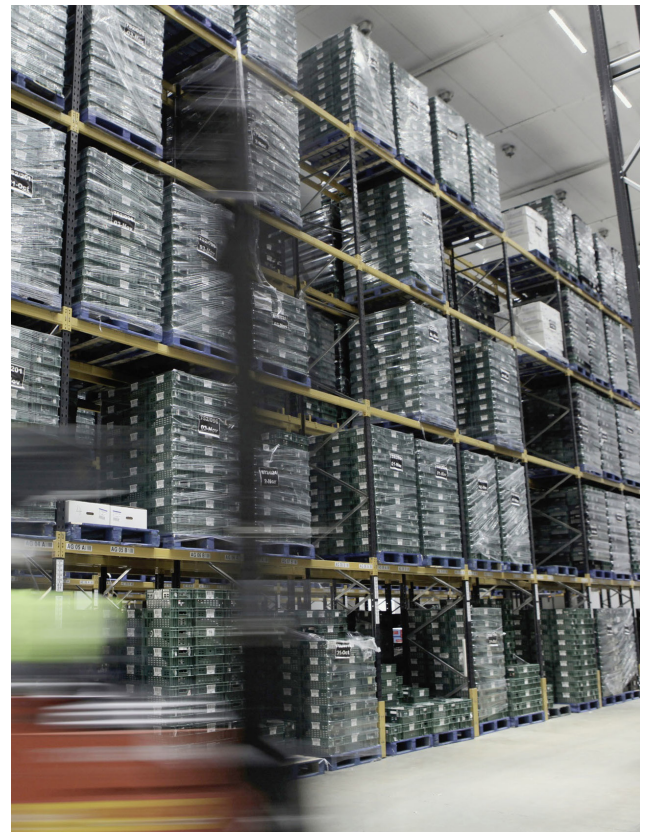
In everything we do, we will be guided by our commitment to promoting equality and diversity by seeking to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different groups of people through all aspects of our work across West Suffolk. Where appropriate, we will assess the impact of our policies and projects as they develop, in order to

ensure they support our commitment to equality and diversity. We have also identified some particular areas where focused action is needed to improve equality of opportunity for people in West Suffolk, included in the actions on the following pages. These are shown below:

Equality objectives

- Champion and promote growth in West Suffolk that recognises the economic value of strong, diverse and healthy workforces and communities and a clean natural environment, alongside growth in productivity.
- Work in partnership with others to support initiatives that focus on prevention and early intervention, particularly on issues such as health, crime and social isolation. In particular, develop innovative new models of supporting residents and businesses to access public services, for example through the Mildenhall Hub and Western Way Development.
- Ensure that provision is made for housing that meets the needs of particular groups and enables them to remain independent.

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



6. Our plans for 2020 – 2024

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

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

- encourage economic growth in West Suffolk that benefits our local economy, our workforce, our families and communities and our global and local environments
- secure improved infrastructure and facilities to support new and existing communities
- invest in our towns, villages and countryside areas by building on their unique strengths.

Why is this a priority?

At the heart of our vision for prosperous communities with improving quality of life lies a strong and diverse economy that is capable of growing. West Suffolk Council is uniquely placed to champion and support the local economy.

West Suffolk as an area supports a wide range of businesses and unemployment is low. There are good opportunities for businesses to start up in West Suffolk or to move here, and businesses are well-connected and receive good support.

However, there remain a number of challenges that need to be addressed, such as relatively low levels of productivity, wages and skills. West Suffolk Council will therefore use its influence and investment to bring about improvements in these areas. This will involve not just traditional approaches to economic development and growth, but initiatives that support the wider wellbeing of the workforce in West Suffolk, in order to enable workers to reach their potential and firms to grow and innovate.

During 2020-2024, we will:

1. Champion and promote growth in West Suffolk that recognises the economic value of strong, diverse and healthy workforces and communities and a clean natural environment, alongside growth in productivity.
2. Continue to directly invest in West Suffolk, opening up opportunities for businesses and our communities to flourish.
3. Drive progress with partners to plan for the infrastructure that reduces our impact on the environment, for example, non-car transport.
4. Support local businesses by bringing them together and enabling them to access advice, training and financial support.
5. Provide support for initiatives that enable the development of higher level skills in West Suffolk. This will include focusing on skills for young people at risk of becoming NEET, STEM skills, and the development of models that are appropriate for rural areas such as West Suffolk.
6. Promote the further development of West Suffolk's market towns and high streets, in the face of a changing retail environment. This will include working in partnership with retailers and market traders, as well as the implementation of masterplans and ensuring appropriate parking provision.
7. Work towards better connected rural places, where people are able to stay safe, healthy and well; build relationships and community; and access skills, education and jobs.
8. Explore how we can work with developers, businesses and partners to ensure that we improve the green credentials of any new development.

Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active

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

- support communities to fulfil their ambitions so as to improve the lives of residents and the local environment
- work with partners to build resilience in families and communities, so that problems can be prevented early
- use our community, leisure, public open space, countryside and heritage assets so that they give maximum benefit to West Suffolk communities

Why is this a priority?

West Suffolk Council already has a strong track record of supporting families and communities to enable them to make a difference in their local places. Our existing focus on prevention has meant a different focus for public services, namely being an option of last resort, rather than the first port of call.

But there is always more to be done, in supporting communities to strengthen in order to deal with the challenges they may face, particularly around issues such as poor health, isolation and loneliness, antisocial behaviour and drug misuse. West Suffolk Council will therefore continue to work with communities and partners over the next four years to enable all West Suffolk residents to thrive and make the most of the opportunities in their local areas.



What will we do to achieve this priority?

1. Support local communities to build their capacity to shape their own future – in line with the West Suffolk Way. This will include responding to communities' ambitions for their local areas, by enabling them to access council grants and other funding, and by providing officer advice and support to community leaders and groups.
2. Work in partnership with others to support initiatives that focus on prevention and early intervention, particularly on issues such as health, crime and social isolation. In particular, develop innovative new models of supporting residents and businesses to access public services, for example through the Mildenhall Hub and Western Way Development.
3. Continue to celebrate and develop West Suffolk's diverse cultural assets and events, maximising their impact in terms of education, tourism, strengthening community relationships and generating income to support local services.
4. Work in partnership to improve community safety in West Suffolk and in particular to take action to prevent and address drug-related crime (including county lines) through education, intelligence sharing and enforcement.
5. Work in partnership with Abbeycroft Leisure, health agencies, sports clubs, community groups and others to encourage West Suffolk residents to become more physically active. This will include continuing to manage our parks and open spaces as attractive leisure, health and cultural assets.
6. Promote strong rural communities that are integrated, informed, equipped and empowered.
7. Maintain and enhance the green infrastructure in West Suffolk to deliver improved biodiversity and air quality and support the health and wellbeing of our local communities.

