


Council



Title	Agenda
Date	Tuesday 21 February 2023
Time	7.00 pm
Venue	Conference Chamber West Suffolk House Western Way Bury St Edmunds
Membership	<p>All Councillors</p> <p>You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council to transact the business on the agenda set out below.</p>  <p>Ian Gallin Chief Executive 13 February 2023</p>
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	One third of the Council (22 members)
Committee administrator	<p>Claire Skoyles Democratic Services Officer Telephone 01284 757176 Email democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk</p>

Venue	Conference Chamber, West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds
Contact information	Telephone: 01284 757176 Email: democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk Website: www.westsuffolk.gov.uk
Access to agenda and reports before the meeting	The agenda and reports will be available to view at least five clear days before the meeting on our website.
Attendance at meetings	<p>This meeting is being held in person in order to comply with the Local Government Act 1972. We may be required to restrict the number of members of the public able to attend in accordance with the room capacity. If you consider it is necessary for you to attend, please inform Democratic Services in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>As a local authority, we have a corporate and social responsibility for the safety of our staff, our councillors and visiting members of the public. We therefore request that you exercise personal responsibility and do not attend the meeting if you feel at all unwell.</p> <p>West Suffolk Council continues to promote good hygiene practices with hand sanitiser and wipes being available in the meeting room. Attendees are also able to wear face coverings, should they wish to.</p>
Public participation	<p>Members of the public who live or work in the district may put questions about the work of the Council or make statements on items on the agenda to members of the Cabinet or any committee. A total of 30 minutes will be set aside for this with each person limited to asking one question or making one statement within a maximum time allocation of five minutes. 30 minutes will also be set aside for questions at extraordinary meetings of the Council, but must be limited to the business to be transacted at that meeting.</p> <p>The Constitution allows that a person who wishes to speak must register at least 15 minutes before the time the meeting is scheduled to start. We urge anyone who wishes to register to speak to notify Democratic Services by 9am on the day of the meeting so that advice can be given on the arrangements in place.</p>
Accessibility	If you have any difficulties in accessing the meeting, the agenda and accompanying reports, including for reasons of a disability or a protected characteristic, please contact

	Democratic Services at the earliest opportunity using the contact details provided above in order that we may assist you.
Recording of meetings	<p>The Council may record this meeting and permits members of the public and media to record or broadcast it as well (when the media and public are not lawfully excluded).</p> <p>Any member of the public who attends a meeting and objects to being filmed should advise the Committee Administrator who will instruct that they are not included in the filming.</p>
Personal information	<p>Any personal information processed by West Suffolk Council arising from a request to speak at a public meeting under the Localism Act 2011, will be protected in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. For more information on how we do this and your rights in regards to your personal information and how to access it, visit our website: https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Data_and_information/howweuseinformation.cfm or call Customer Services: 01284 763233 and ask to speak to the Information Governance Officer.</p>

Agenda

Procedural matters

	Pages
1. Minutes	1 - 22
To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2022 (copy attached).	
2. Chair's announcements	23 - 24
To receive announcements (if any) from the Chair.	
A list of civic events/engagements attended by the Chair and Vice-Chair since the last ordinary meeting of Council held on 13 December 2022 are attached .	
3. Apologies for absence	
To receive announcements (if any) from the officer advising the Chair (including apologies for absence).	
4. Declarations of interests	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any pecuniary or local non pecuniary interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when that item is reached and, when appropriate, to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on the item.	

Part 1 – public

5. Leader's statement	25 - 26
Paper number: COU/WS/23/001 attached. On this occasion, an additional document 'West Suffolk – The Story So Far' will be circulated to members separately by email and will be published alongside the Leader's Statement here prior to the meeting.	
Council Procedure Rules 8.1 to 8.3. The Leader will submit a report (the Leader's Statement) summarising important developments and activities since the preceding meeting of the council.	
Members may ask the Leader questions on the content of both his introductory remarks and the written statement itself.	
A total of 30 minutes will be allowed for questions and responses. There will be a limit of five minutes for each question to be asked and answered. A supplementary question arising from the reply may be asked so long as the five minute limit is not exceeded.	

6. Public participation

Council Procedure Rules Section 6. Members of the public who live or work in the district may put questions about the work of the council or make statements on items on the agenda to members of the Cabinet or any committee.

(Note: The maximum time to be set aside for this item is 30 minutes, but if all questions/statements are dealt with sooner, or if there are no questions/statements, the Council will proceed to the next business.)

Each person may ask **one** question or make **one** statement only. A total of **five minutes will be allowed for the question to be put and answered or the statement made.** If a question is raised, one supplementary question will be allowed provided that it **arises directly from the reply and the overall time limit of five minutes is not exceeded.**

If a statement is made, then the Chair may allow the Leader of the Council, or other member to whom they refer the matter, a right of reply.

The Constitution allows that a person who wishes to speak must register at least 15 minutes before the time the meeting is scheduled to start. **We urge anyone who wishes to register to speak to notify Democratic Services by 9am on the day of the meeting so that advice can be given on the arrangements in place.**

As an alternative to addressing the meeting in person, **written questions** may be submitted by members of the public to the Monitoring Officer **no later than 10am on Monday 20 February 2023.** The written notification should **detail the full question** to be asked at the meeting of the Council.

7. Referrals report of recommendations from Cabinet

27 - 30

Report number: **COU/WS/23/002**

A. Referrals from Cabinet: 7 February 2023

1. Treasury management report (December 2022)

Portfolio holder: Councillor Sarah Broughton

2. Treasury Management Strategy 2023 to 2024 and Code of Practice

Portfolio holder: Councillor Sarah Broughton

3. Budget and Council Tax setting 2023 to 2024 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023 to 2027

Portfolio holder: Councillor Sarah Broughton

(The recommendations emanating from this item, together with Cabinet's approval of the recommendation contained in Report number: CAB/WS/23/005 'Recommendation of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 26 January 2023 - delivering a sustainable medium-term budget' have been incorporated into the main budget setting report due to be considered later on this Council agenda at Agenda item 8. No decision is therefore required at this stage.)

- 8. Budget and Council Tax setting 2023 to 2024 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023 to 2027** **31 - 168**
Report number: **COU/WS/23/003**
- 9. Calendar of meetings 2023 to 2024** **169 - 176**
Report number: **COU/WS/23/004**
- 10. Any other urgent business**
To consider any business, which by reason of special circumstances, should in the opinion of the Chair be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

Part 2 – exempt

None

Council



Minutes of a meeting of the **Council** held on **Tuesday 13 December 2022** at **7.00 pm** in the **Conference Chamber, West Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU

Present **Councillors**

Chair Mike Chester

Vice Chair John Augustine

Richard Alecock	Susan Glossop	Robert Nobbs
Michael Anderson	John Griffiths	Colin Noble
Mick Bradshaw	Pat Hanlon	Sarah Pugh
Sarah Broughton	Brian Harvey	Joanna Rayner
Tony Brown	Diane Hind	David Roach
Carol Bull	Rachel Hood	Richard Rout
John Burns	Ian Houlder	Marion Rushbrook
Patrick Chung	Paul Hopfensperger	Ian Shipp
Max Clarke	Beccy Hopfensperger	Andrew Smith
Nick Clarke	James Lay	David Smith
Simon Cole	Aaron Luccarini	Karen Soons
Dawn Dicker	Victor Lukaniuk	Lance Stanbury
Roger Dicker	Birgitte Mager	Peter Stevens
Andy Drummond	Margaret Marks	Julia Wakelam
Robert Everitt	Joe Mason	Cliff Waterman
Stephen Frost	Sara Mildmay-White	Phil Wittam
	Andy Neal	

251. Remembrance

Before commencing business, all members were asked to stand and observe a minute's silence in remembrance of former Forest Heath District Councillors Warwick Hirst and Alan Chapman who had both sadly died recently. The Chair made a statement of condolence, reflecting on the late Councillors' contributions during their time on the Council.

252. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

253. Chair's announcements

The Chair reported on the civic engagements and charity activities which he and the Vice-Chair had attended since the last ordinary meeting of Council on 27 September 2022.

Attention was specifically drawn to the various Remembrance events attended throughout the district by the Chair.

254. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Trevor Beckwith, Simon Brown, Jason Crooks, David Nettleton, David Palmer, Karen Richardson, Clive Springett, Sarah Stamp, Peter Thompson, Jim Thorndyke and Don Waldron.

Councillor Nick Wiseman was also unable to attend the meeting.

255. **Declarations of interests**

Members' declarations of interest are recorded under the item to which the declaration relates.

256. **Leader's statement (Paper number: COU/WS/020)**

Councillor John Griffiths, Leader of the Council, presented his Leader's Statement as outlined in paper number: COU/WS/22/020.

In his introductory remarks, Councillor Griffiths:

- a. **Staff awards:** paid tribute to those that had been recognised during the virtual annual staff awards event, and to all staff across the organisation for their achievements as they continued to deliver for the people of West Suffolk.
- b. **County Deal:** updated members on the latest position regarding the signing of a formal agreement between Suffolk authorities for a 'minded to' County Deal (Suffolk Devolution Deal).
- c. **Environment:** announced that for the second time, West Suffolk had been named Regional Council of the Year in the Energy Efficient Association, East of England Energy Efficiency Awards.
- d. **Helping the most vulnerable:** explained that acknowledging the challenges facing communities and businesses, West Suffolk and its partners were implementing a range of initiatives to help mitigate the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and the current national economic situation.
- e. **Winter provision:** with the agreement of the Chair, invited Councillor Sara Mildmay-White, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Strategic Health to update members on the Council's winter provision for those facing homelessness or were rough sleeping. This also included an update on Havebury Housing Association's decision to sell the flats known as Goodfellows in Bury St Edmunds and the associated implications of this.

The Leader responded to a range of questions relating to:

- a. **Elected Leader of Suffolk County Council:** As part of the proposed Suffolk Devolution Deal, a directly elected leader would be elected in 2024, ahead of the Suffolk County Council member elections in 2025. The previous devolution deal mooted a few years ago had pursued a model of governance that required a directly elected mayor. The Government was committed to a single figure being directly accountable to the electorate and whilst it had its own implications, if approved, the present deal would offer better governance arrangements removing a layer of bureaucracy that a directly elected mayor would bring. Under the directly elected leader model, the Suffolk partnership arrangements already in place would be largely unaltered. The new devolution deal would empower West Suffolk to be in an even stronger position, building on the work already being achieved and would help to accelerate the vision for even more prosperous, healthier and greener district.
- b. **Voter ID:** In the context of reading reports in the national press regarding electoral changes where it was reported that senior people in local government had apparently asked ministers to delay the introduction of Voter ID, Councillor Diane Hind asked whether the Leader or West Suffolk Council had been involved in requesting a delay in introducing Voter ID, and whether this would in fact be the case.
- c. **Civil parking enforcement (CPE):** In the context of quoting from paragraph 36. of the Leader's written statement, where it states, 'We introduced civil parking enforcement after public support to help improve safety, reduce pollution and traffic jams, grow the economy and make sure emergency services get through', Councillor John Burns asked where the data could be found to support this statement as he felt that no data had been provided in the last 12 months.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Burns asked when the civil parking enforcement (CPE) service would be reviewed. He reported of a specific area in Haverhill which previously had parking restrictions in place under a Traffic Regulation Order but this was not now included on the CPE maps and therefore there appeared to be no means to currently enforce against inappropriate parking.