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

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

- ensure a variety of new housing is provided in appropriate locations, that meets the needs of current and future generations
- improve the quality of housing and the local environment for our residents
- support people in accessing suitable housing, including by working in partnership to address their wider needs

Why is this a priority?

Recent research has underlined the crucial role housing can play in supporting people's economic and social wellbeing. But housing that is affordable in West Suffolk can be a challenge to access given the low wages, coupled with the area's proximity to Cambridge and the large US airbases in the district. West Suffolk Council is therefore responding by working to increase housing supply, improving housing quality and responding to rising homelessness in West Suffolk.



During 2020-2024, we will:

1. Make provision for housing to meet the needs of current and future generations, properly supported by infrastructure, facilities and community networks, while protecting and enhancing West Suffolk's existing countryside and heritage.
2. Accelerate the delivery of new housing, including affordable housing, with local communities and developers, as well as bringing empty properties back into use.
3. Ensure that provision is made for housing that meets the needs of particular groups and enables them to remain independent.
4. Work collaboratively to find sustainable and suitable housing solutions for residents threatened with homelessness. This includes both preventing and relieving homelessness and supporting people in their new tenancies, including specific work with those who have slept rough.
5. Drive forward improvements in the quality of both new and existing housing, especially in the private rented sector and Houses in Multiple Occupation. This includes both environmental improvements and those needed because of problem landlords or tenants.
6. Achieve a wider variety of housing in rural areas that is suitable and affordable for a range of local people, located in developments that the local community support.
7. Support the development of more environmentally sustainable homes and communities throughout West Suffolk, in a measurable way. This will include working with housebuilders, and influencing the Local Plan and development control processes.

Further details of our planned projects and activities are available in our specific strategy documents available on our website at www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/morepolicies

7. Resourcing our priorities

Alongside our Strategic Framework, the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and annual budgets set out how our activities will be resourced. Our Medium Term Financial Strategy is based on the following six themes:

1. Aligning resources to the West Suffolk strategic plan and essential services;
2. Continuation of the shared service agenda and transformation of service delivery;
3. Behaving more commercially;
4. Considering new funding models (eg acting as an investor);
5. Encouraging the use of digital forms for customer access; and
6. Taking advantage of new forms of local government finance (e.g. business rate retention).



8. 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 governance and management, estate and resource management, regulation, service delivery, customer access, workforce and organisational development and improving our governance and democratic arrangements. A particular focus during 2020-24 will be continuing to drive improvements in customer access and service delivery. This will include:

- harnessing the potential of digital technology to improve our systems and processes, including encouraging more online transactions
- working in partnership with the wider public sector network and other partners
- supporting our customers to access the right services in the best way possible. This will



include understanding the nature of customer demand; encouraging self-serve approaches where possible; and using our influence with partners to build joined-up processes between different agencies

- supporting our workforce to work to the best of their abilities (see below)
- using our built assets and facilities in creative ways, for example, through the development of our public sector hubs

The importance of West Suffolk Council's workforce

West Suffolk Council's employees are fundamental to the council achieving its ambitions. As such, engagement, motivation, leadership, development and reward are crucial. The West Suffolk Council Workforce Strategy sets out our people management aims, goals and objectives to assist West Suffolk Council in achieving its strategic aims. It ensures that the HR service commits to working with all our staff and leaders to develop a culture of excellence in how we support and develop people. We will continue to build on our well-embedded workforce strategy to ensure we have the right people, in the right place, with the right values and skills to deliver. The ambitions in the workforce strategy are challenging and measurable so that we can operate successfully in the increasingly complex public sector environment, whilst creating a rewarding and engaging place for people to work.

Our approach will continue to focus on the following five key areas:

Skills and behaviours

Reward and recognition

Recruitment and retention

Future planning

Health and wellbeing

We have a number of more detailed plans in place to drive forward change in these areas over the period 2020-2024, which are available to view at www.westsuffolk.gov.uk

9. Measuring our progress

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

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

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

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



Decisions Plan

Key Decisions and other executive decisions to be considered

Date: 1 January 2020 to 31 May 2020

(including a Portfolio Holder decision expected to be taken on 31 December 2019)

Publication Date: 16 December 2019

The following plan shows both the key decisions and other decisions/matters taken in private, that the Cabinet, Portfolio Holders, Joint Committees or Officers under delegated authority, are intending to take up to 31 May 2020. This table is updated on a monthly rolling basis and provides at least 28 clear days' notice of the consideration of any key decisions and of the taking of any items in private.

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

Members of the public may wish to:

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

In all instances, contact should be made with the named Officer in the first instance, either on the telephone number listed against their name, or via email using the format firstname.surname@westsuffolk.gov.uk or via West Suffolk Council, West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 3YU or College Heath Road, Mildenhall, Bury St Edmunds IP28 7EY.

Expected Decision Date	Subject and Purpose of Decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio Holder Contact Details	Lead Officer Contact Details	Wards Affected	Documents to be submitted
Page 302	Housing Delivery Plan: Update on First Phase This item has been removed from the Decisions Plan as it has been established that no formal decision is required of Cabinet or the Portfolio Holder for Housing.				Sara Mildmay-White Housing 01359 270580	Julie Baird Assistant Director (Growth) 01284 757613 Marie Smith Service Manager (Planning Strategy) 01638 719260		
	31/12/19	Greater Cambridge Partnership Cambridge South East Transport Better Public Transport Project: Consultation Response The Portfolio Holder for Growth will be asked to approve a proposed response, on behalf of West Suffolk Council, to the consultation on the Greater Cambridge Partnership Cambridge South East Transport Better Public Transport Project.	Not applicable	PH (D)	Portfolio Holder for Growth	Susan Glossop Growth 01284 728377	Julie Baird Assistant Director (Growth) 01284 757613 Sara Noonan Principal Growth Officer 01284 757358	All Wards

Expected Decision Date	Subject and Purpose of Decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio Holder Contact Details	Lead Officer Contact Details	Wards Affected	Documents to be submitted
14/01/20	Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document The Cabinet will be asked to adopt a new Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document, which has been subject to consultation.	Not applicable	(D)	Cabinet	Sara Mildmay-White Housing 01359 270580 Susan Glossop Growth 01284 728377	Julie Baird Assistant Director (Growth) 01284 757613	All Wards	Report to Cabinet with new SPD.
14/01/20	West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2020-2024 The Cabinet will be asked to consider the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and recommend to Council the adoption of a new Strategic Framework for West Suffolk Council.	Not applicable	(R) - Council 25/02/20	Cabinet	John Griffiths Leader of the Council 07958700434	Ian Gallin Chief Executive 01284 757001	All Wards	Recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet and Council.
14/01/20	Delivering a Sustainable Budget 2020/2021 Further to its consideration on 26 November 2019, the Cabinet will be asked to consider recommendations of the Performance and	Not applicable	(D)	Cabinet	Sarah Broughton Resources and Performance 07929 305787	Rachael Mann Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	All Wards	Recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet.

Expected Decision Date	Subject and Purpose of Decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio Holder Contact Details	Lead Officer Contact Details	Wards Affected	Documents to be submitted
	Audit Scrutiny Committee for recommending to Council on proposals for achieving a sustainable budget in 2020/2021.							
14/01/20 Page 304	Revenues Collection Performance and Write-Offs The Cabinet will be asked to consider writing-off outstanding debts, as detailed in the exempt appendices.	Exempt Appendices: Paragraphs 1 and 2	(KD)	Cabinet	Sarah Broughton Resources and Performance 07929 305787	Rachael Mann Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	All Wards	Report to Cabinet with exempt appendices.
14/01/20	Treasury Management Report 2019/2020 - Investment Activity (1 April to 30 September 2019) The Cabinets will be asked to consider the recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee and recommend to Council, the approval of the Treasury Management Report 2019-2020 which summarised	Not applicable	(R) - Council 25/02/20	Cabinet	Sarah Broughton Resources and Performance 07929 305787	Rachael Mann Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	All Wards	Recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet and Council.

Expected Decision Date	Subject and Purpose of Decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio Holder Contact Details	Lead Officer Contact Details	Wards Affected	Documents to be submitted
	the investment activity for the period 1 April to 30 September 2019.							
14/01/20 Page 305	Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee The Cabinet will be asked to consider the recommendations of the Anglia and Revenues Benefits Partnership Joint Committee in respect of seeking amendments to its constitutional agreement.	Not applicable	(D)	Cabinet	Sarah Broughton Resources and Performance 07929 305787	Rachael Mann Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	All Wards	Recommendations of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee to Cabinet.
14/01/20	Applications for Community Chest Funding 2020/21 The Cabinet will be asked to consider applications for Community Chest funding for 2020/21 (and beyond in some cases).	Not applicable	(KD) (Those applications for beyond 2020/21 will be subject to the budget setting process.)	Cabinet	Robert Everitt Families and Communities 01284 769000	Davina Howes Assistant Director (Families and Communities) 01284 757070 Lucy Pettitt Service Manager (Families and Communities) 01284 757002	All Wards	Report to Cabinet.

Expected Decision Date	Subject and Purpose of Decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio Holder Contact Details	Lead Officer Contact Details	Wards Affected	Documents to be submitted
14/01/20	<p>West Suffolk Environmental and Climate Change Taskforce - Interim Report</p> <p>The Cabinet will be asked to consider the interim findings and recommendations of the Environment and Climate Change Taskforce, which has been established to ensure that the Council uses the opportunity to review and assess its existing activities and future opportunities in response to increased societal awareness of environmental issues. The Taskforce will explore how the Council can enhance its environmental stewardship, recognising the need for balance with other urgent social and economic priorities.</p>	Not applicable	(D)	Cabinet	John Griffiths Leader of the Council 07958700434,	Jill Korwin Director 01284 757252	All Wards	Report to Cabinet with interim recommendations of the Environment and Climate Change Taskforce.
14/01/20	<p>West Suffolk Rural Taskforce - Final</p>	Not applicable	(D)	Cabinet	John Griffiths Leader of the	David Collinson Assistant Director	All Wards	Report to Cabinet with

Expected Decision Date	Subject and Purpose of Decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio Holder Contact Details	Lead Officer Contact Details	Wards Affected	Documents to be submitted
Page 307	<p>Recommendations The Cabinet will be asked to consider the final report and recommendations of its Rural Taskforce following its work to develop evidence-based options both to directly address challenges facing the rural areas and also to ensure rural considerations are taken into account in future Council processes and decision making.</p>				Council 07958700434	(Planning and Regulatory) 01284 757306		final recommendations of the Rural Taskforce.
14/01/20	<p>Western Way Development: Gateway Review The Cabinet will be asked to consider a gateway review for the Western Way Development project, which was a requirement of the full business case for moving into the procurement phase. This has not however, held up the submission of a planning application.</p>	Exempt Appendix: Paragraph 3	(KD)	Cabinet	Jo Rayner Leisure, Culture and Community Hubs 07872 456836	Alex Wilson Director 01284 757695	All Wards	Report to Cabinet with Exempt Appendix.

Expected Decision Date	Subject and Purpose of Decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio Holder Contact Details	Lead Officer Contact Details	Wards Affected	Documents to be submitted
since publication : This item has been deferred for a decision at a later date)	The Portfolio Holder for Growth will be asked to consider a funding allocation of £25,000 per year for two years to the DMO. The allocation of the second year funding would be subject to receipt of satisfactory outcomes from the first year of funding.					01284 757613 Andrea Mayley Service Manager (Economic Development and Business Growth) 01284 757343		Growth.
14/01/20	Taxi Policy Handbook - Consultation The Portfolio Holder for Regulatory will be asked to make a decision on whether consultation should commence on a new Taxi Handbook for West Suffolk Council.	Not applicable	PH (D)	Portfolio Holder for Regulatory	Andy Drummond Regulatory 01638 666888	David Collinson Assistant Director (Planning and Regulatory)	All Wards	Report to Portfolio Holder for Regulatory.
11/02/20	West Suffolk Local Plan Draft Issues and Options documents - Approval sought for Consultation The Cabinet will be asked to recommend to Council,	Not applicable	(R) - Council 25/02/20	Cabinet	David Roach Local Plan Development and Delivery 07889 510003	Julie Baird Assistant Director (Growth) 01284 757613 Marie Smith Service Manager	All Wards	Report to Cabinet with recommendations to Council.

Expected Decision Date	Subject and Purpose of Decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio Holder Contact Details	Lead Officer Contact Details	Wards Affected	Documents to be submitted
Page 310	approval of draft Issues and Options documents which will assist in the development of the draft West Suffolk Local Plan. Following approval, consultation on the draft documents is expected to commence in spring 2020.					(Planning Strategy) 01638 719260		
11/02/20	Delivering a Sustainable Budget 2020/2021 Further to its consideration on previous occasions, the Cabinet will be asked to consider recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee for recommending to Council on proposals for achieving a sustainable budget in 2020/2021.	Not applicable	(D)	Cabinet	Sarah Broughton Resources and Performance 07929 305787	Rachael Mann Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	All Wards	Report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet.
11/02/20	Budget and Council Tax Setting 2020/2021 and Medium Term Financial Strategy The Cabinet will be asked to consider the proposals	Not applicable	(R) - Council 25/02/20	Cabinet	Sarah Broughton Resources and Performance 07929 305787	Rachael Mann Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	All Wards	Report to Cabinet with recommendations to Council.