In respect of b. and c. above, written responses would be provided following the meeting by Councillor Griffiths and the relevant portfolio holders. In accordance with the Constitution, these responses would be circulated to Councillors Hind, Burns and all members and published on the Council's website.

(Councillor Karen Soons left and Councillor Colin Noble joined the meeting during the consideration of this item.)

257. **Public participation**

The following member of the public spoke under this agenda item:

1. **Frank Stennett**, a resident of the district, made a statement in connection with:
 - a. Agenda Item 8 – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel: Members’ Allowances Scheme
 - b. Agenda Item 7C3 – Cabinet Referral: Western Way Project Review – December 2022

With the challenges facing residents with the cost-of-living crisis, Mr Stennett felt that an uplift in the members’ basic allowance was inappropriate at the present time and urged members not to accept the recommendation of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

Attention was then drawn to b. above where Mr Stennett expressed a number of concerns with the proposals, namely the proposed build costs; that he felt the development should proceed on an alternative, more climate friendly, energy efficient site; and that in the present economic climate against a backdrop of rising interest rates, the project should be deferred until the outlook regarding the national economic situation was more encouraging.

Councillor John Griffiths, Leader of the Council, duly responded to points raised in Mr Stennett’s statement accordingly. He then invited Mr Stennett to remain in the meeting to hear the debate on the two agenda items referred to above where his points would be addressed in detail.

258. **Referrals report of recommendations from Cabinet (Report number: COU/WS/22/021)**

Council considered the referrals report of recommendations from Cabinet, as contained within report number: COU/WS/22/021.

A. Referrals from Cabinet: 18 October 2022

There were no referrals from Cabinet emanating from the meeting held on 18 October 2022.

B. Referrals from Cabinet: 8 November 2022

1. West Suffolk Statement of Licensing Policy

Approval was sought for a revised West Suffolk Statement of Licensing Policy to cover the period 2022 to 2027.

The Licensing Act 2003 required a licensing authority to prepare and publish a statement of its licensing policy at least every five years. The policy must be kept under review during the five-year period and the licensing authority may make any revisions as it considered appropriate, such as those relating to feedback from the local community on whether the licensing objectives were being met, so it continued to be relevant and fit for purpose throughout the relevant time period.

As set out in section 1.5 of the referral report, the proposed substantive changes to the statement were minimal and they were primarily dictated by changes in guidance and legislation.

Members noted that there was a statutory duty to undertake a consultation to gauge impact and opinion among key stakeholders. This was held between 21 June and 22 July 2022. Further details of the consultation and the three responses received were set out in section 4 and 5 of the Cabinet report (Report number: CAB/WS/22/060), and Appendix A attached to that report. No comments received resulted in necessary changes to the Statement of Licensing Policy.

Councillor Andy Drummond, Portfolio Holder for Regulatory and Environment, drew relevant issues to the attention of Council.

On the motion of Councillor Drummond, seconded by Councillor Robert Everitt, it was put to the vote and with the vote being 49 for the motion, none against and one abstention, it was

Resolved:

That the revised West Suffolk Statement of Licensing Policy 2022 to 2027, as contained in Appendix B to Report number: CAB/WS/22/060, be adopted.

C. Referrals from Cabinet: 6 December 2022

Following the publication of the agenda and papers for this meeting, which took place before the Cabinet meeting was held on 6 December 2022, the Chair confirmed that no changes had been made to the recommendations contained in the referral report.

1. Delivering a Sustainable Medium Term Budget

Approval was sought for proposals for inclusion in the medium-term financial plans.

On 17 November 2022, the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee (PASC) considered proposals for delivering a sustainable balanced budget for 2023 to 2024 and for developing the medium-term plans. This included a number of key budget assumptions proposed and the rationale behind those assumptions, as set out in section 2 and Table 1 of Report number: PAS/WS/22/021.

The recommendations, which had been endorsed by Cabinet on 6 December 2022, were now presented for approval by Council. These, together with any further recommendations emanating from PASC and Cabinet in the coming weeks, would be incorporated into the budget setting process, the composite report for which would be considered by Cabinet and Council in February 2023.

Councillor Sarah Broughton, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Property, drew relevant issues to the attention of Council. These included the fact that despite the Government's announcement in the Autumn Statement that councils could now raise their council tax to the maximum of three percent without the need to hold a referendum, West Suffolk Council was at this stage, proposing to increase its proportion of council tax by £4.95 (and not £5.61 as could have been permitted under the new arrangements) for an average Band D property in 2023 to 2024. This would be debated further as the budget developed through the decision making process and for approval in February 2023. Although to be noted with caution, it was anticipated that a balanced budget would be achieved for 2023 to 2024; however, there remained challenges to overcome. A more certain position would be known in the new year.

A number of questions followed where concern was expressed that the proposed budget did not make provision to address a perceived disparity between funding of street lighting by town, parish, district and county councils in the areas of the former Forest Heath District and St Edmundsbury Borough Councils. In response, Councillor Broughton stated that as previously explained, West Suffolk Council was working with Suffolk County Council, as the authority with the responsibility for the majority of street lighting provision, and town and parish councils, to examine this complex historic issue in more detail, in accordance with the recent decision of Cabinet.

Having considered the process and approach to setting the Council's 2023 to 2024 budget and the principles and challenges faced in achieving this, the majority of members supported the recommendation of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee and subsequently Cabinet.

On the motion of Councillor Broughton, seconded by Councillor David Roach, it was put to the vote and with the vote being 38 for the motion, 11 against and 1 abstention, it was

Resolved:

That the proposals, as detailed in Section 2 and Table 1 at paragraph 3.2 of Report number PAS/WS/22/021, be included in the medium term financial plans to 2027.

2. Treasury Management Report (September 2022)

Approval was sought for the Treasury Management Report for the first half of the 2022 financial year.

Councillor Sarah Broughton, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Property, drew relevant issues to the attention of Council.

On the motion of Councillor Broughton, seconded by Councillor Sara Mildmay-White, it was put to the vote and with the vote being 48 for the motion, none against and two abstentions, it was

Resolved:

That the Treasury Management Report (September 2022), as contained in Report number: FRS/WS/22/005, be approved.

3. Western Way Project Review – December 2022

Approval was sought for a number of recommendations as a result of an interim review being undertaken on the Western Way project.

The Western Way (WW) project in Bury St Edmunds was part of a network of existing or planned community hub projects across the whole West Suffolk area being delivered by partners in the public, charity and community sectors. These ranged in scale from a community-led hub project in Clare up to the multi-agency Mildenhall Hub which opened in June 2021.

WW was approved for delivery by Council in late 2019 and achieved planning consent in 2021 on the completion of its Section 106 agreement. After reviewing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Council gave support for a phased delivery of the project in June 2021. In both instances, a set of financial tests were set to safeguard the interests of taxpayers. A final review of these tests by Cabinet was currently required before any contract could be awarded. This would not occur before March 2023.

Given the current economic situation and the changing requirements of partners, Cabinet had asked that an interim review of the status of the project be carried out before the end of 2022 so that Council could consider whether it wished to continue with the current project. Cabinet report number: CAB/WS/22/068, as attached in full to the Council referral report, had provided that review.

Councillor Joanna Rayner, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Community Hubs, drew relevant issues to the attention of Council. These included:

- a. **Smaller phase 1 scheme:** the original proposal for the initial Western Way Development had an approved expenditure cap of £140 million. During the scoping of this and working closely with consultants, this figure was reduced to around £100 million to reflect the impact of the pandemic and a phased approach being needed. A smaller phase 1 scheme, for consideration by Council at this meeting, requested support for a reduced spending cap of £75 million, of which £40 million would deliver a brand new leisure centre. Within this cap: over £5 million would be sourced from Suffolk County Council (SCC) and developer contributions; and £10 million related to interim works to the remainder of the Western Way site not needed in phase 1 to ensure this could also continue to generate an income to the Council as landowner.
- b. **Leisure centre:** the existing Bury St Edmunds leisure centre provided a valued service to the local community; however, it was approaching 50 years old and in need of immediate repairs. That, coupled with a

number of factors detailed in the report including that it was no longer large enough to suitably deliver an acceptable service to cope with the growth in population to 2040, meant a 'do nothing' option could not be applied. Refurbishment options had been considered as detailed in Appendix 1; however, a new leisure centre was considered to return the best financial position over a 40-year period. Just a basic refurbishment to extend its life by 20 years would cost around £13 million. This would only delay a new build by about 20 years at which point the costs to rebuild would have escalated considerably.

- c. **Renewables:** the proposal was to invest £10 million on renewable energy during phase 1. It was expected that this would generate around £980,000 net a year from the phase 1 site alone. Such investment would also align with the Council's ambition to address climate challenges. The planning consent allowed delivery of a scheme in several phases so the site would never sit empty; however, the rest of the frame and its roof would be required to be in good condition to make use of it alongside a completed phase 1. An additional £9 million would therefore enable the rest of the frame and roof to be brought up to a standard which allowed the installation of further renewables outside of phase 1. This cost could be met from any extra renewables income and any rent pending phase 2.

- d. **Other partners/rest of site:** Whilst the phase 1 scheme would be around a third smaller than originally anticipated, the design was sufficiently flexible to adapt and grow to accommodate changing needs of the population and partners. The proposal recommended by Cabinet also included options for phase 1 that aligned with the Council's strategic vision delivered elsewhere whereby a range of services were provided from one community hub. This proposal was, therefore, not only about replacing the leisure centre.

Other potential services in a smaller phase 1 hub included a small health centre; some provision for office, stores and meeting room space; a potential SCC archive office; and a SCC children's pre-school. The aforementioned would need to be cost neutral or they would not be included in the scheme.

- e. **Mitigation of income risk and treasury management approach:** The large income risks associated with the earlier scheme had been removed as the Council would no longer be borrowing on behalf of others or to cover the delivery of commercial offices that may have taken time to become occupied. A conventional long-term treasury management approach to borrowing money could now be adopted as the Council had better control over when the most appropriate time would be to borrow thus mitigating against higher interest rates.
- f. **Ask of Council:** members were reminded that final approval was not sought at this stage to building phase 1. As recommended by Cabinet, the request was to reaffirm support for the re-profiled project and to proceed to the second stage of tendering within a clearly defined, affordable budget. Gateway reviews would continue to be undertaken at relevant stages.

Councillor Rayner concluded her speech and moved the recommendations, as set out in the referrals report. The motion was duly seconded by Councillor Patrick Chung.

The debate ensued and the majority of members were supportive of the project. Comments of support included:

- a keenness to see the existing leisure centre replaced;
- a satisfaction to see the cost of phase 1 of the project reduce significantly whilst still creating a laudable, exciting, ambitious project that would substantially deliver much needed modern facilities and services for the community;
- the importance of promoting healthy living and wellbeing and how the delivery of phase 1 would actively contribute to this; and
- the investment in renewables, which whilst generating income, accorded with the Council's commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030.

However, some members raised questions, comments and/or concerns, which included:

- whether the option to refurbish the existing leisure centre had been fully explored;
- whether any elements of the existing leisure centre could be reused;
- the future of the building that would have been brought up to a standard to accommodate solar panels on the roof, should a phase 2 not proceed;
- the impact on traffic flow and the potential for an increase in congestion in the Beetons Way/Western Way area;
- whether alternatives had been fully explored to promote better health and wellbeing, such as decentralising leisure facilities within new housing developments like Marham Park, which in turn would help promote active travel;
- whether any changes to the design of the proposed buildings took into account new building regulations;
- that the project no longer made sufficient provision in phase 1 for commercial elements;
- whether the environmental credentials planned would be met particularly if funding was not achieved to help mitigate the risk;
- that the implementation of value engineering measures should not result in facilities being below a desired standard;
- that the intended 8-lane swimming pool in the new leisure centre, designed to Swim England/Sport England's county-level competition standard, was of sufficient width. Some members felt that if the Council was to build a new leisure centre that it needed to be ambitious and include a pool suitable for short course championship events to the international competition standard of World Aquatics (formerly known as FINA) i.e. 10 lanes. It was also raised whether sufficient seating would be provided for spectators.