Expected Decision Date	Subject and Purpose of Decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio Holder Contact Details	Lead Officer Contact Details	Wards Affected	Documents to be submitted
	for the 2020/2021 budget (and beyond) and Medium Term Financial Strategy for West Suffolk Council, prior to its approval by Council. This report includes the Minimum Revenues Provision (MRP) Policy and Prudential Indicators.							
11/02/20	Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2020/2021 and Treasury Management Code of Practice The Cabinet will be asked to recommend to Council, approval of the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2020/2021 and Treasury Management Code of Practice for West Suffolk Council, which must be undertaken before the start of each financial year.	Not applicable	(R) - Council 25/02/20	Cabinet	Sarah Broughton Resources and Performance 07929 305787	Rachael Mann Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	All Wards	Report to Cabinet with recommendations to Council.

Expected Decision Date	Subject and Purpose of Decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio Holder Contact Details	Lead Officer Contact Details	Wards Affected	Documents to be submitted
11/02/20	Revenues Collection Performance and Write-Offs The Cabinet will be asked to consider writing-off outstanding debts, as detailed in the exempt appendices.	Exempt Appendices: Paragraphs 1 and 2	(KD)	Cabinet	Sarah Broughton Resources and Performance 07929 305787	Rachael Mann Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	All Wards	Report to Cabinet with exempt appendices.
11/02/20	Investing in our Commercial Asset Portfolio The Cabinet will be asked to consider the acquisition of property for adding to its commercial asset portfolio.	Paragraph 3	(KD)	Cabinet	Councillor Susan Glossop, Portfolio Holder for Growth, Councillor Sara Mildmay-White, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing	Julie Baird, Davina Howes Assistant Director - Growth, Assistant Director (Families and Communities) Tel: 01284 757070	All Wards	Exempt Report to Cabinet.
24/03/20	Treasury Management Report 2019/2020 - Investment Activity (1 April to 31 December 2019) The Cabinets will be asked to consider the recommendations of the Performance and Audit	Not applicable	(R) - Council 31/03/20	Cabinet	Sarah Broughton Resources and Performance 07929 305787	Rachael Mann Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	All Wards	Recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet and Council.

Expected Decision Date	Subject and Purpose of Decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio Holder Contact Details	Lead Officer Contact Details	Wards Affected	Documents to be submitted
	Scrutiny Committee and recommend to Council, the approval of the Treasury Management Report 2019-2020 which summarised the investment activity for the period 1 April to 31 December 2019.							
24/03/20 Page 313	West Suffolk Pay Policy Statement 2020/2021 The Cabinet will be asked to recommend to Council approval of the Pay Policy Statement for 2020/2021, together with the Gender Pay Gap Report contained within it.	Not applicable	(R) - Council 31/03/20	Cabinet	Carol Bull Governance 07764 72419	Wendy Canham Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development) 01284 757006	All Wards	Report to Cabinet with recommendations to Council.
Date to be confirmed	Newmarket Cinema and Restaurant Development Following approval of the outline business case in March 2019, the Cabinet will be asked to consider recommending to Council, approval of the full Business Case for the	Exempt Appendices: Paragraph 3	(R) - Council - Date to be confirmed	Cabinet	Susan Glossop Growth 01284 728377	Jill Korwin Director 01284 757252	All Wards	Report to Cabinet and Council with the possibility of Exempt Appendices.

Expected Decision Date	Subject and Purpose of Decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision Taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio Holder Contact Details	Lead Officer Contact Details	Wards Affected	Documents to be submitted
	proposed Newmarket Cinema and Restaurant Development.							

NOTE 1: DEFINITIONS OF EXEMPT INFORMATION: RELEVANT PARAGRAPHS

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

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

PART 1

DESCRIPTIONS OF EXEMPT INFORMATION: ENGLAND

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

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

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

NOTE 2: KEY DECISION DEFINITION

A key decision is an executive decision that either:

- (a) Results in new expenditure, or a reduced income or savings of more than £100k in any one year that has not otherwise been included in the Council's revenue or capital budgets.
- (b) Comprises or includes the making, approval or publication of a draft or final scheme, which is not a routine business decision, that may require, either directly or in the event of objections, the approval of a Minister of the Crown.
- (c) Results in the formation of a new company, limited liability partnership or joint venture.
- (d) Has a potentially detrimental impact on communities outside of West Suffolk District.
- (e) Is a decision that is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in a definable local community in the District, or on one or more wards, in that it will:
 - (i) Have a long-term, lasting impact on that community; or
 - (ii) Restrict the ability of individual businesses or residents in that area to undertake particular activities; or
 - (iii) Removes the provision of a service or facility for that community; or
 - (iv) Increases the charges payable by members of the community to provide a service or facility by more than 5%; or
 - (v) Have the potential to create significant local controversy or reputational damage to the Council
- (f) A matter that the decision maker considers to be a key decision.
- (g) Any matters that fall under the scope of e) above must be subject to consultation with the local Member(s) in Wards that are likely to be impacted by the decision prior to the decision being made.

NOTE 3: MEMBERSHIP OF BODIES MAKING KEY DECISIONS

(a) Membership of West Suffolk Council's Cabinet and their Portfolios

Cabinet Member	Portfolio
John Griffiths Sara Mildmay-White	Leader of the Council Deputy Leader of the Council/ Housing
Sarah Broughton	Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance
Carol Bull	Portfolio Holder for Governance
Andy Drummond	Portfolio Holder for Regulatory
Robert Everitt	Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities
Susan Glossop	Portfolio Holder for Growth
Jo Rayner	Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Community Hubs
David Roach	Portfolio Holder for Local Plan Development and Delivery
Peter Stevens	Portfolio Holder for Operations

(b) **Membership of the Anglia Revenues Partnership Joint Committee (Breckland Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, East Suffolk Council, Fenland District Council and West Suffolk Council)**

Full Breckland Cabinet Member	Full East Cambridgeshire District Council Cabinet Member	Full East Suffolk Council Cabinet Member	Full Fenland District Council Cabinet Member	Full West Suffolk Council Cabinet Member
Philip Cowen	David Ambrose-Smith	Steve Gallant	Jan French	Sarah Broughton
Substitute Breckland Cabinet Members	Substitute East Cambridgeshire District Council Cabinet Members	Substitute East Suffolk Council Cabinet Members	Substitute Fenland District Council Cabinet Members	Substitute West Suffolk Council Cabinet Members
Sam Chapman-Allen	David Brown	To be confirmed	David Connor	Sara Mildmay-White
Paul Claussen	Joshua Schumann	To be confirmed	Kim French	To be confirmed