The concern regarding the size of the pool led to an amendment being proposed by Councillor Richard Alecock, which was duly seconded by Councillor John Burns. The amendment to the substantive motion sought to

request that investigations be undertaken to ascertain the costs and implications involved for making the prospective swimming pool wider.

A debate ensued on the amendment. Recognition was given to the merit of a wider pool; however, it was considered by the majority of members that it was inappropriate to approve any changes to the recommendations in the substantive motion. The inclusion of a wider pool would almost certainly mean the overall project cost envelope would be exceeded in revenue and capital terms and/or other elements of the swimming provision would have to be omitted. Therefore, it was not felt to be prudent to make alterations to the specification or budget at this time, when it was not known whether the inclusion of a wider pool was appropriate or achievable.

As stated by Councillor Rayner, under (f) above, approval was not sought at the meeting to proceed to the project build, but to progress to the next stage. If there was merit in providing a wider pool, this would be looked into separately and members advised accordingly.

Following Councillor Rayner's right of reply on the amendment, the amendment to the substantive motion was put to the vote and with the vote being 12 for the motion, 36 against and one abstention, the amendment was lost.

The debate returned to the substantive motion; however, no further speeches were made. Councillor Rayner gave her right to reply, which included responding positively to questions and statements raised during the debate on the substantive motion where these issues had not already been covered by the referral report or previous business cases or responses.

On the motion of Councillor Rayner, seconded by Councillor Chung, it was put to the vote and with the vote being 36 for the motion, 12 against and one abstention, it was

Resolved: That

1. This review and update of the business case for the Western Way (WW) project, Bury St Edmunds and, as part of that wider scheme, the replacement of the Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre, be approved, so that Cabinet and officers can continue to deliver phase 1 of the project and any interim works to the rest of the site on the revised basis set out in this review and in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
2. The existing authorities, financial provisions, safeguards and financial tests for delivery of the project be updated as follows:
 - a. The remainder of the due diligence for the second stage of tendering be carried out in accordance with the two new gateways defined in Section E of this review.
 - b. For either facility to be included in the phase 1 construction contract, Suffolk County Council must have entered into a formal pre-let agreement for an archive

facility and/or pre-school which meets the One Public Estate principles of full cost recovery.

- c. The previous spending caps and financial tests for the hub and leisure centre be replaced by a new combined and reduced net capital expenditure limit of £65 million for the total phase 1 scheme defined in this report i.e. project costs, market analysis, enabling works, construction of the initial community hub, installation of renewables.
- d. In addition to this cap on expenditure, at the time the main construction contract is signed, the phase 1 scheme must not increase the Council's existing Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) provision of £724,000 for Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre and, in relation to other ancillary elements of the new hub, be capable of achieving at least a break-even position over the whole life of the borrowing.
- e. In addition to the phase 1 scheme defined in the review, a further capital allocation of up to £10 million be made in the Council's capital programme for interim works to the remainder of the Western Way site as defined in Appendix 3 of this report (CAB/WS/22/068) and also on the basis of at least a break-even income position over the life of the borrowing.
- f. Subject to consultation with the relevant portfolio holders, approval be given for interim or enabling works ahead of the main contract for phase 1, to be financed from within the new combined WW capital budget of £75 million. But only where these works will increase the commercial value of the site irrespective of whether the WW project proceeds or not.
- g. The cash flow risk being managed.
- h. The most beneficial and economic funding method for the project is identified, including entering into agreements with third-party investors if required.
- i. Any phase 2 scheme for a permanent use of the remainder of the WW site be subject to a new and separate business case to councillors before the conclusion of the phase 1 construction programme.

(Councillor Ian Houlder left during the consideration of and John Augustine left the meeting at the conclusion of this particular referral.)

4. West Suffolk Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) 2023 to 2024

Approval was sought for proposed changes to the West Suffolk Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

Each year the Council was required to review its Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS). Cabinet Report number: CAB/WS/22/069 provided an annual review of the 2022 to 2023 scheme and proposed to make changes to the scheme for 2023 to 2024, having been subject to preceptor, stakeholder and public consultation, as required by the relevant regulations when amendments to the scheme were proposed.

Councillor Sarah Broughton, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Property, drew relevant issues to the attention of Council, including that the proposed changes to take effect from 1 April 2023, were as follows:

The current West Suffolk Working Age LCTRS scheme provided a maximum benefit of 91.5 percent for working age claimants and the scheme also fully protected war pensioners. The aim in designing the scheme was to achieve a balance in charging an amount of council tax to encourage customers back into work whilst setting the amount charged at an affordable and recoverable level during the year. A separate statutory scheme applied to pensioners who could receive up to a maximum 100 percent reduction of their council tax bill.

The Council identified potential changes to the LCTRS for 2023 to 2024. This would be for one year only and designed to support low-income working age residents, in light of the current pressures on the cost of living.

The proposed change to the LCTRS where it was proposed should take effect from 1 April 2023 (and last for one year only) was that the maximum reduction on council tax paid should be increased from 91.5 percent to 100 percent. This would be a means tested scheme.

This would reduce the amount that many council tax payers had to pay and could result in some working-age residents paying zero council tax. It should be noted that the maximum reduction would not only apply to those already receiving a 91.5 per cent reduction. The increase would effectively 'stretch' the reductions that could be received, thereby benefitting a wider range of customers.

The background to the proposed changes were detailed within section 2 of the Cabinet report.

Separate from these proposals, the figures used in the calculation of how much a council tax payer needed to live on (known as the applicable amounts) would be automatically increased in 2023 to 2024 in line with Government policy. This would enable a number of new residents to claim council tax support for the first time.

A detailed discussion was held with members supporting and acknowledging the benefits of the proposed changes, including the importance of publicising the revised scheme to residents to ensure that those eligible had access to it.

On the motion of Councillor Broughton, seconded by Councillor Brian Harvey, it was put to the vote and with the vote being 48 for the motion, none against and one abstention, it was

Resolved: That

1. The Local Council Tax Reduction (LCTRS) Scheme for 2023 to 2024, as outlined in Report number CAB/WS/22/069, be reviewed.
2. The changes to the scheme outlined in section 2 of Report number CAB/WS/22/069 and that the maximum discount change only relates to 2023 to 2024, be agreed.

5. Council Tax Base for Tax Setting Purposes 2023 to 2024

Approval was sought for the council tax base for tax setting purposes for the 2023 to 2024 financial year.

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, further details regarding which was set out in Report number: CAB/WS/22/070.

Councillor Sarah Broughton, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Property, drew relevant issues to the attention of Council.

On the motion of Councillor Broughton, seconded by Councillor David Roach, it was put to the vote and with the vote being 48 for the motion, none against and one abstention, it was

Resolved: That

1. The tax base for 2023 to 2024, for the whole of West Suffolk be 57,987.01 equivalent band D dwellings, as detailed in paragraph 2.3 of Report number CAB/WS/22/070.
2. The tax base for 2023 to 2024 for the different parts of its area, as defined by parish or special expense area boundaries, be as shown in Appendix 3 of Report number CAB/WS/22/070.

259. Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel: Members' Allowances Scheme (Report number: COU/WS/22/022)

Council considered this report, which presented a recommendation of the Independent Remuneration Panel following its consideration of whether to recommend an uplift in the members' basic allowance.

Local authorities were required by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (the Regulations) to establish and maintain an independent remuneration panel to make recommendations on the level of basic and special responsibility allowances and associated matters that were paid to councillors.

In February 2020 Council approved the Members' Allowances Scheme (the Scheme) which could be found under Part 6 of the Constitution (Appendix 1 attached to the report). Paragraph 2.2 of the Scheme provided '*The sum of £6,291.71 shall be uplifted each year by the same rate as the Annual Pay Award provided to the majority of Council staff. Should this be 3% or higher, then the Remuneration Panel should consider the level of increase and make recommendations to the Council accordingly.*'

The Local Government Services Pay Agreement 2022 to 2023 was reached on 1 November 2022 and implemented from 1 April 2022 resulting in the sum of £1,925 per annum being added to all payscales agreed under the terms of conditions of the National Joint Council (NJC). The mean average of this increase across all NJC pay grades was 6.9 percent. Accordingly, the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) was required to consider the level of increase to members allowances and make a recommendation to Council.

The IRP met on 24 November 2022 and considered it appropriate for the members' basic allowance to be uplifted by 6.9 percent to £6,725.83 being the mean average of the Annual Pay Award for staff, with effect from 1 April 2022. This uplift would also affect the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs), which were calculated as multiple factors of the basic allowance, as set out in Appendix 2. If approved, this would create an additional budget impact of £37,147. The IRP's rationale for recommending this uplift was set out in section 2 of the report.

Unfortunately, Richard Cooper, Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel was unable to attend the meeting, therefore in his absence, the Monitoring Officer read out a statement on his behalf, which primarily set out the IRP's rationale in reaching its decision to recommend that provided in the report.

The Chair called upon Councillor Carol Bull, Portfolio Holder for Governance to speak on the item. She duly thanked Richard Cooper and the IRP for the work undertaken on this matter. However, whilst the IRP's rationale for its recommendation was understood, she and members of the Conservative Group, felt this could not be accepted, particularly in the current economic climate. Councillor Bull subsequently proposed an alternative motion as follows:

"I would like to thank the panel for their work; however, we have reviewed this as an administration and my proposal is to defer any uplift in the basic allowance for members until the Members' Allowances Scheme is reviewed in full, which will be next year (2023) as the existing scheme expires in February 2024."

This proposal was duly seconded by Councillor Lance Stanbury.

A detailed discussion was held with members across the Council supporting the proposal to defer any potential uplift in the basic allowance until the scheme had been reviewed and adopted by the new Council following the district council elections in May 2023.

Comments included the fact that the receipt of the basic allowance was not a primary reason for the majority of councillors standing for election; the amount of allowance payable should not be a barrier to deter people from standing for election, however, the allowance was not a salary and should not be viewed as such; and whether members should receive an allowance at a fixed amount for the duration of their four-year term.

On the motion of Councillor Bull, seconded by Councillor Stanbury, it was put to the vote and with the vote being 48 for the motion, none against and one abstention, it was

Resolved:

That any uplift in the basic allowance for members be deferred until the Members' Allowances Scheme is reviewed in full, which will be next year (2023) as the existing scheme expires in February 2024.

(Councillors Susan Glossop, Beccy Hopfensperger and Lance Stanbury left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)

260. **West Suffolk Council Constitution: non-executive licensing functions (Report number: COU/WS/22/023)**

Council considered this report, which sought approval for proposed changes to the Constitution in connection with non-executive licensing functions.

The Constitution Review Group (CRG) periodically assessed potential changes to the Constitution and met on the 30 November 2022 to consider two areas recommended for amendment, both being non-executive licensing functions which could be found in Part 3, Section 2 of the Constitution under B - Licensing:

- a. Membership and meeting arrangements
- b. Delegation of functions

The CRG considered it appropriate to align the training requirements for members of the Licensing and Regulatory (L&R) Committee with those for members of the Council's other statutory committee, the Development Control Committee (DCC).