Revenues Collection Performance and Write Offs

Report No:	CAB/WS/20/012	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	14 January 2020
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Sarah Broughton Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance Tel: 07929 305787 Email: sarah.broughton@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Rachael Mann Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) Tel: 01638 719245 Email: rachael.mann@westsuffolk.gov.uk	

Decisions Plan: The decisions made as a result of this report will usually be published within 48 hours and cannot be actioned until five clear working days of the publication of the decision have elapsed. This item is a Key Decision and is included on the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: All wards

Recommendations: **The write-off of the amounts detailed in the Exempt Appendices to Report No: CAB/WS/20/012, be approved, as follows:**

- (1) **Exempt Appendix 1: Council Tax totalling £11,778.83**
- (2) **Exempt Appendix 2: Business Rates totalling £289,654.00**

1. Background / Context

- 1.1 The Revenues Section collects outstanding debts in accordance with either statutory guidelines or Council agreed procedures.
- 1.2 When all these procedures have been exhausted the outstanding debt is written off using the delegated authority of the Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) for debts up to £4,999.99 or by Cabinet for debts over £5,000.00.
- 1.3 It is best practice to monitor the recovery procedures for outstanding debts regularly and, when appropriate, write off irrecoverable debts.
- 1.4 Provision for irrecoverable debts is included both in the Collection Fund and the General Fund and writing off debts that are known to be irrecoverable ensures that staff are focussed on achieving good collection levels in respect of the recoverable debt.

As at 30 November 2019 the percentage of debt written off during 2019/20 for all previous years is 2.13%. The percentage of write offs made during 2019/20 for 2019/20 is 0.02%.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 To review the current revenue collection performance and to consider writing off outstanding debts, as detailed in the Exempt Appendices 1 and 2.
- 2.2 Provision is made in the accounts for non-recovery, as set out in paragraph 1.4, but the total amounts to be written off are as follows **Council Tax £11,778.83 and Business Rates £289,654.00** with full details shown in Exempt Appendices 1 and 2.
- 2.3 As at 1 April 2019, the total National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) billed by Anglia Revenues Partnership on behalf of West Suffolk Council (as the billing Authority) is £76m per annum. The collection rate as at 30 November 2019 was 73.49% against a profiled target of 73.68%.
- 2.4 As at 1 April 2019, the total Council Tax billed by Anglia Revenues Partnership on behalf of West Suffolk Council (includes the County, Police and Parish precept elements) is £98m per annum. The collection rate as at 30 November 2019 was 74.65% against a profiled target of 75.34%.

3. Alternative options

- 3.1 The Council currently uses the services of the ARP Enforcement Agency to assist in the collection of business rates and Council Tax and also has online tracing facilities. It is not considered appropriate to pass the debts on to another agency.
- 3.2 It should be noted that in the event that a written-off debt becomes recoverable, the amount is written back on, and enforcement procedures are re-established. This might happen, for example, if someone has gone away

with no trace, and then they are unexpectedly 'found' again, through whatever route.

4. Consultation and engagement

- 4.1 Leadership Team and the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance have been consulted with on the proposed write-offs.

5. Risks and implications arising from the proposal

5.1 Financial

Low risk - Debts are written off which could have been collected
Control - Extensive recovery procedures are in place to ensure that all possible mechanisms are exhausted before a debt is written off.

5.2 Legal Compliance

The recovery procedures followed have been previously agreed; writing off uncollectable debt allows staff to focus recovery action on debt which is recoverable.

5.3 Personal Data Processing

There are no changes to the way we process personal data.

5.4 Equalities

The application of predetermined recovery procedures ensures that everybody is treated consistently. Failure to collect any debt impacts on either the levels of service provision or the levels of charges. All available remedies are used to recover the debt before write-off is considered. The provision of services by the Council applies to everyone in the area.

5.5 Other

No significant implications as a result of this report on crime and disorder; environmental or sustainability; HR / staffing; changes to existing policy; or impact on other organisations (e.g. community groups, businesses, partner organisations).

6. Appendices

Exempt Appendix 1 - Council Tax
Exempt Appendix 2 - Business Rates (NDR)

7. Background documents

None

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Western Way Development, Bury St Edmunds

Report No:	CAB/WS/20/013	
Report to and date/s:	Cabinet	14 January 2020
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Joanna Rayner Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture & Community Hubs Tel: 01284 750366 Email: joanna.rayner@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Alex Wilson Director Tel: 01284 757695 Email: alex.wilson@westsuffolk.gov.uk	

Decisions Plan: The decisions made as a result of this report will usually be published within 48 hours and cannot be actioned until five clear working days of the publication of the decision have elapsed. This item is a Key Decision and is included on the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: All wards

Recommendations: It is recommended that:

- 1. subject to resolution 2. below, the external assurance review for the Western Way Development carried out between November and December 2019 be deemed to be satisfactory in terms of progression of the project on the basis approved by Council on 19 September 2019;**
- 2. the action plan set out in Appendix 1 to Report No: CAB/WS/20/013 address the key findings of the review be approved and implemented;**
- 3. subject to resolution 2. above and the existing conditions approved by Council on 19 September 2019 being met, the Director be authorised to:**
 - a. adjust the final phase 1 scheme for a replacement leisure centre, the new public service hub and their supporting infrastructure in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and the Council's Section 151 Officer so that it continues to meet the objectives set out in the Final Business Case; and**
 - b. commence procurement work for the parts of this phase 1 scheme in respect of which the necessary safeguards to the Council are in place; and**
- 4. subject to planning consent being secured, the final award of contract(s) prior to works starting on site be subject to approval by Cabinet.**

1. Background / Context



Visualisation – Western Way frontage



- 1.1 In September 2019 the final business case for the Western Way Development (WWD) was unanimously approved by Council. There were two central decisions taken by the Council at that time.
- 1.2 Firstly, the Council, as landowner, agreed to seek planning consent on a scheme which would deliver the aspirations of the approved masterplan to its fullest extent. This application has now been submitted. At the time of writing this report, the application is still subject to consultation and determination by the Local Planning Authority in 2020. As such, it is not appropriate or intended to discuss the planning merits of the project in this report or at this meeting.
- 1.3 Secondly, also in its capacity of prospective developer for Western Way, the Council agreed to progress the delivery of the project subject to certain tests and conditions being met (in addition to achieving planning consent).
- 1.4 Under the terms of that Council decision, Cabinet is now authorised to deliver the project described in the final business case, and seek external funding, without reference back to Council provided that:
 1. before any work commences on tendering:
 - a. the project will have undergone an assurance ('gateway') review by an independent external expert;
 - b. any public sector partners wishing to take part in phase 1 of the project will have entered into formal agreements to confirm the basis on which they will occupy the WWD and to

indemnify the Council for their share of its abortive costs if they subsequently withdraw or substantially reduce their requirements; and

c. taking into account a. and b. above, the Cabinet will have adjusted the final phase 1 scheme so that it continues to meet the objectives set out in the Final Business Case;

2. various financial tests are met, namely:

a. the Council's capital expenditure being capped at the agreed maximum amounts (£112 million for the new hub element and £27.9m for the leisure centre);

b. the hub element being capable of achieving at least a break-even position over the whole life of the project;

c. the cash flow risk being managed; and

3. the most beneficial and economic funding method for the project is identified, including entering into agreements with third-party investors if required.