The West Suffolk Licensing Code of Practice, which could be found in Part 5e of the Constitution expanded the training requirement for members of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee and was stated in full under paragraph 1.6 of the report.

Although the training was mandatory, there was no requirement for untrained members to step down as a member of the L&R Committee which had resulted in untrained members remaining on the committee but unable to be

appointed to any hearing by a sub-committee. The change would mean that members of the L&R Committee would be unable to sit on the Committee if they had not completed the compulsory training requirements set out in the West Suffolk Licensing Code of Practice, and this would align with the training requirements for those sitting on DCC.

It was also considered appropriate to amend the wording of paragraph 3.2 (Delegation of Functions) of the aforementioned section of the Constitution, to that set out in paragraph 2.1 of the report. This would provide additional flexibility within the Constitution to allow the Director for HR, Governance and Regulatory to consult with another trained member of the L&R Committee where the Chair or Vice Chair may be unavailable.

Councillor Carol Bull, Portfolio Holder for Governance, drew relevant issues to the attention of Council.

On the motion of Councillor Bull, seconded by Councillor Sara Mildmay-White, it was put to the vote and with the vote being 45 for the motion, none against and one abstention, it was

Resolved:

That Part 3, Section 2 – Responsibility for Council (Non Executive) Functions - Part B (Licensing) of the Constitution be amended to:

1. align the training requirements for members of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee with those for members of the Development Control Committee such that members of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee will be unable to sit on the Committee if they have not completed the compulsory training requirements set out in the West Suffolk Licensing Code of Practice.
2. Change the wording under paragraph 3.2 (Delegation of Functions) of the aforementioned section of the Constitution to that set out within the paragraph 2.1 of Report number: COU/WS/22/023.

(Councillor Paul Hopfensperger left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)

261. Interim polling places review 2022 (Report number: COU/WS/22/024)

Council considered this report, which sought approval for an interim review of polling places in the district to be undertaken.

The Elections Act 2022 introduced changes which impacted the voting process at polling stations and as a result the Electoral Services Team had undertaken an audit of polling station facilities to make sure they complied.

The feedback gathered had identified some polling stations which were not available on 4 May 2023 and some polling stations which did not provide

electors with reasonable facilities for voting or were not accessible to electors who were disabled. The list of polling stations was included at Appendix A attached to the report.

As a result, an interim polling places review was required and would be focussed only on changes to the polling scheme where venues were no longer available or suitable. The aims of this tailored review, which would be undertaken in accordance with the timetable summarised in paragraph 2.1, would be to:

- Seek to ensure that all electors had reasonable facilities for voting as were practicable in the circumstances; and
- Ensure that so far as was reasonable and practicable, every polling place was accessible to electors who had a disability.

Given the relatively short timescales involved with preparing for the May 2023 elections, authorisation was also sought to enable the Returning Officer to approve the amended scheme of polling places. This would be undertaken following the completion of a thorough process set out in paragraph 2.3.

Councillor Carol Bull, Portfolio Holder for Governance, drew relevant issues to the attention of Council, which included responding to the following questions raised:

- that portacabins were no longer used as polling stations
- it was a legal requirement to ensure disabled access was provided at all polling stations. Discussions would be held with parish councils where their expertise was required to ensure premises designated as a polling station provided the appropriate access and facilities for all disabled people entitled to vote within their parishes.

On the motion of Councillor Bull, seconded by Councillor John Burns, it was put to the vote and with the vote being 45 for the motion, none against and no abstentions, it was

Resolved: That

1. The commencement of an interim review of polling places, as set out in section 2 of Report number: COU/WS/22/024, be agreed.
2. The Chief Executive, as Returning Officer, be authorised to approve the amended scheme of polling places, following consultation on proposals with electors and other interested persons and bodies, including elected representatives and those with expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for disabled people.

262. **Motion on notice**

Under section nine of the Council Procedure Rules detailed in the Constitution, Council had been given written notice of a motion submitted by Councillor Julia Wakelam, as set out in the agenda accordingly.

The Chair called upon Councillor Wakelam to introduce and move the motion. Councillor Wakelam drew attention to a number of issues relating to the adverse impact that glyphosate, and other pesticides were having on the environment by decreasing biodiversity. By implementing the measures proposed in the motion, she felt the Council would be making a very real contribution to improving the environment and promoting biodiversity. She urged members to support the motion, which was duly seconded by Councillor Joe Mason.

The Chair opened the debate and an amendment to the substantive motion was immediately proposed by Councillor Rachel Hood, Chair of the former Environment and Climate Change Taskforce. Councillor Hood highlighted that this was a matter the Taskforce had discussed at length and was included in the Taskforce's action plan adopted by Cabinet. Emphasis was placed on the fact that a motion was not required to commit to something that was already being done as the Taskforce, and subsequently Cabinet had been very clear that the Council needed to end the use of glyphosate but a viable alternative also needed to be sought. Officers had been testing alternatives and, as announced in the press last week, the Council would be ceasing use of glyphosate for all but the most resistant weeds from 2023.

The amendment was as follows as shown by strikethrough of text in the original motion and bold text to show the amended text. The amendment to the substantive motion, which was duly seconded by Councillor Joe Mason, was read out in full by the Monitoring Officer to all persons present:

"Council is asked to note:

1. That there is growing evidence that glyphosate is a higher health risk than previously assumed. In 2015 the World Health Organisation identified it as 'probably carcinogenic to humans'. A 2019 study found the use of Roundup increased the risk of Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma by 41 percent.
2. A 2018 study found that glyphosate, the most used agricultural chemical ever, may be contributing to the global decline in bees and other pollinators, both by poisoning them and through loss of habitat.
3. Glyphosate, and other pesticides, impact on the environment more generally by decreasing biodiversity.
4. Council should also acknowledge the work of the Environment and Climate Change Task Force in this connection. However, over 30 local authorities in Britain have already decided to ban the use of glyphosate from all their own operations and this Council should take immediate steps to do likewise.

In light of this, Council ~~resolves to ask the officers to follow the precautionary principle and:~~ **is asked to note the following action is already committed to by the Portfolio Holder and Cabinet:**

1. Pledge to stop the use of glyphosate completely from all its in-house operations (including in Parks and the streetscene) by April 2023

without increasing the use of other chemical weedkillers. If thought absolutely necessary, an exception could be granted regarding the control of Japanese knotweed, or other specified invasive species, where there are currently no effective mechanical techniques available.

However, in this case glyphosate will be sparingly sprayed in the case of young soft growth and otherwise it will be stem-injected, rather than sprayed, to reduce its spread in the environment. A Register, open to Members, shall be kept of all areas where glyphosate is **or other harmful chemicals that have a potential to negatively impact biodiversity** are used and this will be reported on in the annual Environmental Statement.

2. Officers are instructed not to spray round trees and in other public areas in spring and autumn 2023. If thought absolutely necessary, then weeds round trees could be removed by other, non chemical, means but ideally they should be left to promote biodiversity.
3. Early in 2023, officers will embark upon a publicity and awareness campaign explaining why the spring and autumn sprays will not take place and highlighting the benefits to human health and biodiversity of not spraying. Officers will provide template responses for councillors to respond to residents to assist this campaign."

The majority of members supported the amended motion. Councillor Joanna Rayner, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Community Hubs who had the responsibility for the maintenance of the Council's parks and open spaces explained the significant work that had been undertaken to date to cease the use of glyphosate for all but the most toughest of weeds. There would be a cost implication for using effective, but less harmful, alternatives; however, Councillor Sarah Broughton, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Property explained that additional financial provision to meet this cost would be incorporated into the budget setting process.

Some concern was expressed regarding the effectiveness of alternatives to glyphosate and whether complaints might be received from residents should their neighbourhoods appear to look 'untidy'. Both Councillor Mason, as seconder of the motion, and Councillor Rayner reiterated that communication was key and as ward councillors, members were in a strong position to work with town and parish councils, community groups and individual residents to create a better understanding regarding the positive rationale for moving forward with the action proposed.

Following all speeches on the amendment, it was put to the vote. With 44 votes for the amendment, one against and no abstentions, the amendment to the substantive motion was passed.

As the amendment had passed, the substantive motion now on the table was the original motion, as amended to that detailed above. No further debate was held, and a vote was taken on the substantive motion.

On the motion of Councillor Hood, seconded by Councillor Mason, it was put to the vote and with the vote being 44 for the motion, one against and no abstentions, it was

Resolved:

It be noted that:

1. That there is growing evidence that glyphosate is a higher health risk than previously assumed. In 2015 the World Health Organisation identified it as 'probably carcinogenic to humans'. A 2019 study found the use of Roundup increased the risk of Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma by 41 percent.
2. A 2018 study found that glyphosate, the most used agricultural chemical ever, may be contributing to the global decline in bees and other pollinators, both by poisoning them and through loss of habitat.
3. Glyphosate, and other pesticides, impact on the environment more generally by decreasing biodiversity.
4. Council should also acknowledge the work of the Environment and Climate Change Taskforce in this connection. However, over 30 local authorities in Britain have already decided to ban the use of glyphosate from all their own operations and this Council should take immediate steps to do likewise.

In light of this, it be noted that the following action is already committed to by the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Community Hubs and Cabinet:

1. Pledge to stop the use of glyphosate completely from all its in-house operations (including in Parks and the streetscene) by April 2023 without increasing the use of other chemical weedkillers. If thought absolutely necessary, an exception could be granted regarding the control of Japanese knotweed, or other specified invasive species, where there are currently no effective mechanical techniques available.

However, in this case glyphosate will be sparingly sprayed in the case of young soft growth and otherwise it will be steminjected, rather than sprayed, to reduce its spread in the environment. A Register, open to Members, shall be kept of all areas where glyphosate or other harmful chemicals that have a potential to negatively impact biodiversity are used and this will be reported on in the annual Environmental Statement.

2. Officers are instructed not to spray round trees and in other public areas in spring and autumn 2023. If thought absolutely necessary, then weeds round trees could be removed by other, non chemical, means but ideally they should be left to promote biodiversity.

3. Early in 2023, officers will embark upon a publicity and awareness campaign explaining why the spring and autumn sprays will not take place and highlighting the benefits to human health and biodiversity of not spraying. Officers will provide template responses for councillors to respond to residents to assist this campaign.

263. Any other urgent business

There were no matters of urgent business considered on this occasion.