1.5 Since September 2019, the following steps have been taken to ensure the project can remain on track if planning consent is achieved:

a. Property and development specialists, Rider Levett Bucknall UK Limited (RLB), were appointed by competitive tender (assessing price and quality) to carry out the external assurance review. RLB are a global and independent organisation in cost management and quantity surveying, project management and advisory services. They have worked with numerous governments and other stakeholders of major public and civic projects, and have a clear understanding of the processes, regulations and requirements to ensure project success.

b. Further discussions have been held with potential partners, occupiers and funders.

c. Further work has taken place to refine the financial model and to consider the internal layout of the scheme so that it reflects the feedback received the pre-application consultation and the latest requirements of potential occupiers (*N.B. this work does not affect determination of the planning consent*).

1.6 This report updates Cabinet on these three areas of work.

2. Project update and proposals

External assurance review

2.1 Council agreed in September 2019 that a focused piece of assurance work should be carried out for the WWD project before moving to any tendering

stage. The brief for the appointed consultants, RLB, was therefore to cover the following aspects of the project where the risks were perceived to be highest at the final business case stage:

- a. Council's likely role as developer;
- b. project risks and governance;
- c. likely phasing of the proposed scheme;
- d. latest position regarding external funding;
- e. Council's likely approach to borrowing;
- f. Council's likely approach to the management of cash flow risk; and
- g. whether, as a result of the above, the final Council budget is likely to be within the limits approved under the final business case.

2.2 As well as drawing on the experience of RLB themselves, particularly in relation to NHS linked projects, the review involved a desk-top review of all the relevant project documentation supplemented by interviews with the project team and with a representative group of key internal and external stakeholders.

2.3 Having concluded their review in December 2019, the report of RLB is provided for councillors only as an exempt appendix to this report (Appendix 2). It is exempt because it not only contains information about the financial and operational interests of third parties (given in confidence) but also because it identifies the potential negotiating position of the Council in future contractual matters, which could compromise the financial interests of the taxpayer. As such, the full report is a commercially sensitive document. Nonetheless, to ensure full transparency, its findings can be shared in this covering report below.

2.4 RLB's overall conclusion for their review was:

"The review has not identified any reasons to cease the project or to reduce the rate of progress. A number of recommendations are made....These can be addressed as the project progresses, however progress in their implementation should be monitored and if they are unable to be adequately progressed the impact on the project and its speed of implementation should be reviewed."

2.5 Appendix 1 to this report contains the full and verbatim recommendations received from RLB. These are provided in the form of an action plan to ensure each recommendation is acted upon and monitored as suggested by RLB.

2.6 In addition, RLB's main findings can also be very briefly summarised as follows. Where appropriate the required mitigation for these issues is included in the action plan set out in Appendix 1:

- Given its scale, the WWD is an innovative development with clear strategic benefits and, given those potential benefits, enjoys broad based support locally, regionally and nationally from within the Council and among key partners.

- The bringing together of several public sector bodies with different capital and revenue funding arrangements and widely varying governance requirements will be challenging.
- The governance of the project is appropriate to the size and scale of the project and partner organisations are engaged at senior levels.
- There are likely to be significant community and environmental benefits to re-using the steel frame and concrete slab of the existing building.
- The Programme and Phasing strategy are realistic. However, the scale of the building might need to be reviewed if there is a significant reduction in the requirements of key partners in the project.
- Delivery of the proposed travel plan will require strong leadership from the Council as well as buy-in from partners.
- The costs of the project are realistic, albeit at the lower end of normal ranges. RLB have therefore made recommendations about the treatment of the project contingency and how to manage the initial cashflow of the project.
- The Council is undertaking a project that is of a larger scale and ambition than it has previously delivered. The scale of the risk is commensurate. Although the understanding of these risks is generally good, the Council should: actively manage these defined risks; prepare contingency plans; and also quantify the wider socio-economic benefits which are the main reason the project is being pursued.
- There are no obvious alternatives to Public Works Loans Board funding at the current time. As such, there is no option which appears to offer a reduced financial risk to West Suffolk Council other than increased capital contributions from partners or grant funding.

2.7 As can be seen, many of the points raised through the review serve to reinforce the importance of the tests and safeguards that have already been put in place for the project (see section 1.4 above). However, some new risks are also identified. Therefore, through the RLB report, the Council is able to refine its risk appraisal of the project before taking the next steps.

Next steps for project delivery

2.8 As set out in section 1 of this report, RLB's review is only one of the tests that Council put in place in September 2019 to act as a gateway to the next stage of the project. Those other tests still have to be passed. Not least gaining the formal commitment of partners before further design work takes place; the importance of which is also reinforced by the RLB report.

- 2.9 However, there were also other gateway tests to pass in respect of the project finances. The RLB review and the resulting action plan will assist with this, and the wider mitigation of project risks.
- 2.10 Subject to implementation of the RLB recommendations, it is therefore concluded that the outcome of their external assurance review is satisfactory and that there is no reason to change the existing delegated authorities and safeguards put in place for the project by Council in September 2019.

Further discussions with partners and funders

- 2.11 The external assurance review included interviews with some of the partners and this is summarised in exempt Appendix 2.
- 2.12 As previously mentioned, the phase 1 space requirement of partners, and their ability to indemnify the Council for any abortive costs, remain a condition for their involvement in the next stage of the project. A draft partnership agreement was sent to all partners for consideration in November. This will be followed up with individual and collective discussions with partners. Given the financial risk to the Council in its developer role, if partners are unable to provide assurances in January 2020 the project will either have to proceed without their elements in phase 1, or will be delayed overall, as per the September 2019 Council decision and delegated authority to Cabinet.
- 2.13 As reported in September 2019, the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) is very supportive of the project but, until there is clarity on the next Comprehensive Spending Review from central government, it is not expected to be possible to establish whether and how the Council might be able to bid for direct LEP funding.
- 2.14 Informal conversations have also been held with a small number of prospective commercial partners. These have indicated some potential interest in the project. However, it is too early in the project for commercial organisations to commit and the plan is still only to start formal marketing if the planning process is successfully concluded. Nonetheless, this does reinforce the findings of the market appraisal report produced for the Council at the final business case stage.