The meeting concluded at 9.34 pm

Signed by:

Chair

This page is intentionally left blank

Civic communication for Council

13 December 2022 to 21 February 2023

Chair attended 9 engagements

Vice Chair attended 1 engagement

Event	Venue	Date	Time	Attending
West Suffolk Council meeting	West Suffolk House	Tuesday 13 December 2022	7pm	Chair and Vice Chair of Council
Sea Cadets annual Presentation Evening	The Klondyke, Beetons Way, Bury St Edmunds	Thursday 15 December 2022	7pm	Chair of Council
RAF Honington Voluntary Band Concert meeting	The Apex	Thursday 5 January 2023	10am	Chair of Council
Visit to the new Wildlife Friendly Garden at the Erskine Centre in Chedburgh	The Erskine Centre, Chevington Road, Chedburgh, IP29 4UL	Thursday 5 January 2023	2pm	Chair of Council
Ukrainian Christmas Service	St Edmundsbury Cathedral	Friday 6 January 2023	5pm	Chair of Council
Holocaust Memorial Service Holocaust	Peace Garden, Abbey Gardens	Friday 27 January 2023	10.30am	Chair of Council
Haverhill Mayor's Burns Night Dinner and Dance	Haverhill Arts Centre	Saturday 28 January 2023	6.30pm	Chair of Council
Mid Suffolk Chairman's Civic Service	St Mary the Virgin Church, Church Green, Bramford IP8 4AT	Sunday 5 February 2023	2pm	Chair of Council
Apprentices Bake Sale for Chair's charity	West Suffolk House	Thursday 9 February 2023	10am	Chair of Council

West Suffolk Council Meeting	West Suffolk House	Tuesday 21 February 2023	7pm	Chair and Vice Chair of Council
------------------------------	--------------------	--------------------------------	-----	---------------------------------------



Leader’s statement

Report number:	COU/WS/23/001	
Report to and date:	Council	21 February 2023
Documents attached:	None	

Leader’s statement

1. As we are reaching the end of West Suffolk Council’s first four-year term I have broken from tradition and put together a round-up of just some of what the authority and all of us together have achieved.
2. ‘West Suffolk – The Story So Far’ will be sent to you as a PDF for your information and, for use yourselves. It will also be added prior to the Council meeting as a downloadable file to the Council agenda webpage under Leader’s Statement (click link: [Agenda for Council on Tuesday 21 February 2023, 7.00 pm \(westsuffolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/agenda-for-council-on-tuesday-21-february-2023-7-00-pm)) so the public can access it.
3. As you will see this is a considerable document, covering four years of many achievements, which is one of the reasons this is available electronically (rather than printing multiple copies).
4. You will also recall that one of the first things we did as a Council was declare a Climate Emergency and form a cross party taskforce; and one of the aims from that work was to reduce paper and printing (which is another good reason why I am sharing this electronically).
5. To sum up, this document represents the outcome of the work of all councillors and our staff at West Suffolk Council and is something we should all be proud of.

Budget

6. I will wait to comment on the budget until the meeting of Council. However, I would emphasise this, like all budgets before is more than an exercise in balancing books and neat columns of figures. The outcome of our budget decisions can be seen in the round-up of what West Suffolk Council has achieved over the last four years. It is the way we have continued to deliver high quality services while encouraging economic growth, improving our environment and working with communities and organisations to deliver initiatives such as Community Chest and locality budgets. We have been able to invest to create income, including renewable energy while improving leisure facilities and other initiatives to improve health and wellbeing. This has also

put us in the strong position of being able to face challenges such as COVID-19 and the cost-of-living crisis which affects not only our communities and businesses but also the ability of public services to meet increased demand. But what has always been clear is that our budgets are about delivering for and benefitting the whole of West Suffolk.

Community Chest

7. I also want to thank all members and staff who have worked together on the applications for Community Chest grants which were supported by Cabinet. These discussions are cross party and I know every effort is made to support in other ways those groups and initiatives which were not successful. Another £513,000 has been made available this year under our successful Community Chest initiative which provides funding for local community groups; and a total of 32 voluntary and community organisations, charities, faith groups and social enterprises, will receive funding for projects. This includes over £315,000 of Community Chest funding for ten projects identified specifically as helping people with some of the current cost of living challenges.
8. In total, over the last four years, the Council has directly invested more than £2 million in supporting groups across West Suffolk.

Make Your Mark

9. You may have also seen we have launched our Make Your Mark campaign as part of encouraging people to take part in local democracy from standing as candidates to voting in the elections. We ran a similar campaign for our first West Suffolk Council elections. You can find out more in our election section of our website [Voting and elections \(westsuffolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/voting-and-elections) as well as how people can stand to become a councillor [How to become a councillor NEW \(westsuffolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/how-to-become-a-councillor-new) and a short animation we are using on social media channels which used answers from West Suffolk Councillors <https://youtu.be/TVQ8CYboKC0>

And finally...

10. I look forward to seeing you all at this penultimate meeting of West Suffolk Council's first four-year term. And I want to thank you all for the work we have done together which has benefitted so many of the people, communities and organisations that we serve across West Suffolk.

With best wishes,

Councillor John Griffiths
Leader of West Suffolk Council

Referrals report of recommendations from Cabinet

Report number:	COU/WS/23/002	
Report to and date:	Council	21 February 2023
Documents attached:	None	

A. Referrals from Cabinet: 7 February 2023

1. Treasury management report (December 2022)

Portfolio holder: Councillor Sarah Broughton

Cabinet Report number: [CAB/WS/23/006](#)

Financial Resilience Sub-Committee Report number: [FRS/WS/23/001](#)

Recommended:

That the Treasury management report (December 2022), as contained in Report number: [FRS/WS/23/001](#), be approved.

1.1 Investment Activity 1 April 2021 to 31 December 2022

Following the Financial Resilience Sub-Committee's consideration of Report number: [FRS/WS/23/001](#) on 16 January 2023, the Service Manager (Finance and Procurement) verbally reported on the Sub-Committee's consideration of the report.

- 1.2 The Council held investments of £71,500,000 as at 31 December 2022. Interest earned during the first nine months of the financial year amounted to £639,193.67 against a budget for the period of £33,750.
- 1.3 External borrowing as at 31 December 2022 was £13,750,000 a reduction of £250,000 from 1 April 2022, which relates to the repayment plan for the recent Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) £10 million 40-year loan, with the Council's level of internal borrowing increasing slightly to £42,309,057 as at 31 December 2022. Overall borrowing, weighted towards internal borrowing is expected to increase over the full financial year.

- 1.4 Borrowing costs, which included interest payable and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) for the year are forecast to be £1,069,488 against an approved budget of £2,268,350. However, this could change if more external borrowing is undertaken than is currently forecast.
- 1.5 The 2022-2023 Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy sets out the Council's projections for the current financial year. The budget for investment income for 2022 to 2023 was £45,000, which was based on a 0.25 percent target interest rate of return on investments.
- 1.6 The report also included a summary of the borrowing activity during the period; borrowing strategy and sources of borrowing; borrowing and capital costs – affordability; borrowing and income – proportionality; borrowing and asset yields and market information.
- 1.7 The Sub-Committee scrutinised the investment activity for 1 April 2022 to 31 December 2022, and asked questions to which responses were provided. In particular, discussions were held on the current volatility of the markets; future borrowing requirements and options for paying off the Barclays £4 million loan.
- 1.8 Since the Sub-Committee met the Council has received further information on repaying the Barclays loan off early. Due to the rise in interest rates the early repayment premium for this loan has come down from previous quotes received. The current Treasury Management and Investment Strategy allows the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Property and the Director (Resources and Property) to consult and exercise powers for paying off the loan early. The Council has the cash available at the present time to repay the loan and sought the Committee's support in doing this.
- 1.9 The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on 26 January 2023 also scrutinised the report. In particular, discussions were held on the Barclays' loan, which the Committee supported repaying early.
- 1.10 On 7 February 2023, the Cabinet considered the recommendation of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, as reproduced above and this is now referred to Council for final approval.

Continued over...

2. Treasury Management Strategy 2023 to 2024 and Code of Practice

Portfolio holder: Councillor Sarah Broughton

Cabinet Report number: [CAB/WS/23/007](#)

Financial Resilience Sub-Committee Report number: [FRS/WS/23/002](#)

Appendix 1 [Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2023 to 2024](#)

Appendix 2 [Treasury Management Code of Practice](#)

Recommended: That

- 1. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2023 to 2024 as set out in Appendix 1 to Report number: FRS/WS/23/002, be approved.**
- 2. The Treasury Management Code of Practice, as set out in Appendix 2 to Report number: FRS/WS/23/002, be approved.**

1.1 Financial Resilience - Strategy Statement 2023 to 2024 and Treasury Management Code of Practice

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Treasury Management Code of Practice requires that, prior to the start of the financial year that Council formally approves a Treasury Management Policy Statement and Investment Strategy, setting out the Council's treasury management policy and strategy for the forthcoming year.

- 1.2 The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2023 to 2024 was attached as [Appendix 1](#) to Report number: [FRS/WS/23/002](#) and the Treasury Management Code of Practice attached as [Appendix 2](#). The Sub-Committee was advised that a new Treasury Code of Practice was published on 20 December 2021 and changes from this Code had been incorporated into the Treasury Management Strategy 2023 to 2024. The key changes made were around knowledge and skills, as well as the inclusion of some extra treasury management prudential indicators, mainly around the liability benchmark.
- 1.3 The report also included additional supporting information on treasury advisors; borrowing strategy; investment strategy counterparty ratings and interest rate projections.
- 1.4 The Financial Resilience Sub-Committee scrutinised the report on 16 January 2023 and asked questions to which responses were provided. In particular, discussions were held on the meaning of short-term borrowing; capital financing which was based on the current programme of planned spending; and local authority lending and local authorities who are subject to a Section 114 notice.
- 1.5 The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee considered the report in detail and asked questions to which comprehensive responses were provided. Discussions

were held on the budget gap; pensions and the tri-annual pension report; recruitment freeze; pay award; outsourcing; the ground maintenance service and whether the council was charging commercial rates, for example for grass cutting; car park revenue; the impact of the capital programme on the budget, and the announcement made on 17 November 2022 about a possible Devolution Deal for Suffolk and whether this would have an impact on the Council's budget.

- 1.6 The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on 26 January 2023 considered the report and did not raise any issues.
- 1.7 On 7 February 2023, the Cabinet considered the recommendation of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, as reproduced above and this is now referred to Council for final approval.

3. Budget and Council Tax setting: 2023 to 2024 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023 to 2027

Portfolio holder: Councillor Sarah Broughton

Cabinet Report number: [CAB/WS/23/008](#)

(Note that due to extensive number of appendices attached to Report number CAB/WS/23/008, the above link applies to the Cabinet agenda papers page on the Council's website)

- 3.1 The recommendations emanating from the Cabinet's consideration of this report, together with its approval of the recommendation contained in Report number: [CAB/WS/23/005](#) 'Recommendation of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 26 January 2023 - Delivering a sustainable medium-term budget' are contained within Report number: COU/WS/23/003 'Budget and Council Tax setting: 2023 to 2024 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023 to 2027', for consideration as agenda item 8 on this Council agenda.
- 3.2 Members are therefore requested to **note** that no decision is required at this stage.

Budget and Council Tax setting: 2023 to 2024 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023 to 2027

Report number:	COU/WS/23/003	
Report to and date:	Council	21 February 2023
Cabinet member:	Councillor Sarah Broughton Portfolio Holder Resources and Property Tel: 07929 305787 Email: sarah.broughton@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) Chief Financial Officer Tel: 01638 719245 Email: rachael.mann@westsuffolk.gov.uk	

Decisions Plan: This matter has already been considered by Cabinet as referred to in Report number: COU/WS/23/002, and was included on the Decisions Plan as a referral to Council for a final decision.

Wards impacted: All wards

Recommendation: It is recommended that:

1. Having taken into account the information received by Cabinet on 7 February 2023 (Report number: CAB/WS/23/008) including the report by the Director

(Resources and Property) (Section 151 Officer) set out in Attachment C, together with the up to date information and advice contained in Report number: COU/WS/23/003, the level of West Suffolk Council's band D council tax for 2023 to 2024 be set at £192.06 (the level of council tax beyond 2023 to 2024 will be set in accordance with the annual budget process for the relevant financial year).