Likely evolution of internal design and layout

- 2.15 Further discussions with partners have clarified their likely requirements in terms of the potential internal layout of the hub building and also what multi-purpose shared facilities might be part of it. This information complements the excellent feedback received from the community and staff in the pre-application consultation.
- 2.16 Clearly, the internal building design will continue to evolve as requirements and phasing become clearer. However, it is already evident that:
- a. there is greater scope to blend the health, advice and leisure facilities to maximise service outcomes and reduce running costs;

- b. there is greater scope to make use of the public access facilities in West Suffolk House as part of the overall strategy for providing integrated advice services on the site as a whole. As such, a greater allowance may be made for minor adaptations to the ground floor of West Suffolk House in the project budget (but staying within the existing approved budget limits);
- c. the proportion of central areas of the new Hub which will have public access during normal working hours can potentially be increased, allowing even more flexibility in how the operational facilities on the ground floor are configured.

3. Alternative options

- 3.1 These are pre-approved steps to deliver the project and each piece of work includes an options appraisal where required.

4. Consultation and engagement

- 4.1 The future development of the project will be informed by earlier and ongoing consultations with the public, key stakeholders and partners, as detailed in this and previous reports, and reflecting the action plan to address RLB's recommendations.

5. Risks

- 5.1 The purpose of the external gateway review was to examine key project risks. The main project risks remain those which were detailed in the Final Business Case and a project risk register will form part of the ongoing project governance. A risk appraisal is also provided in this report for the action plan in relation to the assurance review.

6. Implications arising from the proposal

- 6.1 Most relevant implications are already covered in this report or the outline and final business case reports where applicable. However, it is worth clarifying that this report, and the recommendations within it, do not change the project's financial implications or delegated authorities which were approved by Council in September 2019. If they did need to be changed, the project would be referred back to Council.

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix 1 - Action Plan for WWD Assurance Review
Exempt Appendix 2 - External Assurance Review by RLB

8. Background documents

- 8.1 [Final Business Case for WWD, September 2019](#)
[Outline Business Case for WWD, October 2018](#)

Appendix 1

External Assurance Review, Western Way Development – Recommendations and Action Plan

	Consultant's (i.e. Rider Levett Bucknall) Recommendation	Council's Assessment of Inherent Risk	Council's Response to Consultant's Recommendation	Action Required	Council's Assessment of Residual Risk	Timing
1	A revised financial model should be created for internal use only with greater visibility of wider cost inputs to allow a variety of scenarios to be tested. This would be separate to the existing financial model within the FBC.	Medium	Agreed. The model produced for the business case was designed for that stage of the project only. It is agreed that a different financial model should now be produced to assist the Council in its specific developer role, and in determining if the financial tests set by Council can be met. However, this model will not change the existing financial parameters set by Council for the project.	Produce developer financial model to support next stages of project.	Low	Jan 2020
2	There are no obvious alternative funding sources [to a PWLB loan] for the development and, as the risk of funding a negative cashflow position remains the greatest challenge to the long-term success of the project, it is recommended that alternative capital input routes continue to be explored. The option for partners to undertake a "land-for-equity" swap may be an option, as might their disposal of their sites with capital receipts ploughed into the development.	Low	Agreed. PWLB is still likely to be cheapest form of finance, but officers will continue to explore alternative capital sources, as per the Council decision in September 2019. It is already identified in the business case that partners could invest capital directly or seek asset 'swaps', and the MOUs with partners already require this to be examined under normal OPE principles where applicable. The Council has always had a strong preference for partners to invest their own capital.	Continue to explore alternative funding sources in the market and with partner organisations, in accordance with the adopted financial principles in the business case.	Low	Ongoing but to be clarified no later than award of final contract
3	The LEP indicated a willingness in principle to consider applications to support the development. If they could provide a level of support that reduced or removed the negative position or were able to underwrite any shortfall in the balance of repayments of the loan, that would remove the greatest risk to WSC on this project.	High	Agreed. It is unlikely that the Council will be able to pursue this course of action until there is greater clarity for the LEPs on the outcome of the next CSR.	Continue dialogue with LEP(s).	High	Ongoing but to be clarified no later than award of final contract
4	The main benefits of undertaking this project are set out in the Strategic Business Case. These are not significantly reviewed in the FBC nor has an attempt been made to quantify them. Consideration should be given to undertaking a Socio-Economic impact assessment to quantify the benefit to WSC and partners and the community they serve in undertaking this project.	Medium	Agreed. The Outline Business Case provided analysis of where these benefits would be found, and this was an integral part of the decision to proceed. However, it is correct that, other than some work on leisure outcomes, these impacts were not quantified as the aim in the Final Business case was for the project to stack up in terms of direct income and savings only. However, it was always expected that such analysis would be needed for external funding bids, particularly to the LEPs, and the Suffolk Office of Data & Analytics (SODA) may be able to assist in gathering relevant data.	Work with partners to develop a socio-economic impact assessment prior to any external funding bids being made, and commission support to do this from within existing budgets if necessary.	Low	April 2020 and then ongoing as required by funding bids
5	The process and timescales for obtaining approval for the relocation of NHS services should be investigated with partners together with developing an	High	Agreed. This is already a requirement of the Council's FBC approval and a pre-condition for starting any work on tender packs. Having funded specialist input to the	Obtain clarity on NHS processes	Medium	Jan 2020