- 2. Subject to recommendation 1. above, the following formal council tax resolutions be adopted:**
 - a. the revenue and capital budget for 2023 to 2027, attached at Attachment A to Report number: COU/WS/23/003, and as detailed in Attachment D (Appendices 1 to 6), Attachment E and Attachment F be approved.**
 - b. A general fund balance of £5 million be agreed to be maintained, as detailed in paragraph 8.2.**
 - c. The statutory calculations under Section 30 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, attached at Attachment I, be noted.**
 - d. The Suffolk County Council and Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk precepts issued to West Suffolk Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and outlined at paragraphs 12.6 and 12.7 below, be noted.**
 - e. In accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the amounts shown in Schedule D of Attachment H be agreed as the amount of Council Tax for the year 2023 to 2024 for each of the categories of dwellings shown.**
- 3. The Director (Resources and Property), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Property, be authorised to**

vire funds between existing Earmarked Reserves (as set out at Attachment D, Appendix 3) as deemed appropriate throughout the medium term financial planning period.

- 4. Approval be given to delegate authority to the Director (Resources and Property) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Property to formulate and implement in full, Government grant, discount or relief schemes (examples include but not limited to those set out in paragraphs 3.13 to 3.19 and 4.7 to 4.9), so long as they are as a minimum, revenue cost neutral to the Council.**
- 5. Approval be given to the change to the Long Term Empty Property Premium set out in paragraphs 4.10 to 4.13, and to the further class of property not attracting the premium set out in paragraph 4.12.**
- 6. Endorsement be given to Cabinet’s approval of the fees and charges price increases (as set out in Attachment D appendix 6a).**
- 7. Approval be given to the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy (as set out in Attachment F).**

1. Summary

- 1.1 West Suffolk Council has an exemplary track record in robust financial management which has meant it has continued to deliver high quality services as well as meeting the strategic vision of the authority.
- 1.2 This is despite a series of challenges. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery which has not only reduced income through behavioural changes (Government policy has been that councils create income to supplement reduction in national funding) but also costs to the council in playing its role to support communities and businesses. All UK authorities are now facing tough financial challenges caused by issues such as soaring inflation, cost of living and energy prices, the war in Ukraine and changes to the way communities spend which reduces income. National finances have also been reduced significantly over the last decade for local councils and added burdens have been placed on authorities too during this time.
- 1.3 This budget has been created not only to be balanced and sustainable but as an investment in the priorities of our residents and businesses. It is designed to make the communities of West Suffolk greener, healthier and more prosperous.
- 1.4 This budget has been created to meet the needs of the Council's strategic framework and benefit all West Suffolk. It will see the continuation of investments in a range of initiatives to meet priorities such as meeting zero carbon emissions by 2030 following the authority declaring both climate and environmental emergencies. This investment builds on years of carbon reduction initiatives by West Suffolk and its predecessor councils. Not only will this reduce the impact the Council has on the climate but also actually produce a net income towards the cost of running much valued council services – a win-win for taxpayers and the environment.
- 1.5 The Council will continue to concentrate, with councillors, on its health and wellbeing agenda, including investing in its hubs, LifeLink, housing and families and communities work – as well as the hub network across West Suffolk, investing in new and better ways to work with our partners on the wellbeing of our residents.
- 1.6 In addition, the budget includes an additional £240,000 investment per annum in our waste and grounds maintenance team in recognition of the importance of this service to our communities and the continued demands through the housing growth in the district. The budget also includes £1.3 million (2023 to 2027) for capital investment in our open spaces and parks as well as our popular museums and attractions that are vital to the wellbeing and health of residents as well as doing their part to protect and improve the local environment.

2. Context to this report

- 2.1 West Suffolk Council (and its predecessor councils Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council) has a good track record of delivering high quality services that our communities demand and value. It also has a strong vision and programme to deliver, through our West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2021 to 2024, to bring greater prosperity for our communities and businesses.
- 2.2 This has been underpinned by robust financial planning and management enabling the Council to deliver both services and the strategic aims of West Suffolk. This can be seen in year-on-year savings and income generation, alongside the £5 million in annual savings made from shared services and the creation of a single council in April 2019, to put the Council on a stronger financial footing as well as the right size to better champion West Suffolk communities. Due to this financial management, and despite previous reductions in national funding as well as the severe impact of COVID-19 and the cost of living crisis on finances, the Council can put forward a balanced budget for 2023 to 2024 and an indicative balanced budget for the following year 2024 to 2025.
- 2.3 Despite our successes the pressures on local government finances, with or without a pandemic and cost of living crisis, still require local authorities nationally to continue to deliver more with less. So, we must continue to transform the way we work and the way we are funded in response to these challenges to meet future savings.
- 2.4 West Suffolk Council's ongoing robust and responsible financial management has meant we have been able to be in a strong position to face many of the challenges that have so deeply affected all local government authorities. However, as costs increase for our businesses and communities there is more demand, especially from the most vulnerable for our aid. At the same time the rising cost of goods, utilities and fuel that everyone is experiencing to deliver these services are also increasing for West Suffolk Council – doubling the challenge to our budget setting.
- 2.5 The economic situation, therefore, continues to be hugely challenging, with rising costs and increased demand for services, in particular for housing support. Suffolk, and West Suffolk through its Families and Communities as well as economic growth work, is at the forefront nationally supporting its communities and businesses by working in partnership across the public, private and voluntary sectors. This partnership working brings benefits to communities and businesses alongside efficiencies and savings. However, the impact of the economic situation and wider income recovery challenges on our partners including Suffolk County Council is uncertain at this stage. Therefore, it is not clear what indirect cost impacts may be experienced locally and, on the partnership working.

- 2.6 The medium-term budget plans (beyond April 2024) are being prepared in the context of significant uncertainties around the current economic climate and Government policy, such as:
- the long-term financial impact of behavioural change following the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions and current cost of living and inflationary challenges
 - Local Government Finance Settlement (post April 2025)
 - the Fairer Funding Review, Business Rates Retention (BRR) Scheme Review (post April 2025)
 - commercial investment policy
 - potential major reforms with the Resources and Waste Strategy (RAWS), Health and Social Care reforms and the Planning Reform White Paper

The Council will continue to lobby Government over financial support and funding together with partners and other local authorities.

- 2.7 Councils nationally are expected to balance the budget through savings and producing local income to fund services due to reduced Government funding. This year, to assist with the expected impact on demand for council services, the Council will see an increase in funding from the Government. However, this will not completely neutralise the impact expected from the recovery from the pandemic or the current cost of living crisis. Nor will it address the financial challenges that already existed for local government following a decade of funding reductions and increases in the demand for our services such as housing and homelessness support.
- 2.8 Despite all of this, through prudent budgeting, our commitment to our six financial themes, investment as well as transformation, West Suffolk Council is in a good financial position. However, while this means a balanced budget can be set for 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025 there are gaps to be met in later years – currently forecast at £2.67 million in 2025 to 2026 growing to £3.69 million in 2026 to 2027. Government has made it clear that budgets have to be balanced by councils through reducing the cost of delivery, investment, income generation and local taxation.
- 2.9 Whilst the 2023 to 2024 budget includes some previously committed income proposals, cost certainty has played a particular focus in this year's budget process (the detail being shown in Attachment B) to enable, where possible, greater certainty in the Council's financial plans given the volatility of income streams and the uncertainty around the impact of the current cost of living crisis and the continued recovery of income streams post COVID.
- 2.10 Currently council tax makes up approximately one fifth of the authority's budget (exclusive of housing benefit) and therefore only goes a fifth of the way to actually paying for services. Council tax goes on the base budget, which means it has a cumulative effect and a greater impact in future years. It is recognised that any increase provides an extra burden on taxpayers but does mean the protection of vital services which would otherwise possibly have to be considered for reductions. West Suffolk Council uses around nine

percent of a local council taxpayer's bill with the rest made up by the County Council, Police and Crime Commissioner, as well as Parish or Town Council. Councillors are asked and expected by Government to look at local taxation levels to meet the authority's financial needs to support its communities and help future proof from financial uncertainty. Council tax levels are considered further in Sections 4 and 12 of this report.

Investing in our growth agenda

- 2.11 National policy also encourages councils to grow their local, and therefore the UK, economy by supporting business, investment and housing to bring in local income, including consideration of new income streams. Bridging the gap between income and demand remains, cost of living crisis aside, the single biggest challenge facing local government across the country.
- 2.12 The financial challenges and national funding policies means that councils can no longer rely on Government grants but must look at more innovative ways to finance the current services and create financial capacity to invest and meet the needs of our communities and businesses. West Suffolk Council recognises this and continues to take a proactive investment role through our Investing in our Growth Agenda Strategy and fund, not only to meet the challenges brought by funding for councils, but also importantly to manage growth, reduce our carbon footprint and ensure prosperity for our communities. We must, therefore, maintain and where appropriate grow the local income we receive now (and reduce the cost of delivering services) but also deliver our investment projects, enable the building of homes, through Barley Homes and increase our investment base so that we deliver new income streams to replace those lost. This will enable us to continue delivering the services and wider community support which people value and make West Suffolk an attractive place to live, work and invest.
- 2.13 Our medium-term financial plans continue to place reliance on delivery of our strategic projects as set out in our capital programme at Attachment D Appendix 2, such as Barley Homes, the Innovation Units at Suffolk Park and our Net Zero Carbon investment plans (see Attachment G for further details). As we have started to gain more certainty around our anticipated returns (through a dividend) from the Council's wholly owned Housing Company - Barley Homes - we now see these returns coming through the current budget process, smoothed out at an estimated £300,000 across the medium term (an additional £100,000 per annum from last year's estimates), to support the delivery of future years' budgets.
- 2.14 Over recent months there have been some consultations and announcements that indicate the Government's wish to ensure that local government focuses on its core functions rather than expanding into what are seen as more 'commercial' type activities. These include:
- Changes to the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) lending criteria to exclude the ability to borrow to invest in commercial property to generate income.

- Consultations on the CIPFA Treasury Management and Prudential Codes to strengthen the intention around commercial investments and provide clarity about borrowing and investments
- Current Government consultation about minimum revenue provision and use of capital receipts from commercial activity

2.15 There has been no need to change our outcome-based investment approach to date. However, as we continue to shape our investing in our growth agenda projects, focusing in and around recovery and our growth and climate agendas, we will continue to review and have regard to any changes and the new operating parameters when considering future activity under our capital programme and investment plans.

2.16 Some of our projects will need considerable investment, both in money - including creating new funds where needed through borrowing (supported by robust business cases) – and resources and time. But that investment will build a more financially resilient and self-sufficient council, with less reliance on uncertain national or other funding streams. That focus on projects that are also income-generating, which may span several years before they deliver a return, means we no longer look simply to balance a budget for one year.

2.17 Importantly these economic growth projects will bring wider long-term benefits to our areas than purely being a financially robust council, such as jobs, reducing our carbon footprint, better health outcomes and investment in working with communities and place-based initiatives.

Transforming West Suffolk Council

2.18 It is important now more than ever, with the uncertainties around income generation during a pandemic, that we balance growth in existing and new income streams with controlling our cost base and delivering an efficient council. We have transformed what we do and will continue to do so – examples being the sharing of services and the most recent creation of a new single West Suffolk Council, achieving and protecting annual savings in excess of £5 million a year. Our Families and Communities work is making real changes in people’s lives, delivering locally alongside our elected members.

2.19 The partnership work that we started through the Families and Communities work has been invaluable during the pandemic in strengthening the community response that has been vital to supporting the vulnerable. This has led to partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors working in new ways to find local solutions. The Council and community have also, through the pandemic, adapted to using online and digital solutions and the benefits that brings alongside more traditional methods. The Council recognises the vital role that our communities play in the COVID-19 response and in the future recovery.

- 2.20 The Council's change and service programme, which will accelerate the delivery of a number of our financial strategy themes such as transformation of service delivery, encouraging the use of digital forms for customer access and behaving more commercially, will feature as our key approach to delivering across our medium-term plans. Our opportunities include capturing and building on the learning and innovative ways of delivering our services experienced during this time.
- 2.21 The role that digital will play in our future state, alongside the role of our partners (public, private and voluntary), including the relationships across the tiers of local government within West Suffolk, will be critical in ensuring a system approach for our residents and businesses that is valued and sustainable. This transformational plan, which will go towards ensuring delivery of the outcomes of both financial and improved services, will take shape to contribute towards our financial challenges in 2023 to 2024 and across the medium term.

Net Zero Carbon Emissions by 2030

- 2.22 In September 2019, West Suffolk Council declared a climate emergency, and in 2020 Cabinet approved the council's Environment and Climate Change Taskforce report and action plan. This work built on years of significant focus and investment by West Suffolk Council and its predecessor councils on this important matter. The Taskforce made a series of recommendations on the Council's future role in protecting and enhancing the environment and tackling climate change, both in the way in which it carries out its operations and through specific initiatives.
- 2.23 The Taskforce developed a broad Action Plan and Trajectory to achieve Net Zero Emissions by 2030. The plan focused on the greenhouse gas emissions arising from the Council's operations. Work has completed now to decarbonise a number of buildings, with the Council securing £1.4 million from the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund as well as its own investment. The Council has also invested in a range of renewable technologies at the new Mildenhall Hub and plans to make further investment in the Western Way Development.
- 2.24 The 2023 to 2024 budget continues the commitment to the £9 million investment facility in our Net Zero Emissions by 2030 journey. Attachment G sets out more detail on the facility, created within the Investing in Our Growth Agenda Fund (funded in the main by external borrowing, £650,000 from revenue), specifically allocated within the capital programme to deliver environmental projects which are anticipated to deliver a 31 per cent carbon saving on council operations, together with a return to the Council of two per cent after allowing for borrowing costs.
- 2.25 This £9 million fund is to be utilised across the following proposed projects:
- Council buildings: improve the energy efficiency and incorporate renewable energy (electricity and/or heat) into buildings

- Electric vehicle fleet (EV) investment: replace small vehicles on fleet with EVs when replacement falls due
- Expansion of our West Suffolk Solar for Business scheme

2.26 In addition to this £9 million capital facility, the revenue budget 2023 to 2024 includes a £100,000 per annum provision to support a planned switch to use Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) derived fuel in the larger diesel-powered fleet once the fuel market prices settle. No vehicle modifications would be required, and this would achieve carbon savings of nearly 400 tonnes Co2e per annum, having regard to emissions resulting from production as well as use. It will also deliver air quality improvements.

2.27 In total the projects proposed would deliver 2,279 tCo2e savings per annum once fully implemented. This should mean that the Council would meet its Carbon Budget target for 2026 putting the Council on the right path to meet its net zero ambition. The carbon performance of the fund will be monitored and reported on as part of the Council's annual Environmental Statement. The overall performance of the fund will be reviewed regularly and will help inform any further funding requirements for the third and fourth periods of the net zero plan.

3. Local government finance settlement

3.1 The Government set out its intentions for the local government finance settlement for 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025 in a policy statement published on 12 December 2022. The statement confirmed that the next two years will essentially be two rollover settlements, although in practice there would be firm figures for 2023 to 2024 only with just the principles for 2024 to 2025 being set out. The anticipated funding reforms (Fair Funding Review and business rates baseline reset) will not now be implemented until 2025 to 2026 at the earliest.

3.2 The provisional settlement allocations for 2023 to 2024 were released on 19 December 2022 and the final allocations were released on 6 February 2023, and these have been included in the 2023 to 2024 budget and MTFS. The settlement was better than expected, and in cash terms is the best that local government has received in several years. In real terms, however, the settlement still doesn't make up for the years of austerity and Government funding cuts. The financial implications of the settlement for West Suffolk are generally positive and an additional £1.17 million net benefit (after the agreed transfer of the New Homes Bonus to the Strategic Priority and MTFS reserve) compared to the previous settlement assumptions for 2023 to 2024 is included in the proposed budget.

Revenue Support Grant

3.3 Revenue Support Grant allocations have been rolled forward from 2022 to 2023 and inflated by CPI before rolling in two pre-existing grants

(Family Annexe Council Tax Discount grant and Local Council Tax Support Administration Subsidy grant) that will now be included in the Settlement Funding Assessment going forward. West Suffolk's allocation for 2023 to 2024 is £0.420 million and for 2024 to 2025 we have assumed a further increase in line with forecast CPI of 7.4 per cent amounting to £0.451 million. No further RSG allocations have been included in the MTFs from 2025 to 2026 onwards.

Rural Services Delivery Grant

- 3.4 The Rural Services Delivery Grant has been rolled forward from 2022 to 2023 and £0.203 million has been included in both 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025 budgets, with nothing assumed beyond this.

Services Grant

- 3.5 This was communicated as a one-off grant for 2022 to 2023 distributed to every authority to support all services delivered by councils and included the reimbursement of the National Insurance increase from April 2022. However, the Government has rolled this forward to 2023 to 2024 albeit at a lower level to reflect the reversal of the National Insurance increase. West Suffolk's allocation is £0.183 million for 2023 to 2024 and we have assumed a similar sum for 2024 to 2025.

New Homes Bonus

- 3.6 There has been considerable uncertainty regarding New Homes Bonus (NHB) as the consultation on the future of NHB and potential alternative incentives for the provision of new housing has been postponed. However, there will now be a further one-year round of NHB funding (year 13), and the Government will decide whether to continue this into 2024 to 2025 before next year's settlement. The total money available for NHB has been cut partly to fund the new Funding Guarantee (see below) and will not attract any legacy payments. However, our funding guarantee grant (below) includes provision to replace the NHB lost between the current year 2022 to 2023 and 2023 to 2024 settlement. The NHB allocation for West Suffolk is £0.815 million for 2023 to 2024, along with £0.941 million included in the funding guarantee grant to maintain the £1.756 million received in the current financial year. The full allocation (£1.756 million in total) will be transferred to the Strategic Priorities and Medium Term Financial Strategy Reserve for future utilisation across the medium term plans.

Funding Guarantee Grant

- 3.7 This new grant has been created to ensure every authority has an increase in Core Spending Power (CSP) of three per cent before any council tax increases. It will be funded from the now discontinued Lower Tier Services Grant and the reduced cost of NHB. West Suffolk has been given an allocation of £1.137 million for 2023 to 2024 and we have assumed a similar allocation for 2024 to 2025, with no further allocations beyond that date. As this allocation includes £0.941 million

transferred from NHB, the net £0.196 million will benefit the 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025 budgets.

- 3.8 These Government funding assumptions will continue to be kept under constant review as part of future budget processes. This collection of assumptions has one of the biggest financial impacts on the Council's budget in the medium term given the sums involved.

Business rates and business rates revaluation

- 3.9 The Government has confirmed that there will be no reset of the Business Rates Retention system and implementation of the Fair Funding Review in 2023 to 2025. It is anticipated that some form of reset or review will take place in 2025 to 2026 at the earliest. There is a commitment from Government that they will work closely with the sector on the challenges and opportunities before consulting on any potential changes. Part of this work is expected to look at options to support local authorities through transitional protection.
- 3.10 The next business rates revaluation will take effect from 1 April 2023 and the Government has confirmed that it will adjust each local authority's tariff or top-up to ensure that retained income from business rates is the same as it would have been had the revaluation not taken place.
- 3.11 The Government has also confirmed that the decision to freeze the business rates multiplier again will be fully funded and, from 2023 to 2024 onwards, compensation for under-indexation of the multiplier will be paid based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rather than the higher Retail Price Index (RPI).
- 3.12 Compensation to authorities will be part-paid via an uplift to Baseline Funding Level of 3.74 per cent, with the remainder paid via cap compensation section 31 grant.

Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Relief and Supporting Small Business Relief

- 3.13 The Government announced in November 2022 that following the revaluation of properties for non-domestic rates, effective from 1 April 2023, that Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Relief (RHL) and Supporting Small Business Relief (SSB) will be extended into 2023 to 2024 financial year. Local authorities are expected to use their discretionary relief powers (section 47 of the Local Government Act 1988, as amended) to grant these reliefs in line with the relevant eligibility criteria set out in guidelines. However, the full cost of granting this relief will be compensated through a section 31 grant from Government.

- 3.14 RHL and SSB reliefs are automatically applied to accounts without the need for businesses to apply. RHL relief is applicable to occupied properties which fall within the definitions within the guidelines of being retail, hospitality or leisure premises. RHL relief is being increased from 50 per cent relief to 75 per cent with effect from 1 April 2023. The 75 per cent reduction is applied after Transitional and Small Business Rate reliefs have been applied to reduce the amount payable by the ratepayer.
- 3.15 SSB is being implemented to assist ratepayers following the 2023 revaluation. Any business that was in receipt of Small Business Rate Relief prior to 2023, and who lost part or all of that relief following the 2023 revaluation, would have their rates bill increase limited to a maximum of £600 per annum. The remainder of any increase would be subject to SSB relief.
- 3.16 Both reliefs require the granting of the Council's discretionary relief powers. Members are asked to approve the extension of these rate reliefs (which will be fully funded by the Government through section 31 grants) in order to support West Suffolk's businesses through support of recommendation 4.

Local Authority Housing Fund

- 3.17 In late December 2022, Government announced details of a £500 million Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) aimed at providing accommodation for Afghan and Ukrainian refugees in the first instance, and to address local housing and homelessness pressures in the future. Based on a formula calculating the number of Ukrainian arrivals per 1,000 head of population and current housing pressures, West Suffolk Council has been offered up to £2,226,000 towards providing a minimum of 21 homes, plus a further £419,239 towards a minimum of two larger homes (four bedrooms plus). In addition, £20,000 per property is provided for other costs such as refurbishment. These amounts equate to 40 to 60 percent of the cost of the average lower quarter property price in the area. The expectation from Government is that councils and/or registered housing providers provide the remaining funding.
- 3.18 As a non-stock holding authority, the Council is working with local registered housing providers to agree how the funding could be used to purchase properties in the area. Initial discussions indicate that purchasing off the open market is the most effective solution and would secure homes within the timescales set by Government. The intention being that the registered providers would own and manage the stock, with the Council passporting the funding from central Government. Officers are working on principle that the use of this fund should be revenue cost neutral to the Council.

- 3.19 The Government has set a deadline of 1 March 2023 for councils to agree involvement in this scheme by way of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with funding potentially allocated from March onwards. The MoU details how many properties could be secured, with the Government wishing to understand how many properties could be procured by November 2023. Delegation 4 of this report allows for the Section 151 officer to implement this scheme including to be authorised to submit a MoU to central Government to secure funding from this scheme on the basis that this is revenue cost neutral to the Council.

Collection Fund deficits

- 3.20 Detailed proposals for changing the accounting treatment of the 2020 to 2021 Collection Fund deficits were previously confirmed in regulations, and Collection Fund deficits in relation to 2020 to 2021 will be spread over three years (2021 to 2024), as reflected in the medium-term budgets.