	Consultant's (i.e. Rider Levett Bucknall) Recommendation	Council's Assessment of Inherent Risk	Council's Response to Consultant's Recommendation	Action Required	Council's Assessment of Residual Risk	Timing
	understanding of any interfaces or restrictions on their ability to enter into lease arrangements during the consultation process. This should be combined with confirming the current level of involvement and support from regional NHS England office.		project to date, the NHS continues to lead the making of its own business cases to participate in the project. NHS partners are aware of the project timetable and are liaising closely with the Council.			
6	Commitment from partners to underwrite the design development costs of the areas they intend to occupy should be obtained by WSC prior to commissioning the next phase of work to avoid the risk of WSC being liable for abortive design fees in the event the leases are not taken up.	High	Agreed. This is already a requirement of the Council's FBC approval and a pre-condition for starting any work on tender packs. Work has already started with the partners to provide this clarity (see other sections of this report).	Obtain sign-up of public partners in respect of their phase 1 requirements and meeting abortive costs before work proceeds on tender packs, in accordance with existing Council authority.	High	Jan 2020
7	The project contingency is at the lower end of what would typically be expected at this stage of a project. This would normally be in the range of 5-20%. It is recommended that the contingency levels are reviewed.	Medium	Agreed. The cost plan currently has a 9% contingency plus other risks built into the estimates for certain packages. How these existing contingencies are presented in the financial model will be looked at. However, it is agreed that there is also a need for the Council to review the contingencies and safeguards that are already built into the existing model and then increase them if necessary, before proceeding to the next stage. In doing so, there would be no intention to increase the overall capital budget, but to find a way to accommodate this within the existing sum e.g. by making further Value Engineering (VE) savings.	Carry out a review of contingencies to incorporate in the new developer financial model but within the existing project budget.	Low	Jan 2020
8	It is normal for a developer to hold a developer's contingency of 5-10%, outside of the project contingency. It is recommended that this is reviewed at the same time as the overall project contingency.	Medium	Agreed. Such a contingency would be for addressing change to the scope or strategy for the project, or to allow the developer to adapt to revenue risks or opportunities. It is understood why a commercial developer would normally want to hold such a contingency. However, as a public body, the Council wouldn't normally create such a developer contingency because it is using public funds and doing so would have an opportunity cost. The Council also has access to general reserves and has an annual budget setting process, with flexibility to make in-year changes. Therefore, if the Council wanted to adapt the scope or strategy for the WWD project agreed by Council it would	Review the available mechanisms for coping with the need for additional capital or revenue in the project.	Low	Jan 2020

	Consultant's (i.e. Rider Levett Bucknall) Recommendation	Council's Assessment of Inherent Risk	Council's Response to Consultant's Recommendation	Action Required	Council's Assessment of Residual Risk	Timing
			need to go back to Council with a revised business case and seek approval accordingly. Nonetheless, it is agreed that it would be useful to review the available mechanisms for coping with the need for additional capital or revenue in the project, as part of the ensuring that the necessary project governance and contingencies are in place before delivery begins.			
9	Alternative uses for large volume spaces should continue to be pursued. The opportunities of having the College, leisure centre and potential employers in close proximity to each other should provide some opportunities. Pop-up uses around community events, training and performance are all potential options.	Medium	Agreed. Irrespective of the phasing strategy eventually adopted, seeking temporary uses of spaces awaiting a long-term tenant makes eminent sense, as this will not only assist in meeting holding costs and/or managing cash-flow risk but also create community benefit. Permanent alternative uses of spaces should also be considered in case partner requirements are significantly reduced e.g. NHS clinical space.	Incorporate planning for temporary uses into the next stage of design and wider project development and marketing.	Medium	Feb 2020 (or at time of starting work on tender packs whichever is the later)
10	Greater use of the option of deferring the Cat-A fit-out and constructing to shell and core only should be considered to defer capital spend, reduce risk and waste. This could be undertaken later as part of a landlord's contribution to the tenant fit-out.	High	Agreed. A significant proportion of the office accommodation was already modelled to a shell and core level only in September 2019 for the Final Business Case as a way to mitigate the cash-flow for the project. However, it is fully agreed that extending this approach further, particularly to ground floor operational areas, should be looked at before the phase 1 scheme is determined. This potential flexibility in the adopted design was a key part of the FBC strategy and Pick Everard have already been asked to consider how this financial remodelling might be quickly undertaken if needed.	Consider increasing the proportion of the lettable space initially fitted to shell and core only depending on final phase 1 requirements.	Medium	Feb 2020 (or at time of starting work on tender packs whichever is the later)
11	The option of a reduced size build should be considered and costed to inform decision making. Reducing the building size by a third will not reduce the total project cost by a third, but the implications need to be understood so they can be properly evaluated and the impact on the borrowing and repayment levels understood.	High	Agreed. All fall-back options to the FBC scheme should be identified if and when this becomes applicable to a decision on the phase 1 scheme. This potential flexibility in the adopted design was a key part of the FBC strategy and Pick Everard have already been asked to consider how this financial remodelling might be quickly undertaken if needed. However, at the current time, it is important to obtain planning consent for the maximum potential extent of the scheme and to retain this as the target model until partner requirements for phase 1 are clarified.	If partner requirements for phase 1 significantly change, model fall-back options to the existing FBC proposals to inform decision-making.	Medium	Feb 2020 (or at time of starting work on tender packs whichever is the later)

	Consultant's (i.e. Rider Levett Bucknall) Recommendation	Council's Assessment of Inherent Risk	Council's Response to Consultant's Recommendation	Action Required	Council's Assessment of Residual Risk	Timing
12	Interest in pre-let office space is likely to increase once planning permission for the development is secured and it is recommended that further market engagement is undertaken if the permission is granted to attempt to secure a pre-let.	High	Agreed. Already planned, with the use of internal and appropriate external resources. Informal discussions will also continue to be held in the meantime.	Develop and implement a marketing plan as part of delivery of phase 1 of the scheme.	Medium	April 2020 (or after planning consent whichever is the later)
13	The current contractor procurement strategy is based on partnership working and avoiding the contractor overpricing risk. If cost certainty is important then alternative procurement options could be considered.	High	Agreed. Before any formal procurement starts, the form of tendering and/or contract will be reviewed with the professional team and framework provider to ensure that the option chosen reflects the circumstances of the project at that time, and has the best chance of delivering the financial outcomes required by the Council in adopting the FBC.	Review choice of procurement method before commencing this work.	Medium	Feb 2020
14	For the construction phase of the project consideration should be given to the project team structure. There should be clear separation of roles between the client and contractor. Conflicts of interest should be avoided with clear lines of accountability and formal roles and responsibilities. The consolidation of the project and cost management roles would be expected to result in significant economies of scales and efficiencies if the same company undertook the contract administration function. It is recommended that WSC engages and retains their own design and quality inspection teams, to challenge and hold to account the design and construction teams engaged by the contractor. These should be separate appointments and any overlaps are likely to cause a conflict of interest.	Medium	Agreed. Nothing to add.	Build advice into the procurement and appointment of the professional team for the next stage of the project	Low	Jan 2020
15	It is recommended that confirmatory approval is sought at the appropriate level of governance within the Council to proceed with the project once the procurement of a contractor has resulted in a preferred bidder being selected and final costs are understood. This should precede entering into the contract and securing the loan.	Low	Agreed. This is a sensible final stage of assurance and political oversight before taking the final decision to proceed and will give the Council greater cost certainty in the light of full market testing.	Build Cabinet approval into the project programme.	Low	Before award of final contract (likely to be late 2020 at the earliest)

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