Council tax referendum limits

- 3.21 In 2023 to 2024, local authorities will be given greater council tax flexibility. The core referendum threshold will increase from two per cent to three per cent (with district councils able to increase by the higher of £5 or three per cent). Police and crime commissioners will be able to increase their precept by £15 in 2023 to 2024 and £10 in 2024 to 2025. Social care authorities will be able to apply a further two per cent increase in 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025 (five per cent in total). The medium-term budgets currently assume no change to the previously agreed £4.95 annual band D increase.

4. Council tax for 2023 to 2024

Council tax level 2023 to 2024

- 4.1 The budget for council tax for 2023 to 2024 and future years is based on maximising our council tax receipts to protect services and to support our investment plans. For 2023 to 2024 the planned band D council tax level is proposed at £192.06, which represents a band D weekly increase of just under 10 pence - noting that just over 70 per cent of our residents are in bands A to C so will actually see a lower increase. This increase is still below the expectation from Government for a greater rise in council tax up to three percent for district councils.

Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2023 to 2024

- 4.2 Council on 13 December 2022 (COU/WS/22/21) agreed to a one year only change to the West Suffolk Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS). The maximum reduction on Council Tax paid by LCTRS claimants, from 1 April 2023, has increased from 91.5 per cent to 100 per cent.

- 4.3 The proposal is highly targeted to reach those who are already on means-tested benefits, many of whom are working, and has low administrative cost. This could benefit around 4,700 residents and represents a one year only £500,000 investment by organisations that set Council Tax precepts in supporting those most in need that meet the criteria.
- 4.4 It is part of a range of ways the Council is supporting communities including those with the highest risk of financial hardship as a result of the current cost of living crisis. The cost (our share is approximately £50,000) to the Council has been worked through the 2023 to 2024 budget setting process and is reflected in a reduced tax base for 2023 to 2024.
- 4.5 By providing additional support to residents the aim is to help avoid crisis situations, for example, homelessness and fewer applications for Exceptional Hardship Payments from those in receipt of Council Tax support.
- 4.6 This is a short-term measure for the financial year 2023 to 2024 only. After this period West Suffolk Council's LCTRS would revert to the current minimum 8.5 per cent contribution rate.

Council Tax Support Fund 2023 to 2024

- 4.7 The Council will also be administrating (hopefully in time for the 2023 to 2024 bills) its share - £227,547, of the new £100 million Council Tax Support Fund announced in the finance settlement in December. The fund recognises the impact of rising bills on residents. The Government expects local authorities to use the majority of their funding allocations to reduce bills for current working age and pension age LCTRS claimants by up to £25.
- 4.8 The Council is expected to deliver this using their discretionary powers under s13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- 4.9 As West Suffolk has already committed to go further than that with its LCTRS scheme change to up to 100 per cent reduction for 2023 to 2024, we expect to have a higher discretionary element to use to support more vulnerable households with council tax bills. It is recommended that the Director of Resources and Property be given a delegation to implement this scheme, as it is fully funded by Government.

Changes to the Long-Term Empty Property Premium and Second Homes

- 4.10 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (the Bill) announced in May 2022 confirmed that the Government will be changing the qualifying period

for use of the council tax long term-empty homes premium, and also introducing a discretionary council tax premium on second homes. The new powers reinforce the incentive for owners to bring empty properties back into use and support councils in addressing the impacts of empty and second homes.

- 4.11 Section 72 of the Bill will give billing authorities the opportunity to charge the Long Term Empty Premium after one year, rather than the current two years. This will be effective from April 2024 and will require billing authorities to use their discretionary powers. Therefore, members are requested to approve this change (which will be subject to the Bill receiving Royal Assent).
- 4.12 The Council currently has a policy applying waivers on the Long Term Empty Premium being applied in certain circumstances (as set out in report CAB/WS/19/044). It is recommended that a further class of property that will not attract the premium is added to the policy as follows:
- Where a long term empty property has recently been purchased and is actively being renovated with a view to sell, rent or inhabit, provided that the owners apply for the suspension within six months of purchasing the property, and the project is completed within six months of purchase. If the work is not completed within the six month timeframe, the premium charge will be reinstated and backdated to the purchase date. In exceptional circumstances, such as very good progress having been made at six months, the Council may use its discretion to grant a further extension to the premium waiver.
- 4.13 In addition to this, Section 73 of the Bill gives billing authorities the power to charge 100 percent premium on dwellings occupied periodically (second homes). To be able to charge this premium the billing authority needs to make a determination at least one year before the beginning of the financial year to which the change relates. It is unclear at the moment whether this will be a more widely adopted policy or targeted at those areas that have a particularly high proportion of second homes such as some coastal areas. For this reason, it is not being recommended to adopt this change currently and officers will keep the situation under review.

5. Setting the budget - 2023 to 2024 and across the medium term to 2026 to 2027

- 5.1 On 22 February 2022 the Council approved a budget for 2022 to 2023 and medium term financial plan for West Suffolk Council to 2026. This medium term financial plan was balanced for the first year and then showed a budget gap of £1.16 million in 2023 to 2024, £1.71 million in 2024 to 2025 and £2.98 million in 2025 to 2026 (these are cumulative amounts).

- 5.2 At its meeting on 29 September 2022, Report number: PAS/WS/22/017, the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee (PASC) supported Cabinet with the next steps and principles for future financial planning across the medium term. Our approach is designed to enable the Council to respond effectively to changing circumstances while maintaining a medium-term focus on the Council's financial sustainability.
- 5.3 West Suffolk Council's response to the financial challenges and opportunities will continue to follow our six key themes. Our opportunities include capturing and building on the learning and innovative ways of delivering our services, experienced during this time. These themes are considered to still represent an appropriate response to the ongoing financial situation:
- Aligning resources to West Suffolk's strategic framework and essential services.
 - Sharing services and transformation of service delivery.
 - Behaving more commercially.
 - Considering new funding models.
 - Encouraging the use of digital forms for customer access.
 - Taking advantage of new forms of local government finance.
- 5.4 Attachment A is the revenue budget summary, which provides an overview of the proposed income and expenditure for 2023 to 2027. The total proposed revenue expenditure in 2023 to 2024 is £63.40 million (excluding housing benefits).

5.5 This revenue forecast includes several inflation assumptions as detailed in the following table.

Inflation assumptions assumed in the MTFS

DETAILS	2023 to 2024	2024 to 2025	2025 to 2026	2026 to 2027
INFLATIONARY CHANGES				
Pay inflation	4.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Employers Pension Contribution	26.00%	26.00%	26.00%	28.00%
Pension Take-Up Assumption	97.00%	97.00%	97.00%	97.00%
Vacancy Savings	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%
Drainage board precepts inflation	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%
General Inflation	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
ICT Inflation	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%
Business Rates Inflation - CPI at Sept	0.00%	7.40%	2.10%	2.00%
Business Rates Inflation - 0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Fees & Charges	Varies	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Utilities	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Electricity	7.5%	7.5%	7.5%	7.5%
Transport - Fuel	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Insurance Premium Increases	10.0%	7.5%	5.0%	5.0%

Further details around the assumptions used in the MTFS are set out in Attachment D – Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023 to 2027. Budget assumptions continue to be reviewed as more accurate information becomes available.

5.6 The PASC committee received two further 'delivering a sustainable budget' reports during the 2023 to 2024 budget process. These reports (reference PAS/WS/22/021 and PAS/WS/23/01) detailed a number of budget pressures, investments and saving proposals. These have all been worked through the 2023 to 2024 budget process and are detailed in Attachment B.

Fees and charges

5.7 As part of the budget setting process, and as reported to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee PAS/WS/23/01 on 26 January 2023, the Council has undertaken a review of its fees and charges pricing used in the budget and medium term. This is to ensure:

- That we are recovering the cost of delivering discretionary services on a user pays basis (taking into account charging levels made by other local authorities)
- Consistency of approach in line with the new fees and charges policy
- Appropriate visibility for those pricing decisions that are likely to have significant public interest (including those over 5 per cent annual increase – in line with the Council's constitution).

The fees and charges that are changing and meet the reporting requirements are detailed in attachment D appendices 6 and 6a.

Delivering our sustainable future – beyond 2023 to 2024

- 5.8 With demands increasing and uncertainty in local government funding beyond April 2025, it is critical that we continue to drive change and stay ahead of the financial curve to enable us to protect valuable local services and to continue to have the financial capacity to continue to invest in our communities. In order to provide greater certainty to our budget and to not over rely on income until such time we understand the true impact of the current pandemic, our biggest savings focus must be on the continual review and transformation in the way we deliver our services through our emerging Change and Service Improvement programme (paragraphs 2.18 to 2.21).
- 5.9 The financial impact of the current cost of living crisis has also introduced considerable uncertainty (on top of what was already uncertain times) in predicting the Government’s approach to financial resources for local government in future years. Therefore, the resource assumptions from April 2025 should be treated with caution and will be updated as we go through future budget setting processes and further Government announcements are made.

6. Capital Programme 2023 to 2027

- 6.1 The capital expenditure of the Council through its investment approach has an impact on the revenue budget and is part of the overall preparation of the revenue proposals for the coming year. Its overall capital expenditure is not just about creating a return income but also has greater benefits such as much needed new leisure and health facilities; providing infrastructure for businesses, our high streets and rural areas; reducing our carbon footprint; protecting jobs; helping prevent homelessness and improving access to services.
- 6.2 It is estimated that £48.11 million will be spent on investment through our capital schemes during 2023 to 2024 which are to be funded by a combination of grants and contributions (£1.05 million), earmarked revenue reserves (£4.57 million), our usable capital receipts reserve (£7.45 million) and borrowing (£35.04 million).
- 6.3 Looking ahead, the total value of the capital programme over the next four years is approximately £137 million. Attachment D, Appendix 2 shows the planned capital expenditure in financial year 2023 to 2024 and future years, together with information on the funding of that expenditure (that is, grants and contributions, use of earmarked revenue reserves, useable capital receipts reserve and external borrowing) and is summarised in the table below.

Planned capital expenditure over four years to 2026 to 2027

	2023 to 2024 millions	2024 to 2025 millions	2025 to 2026 millions	2026 to 2027 millions	Total millions
Gross capital expenditure	£48.11	£54.27	£31.07	£3.19	£136.64
Funded by:					
Grants and contributions	£1.05	£0.90	£0.90	£0.90	£3.75
Earmarked revenue reserves	£4.57	£3.31	£3.30	£2.29	£13.47
Capital receipts reserve	£7.45	£0.20	£0.12	£0.00	£7.77
External borrowing	£35.04	£49.86	£26.75	£0.00	£111.65
Total	£48.11	£54.27	£31.07	£3.19	£136.64

- 6.4 Subject to the year-end outturn position, any carry forwards from the 2022 to 2023 budget will be added to the 2023 to 2024 capital programme budget at the year-end.

Disposal of surplus assets

- 6.5 Part of the funding arrangements for the capital programme has been the disposal of surplus assets. The Council has plans to review its programme of asset disposals as part of the development of its Asset Management Strategy. The following table is a summary estimate of the likely level of income from asset disposals over the period 2023 to 2027.

Estimated income from asset disposals 2023 to 2027

	2023 to 2024 millions	2024 to 2025 millions	2025 to 2026 millions	2026 to 2027 millions
Council share of right to buy receipts	£0.50	£0.50	£0.50	£0.50
Barley Home loan repayments to be made available through agreed loan facility	£0.00	£6.01	£0.89	£0.00
Other asset disposals	£3.36	£0.06	£0.17	£0.05
Total	£3.86	£6.57	£1.56	£0.55

- 6.6 The above capital programme and asset disposals programme will, in the short to medium term, move the Council's usable capital receipts reserves from £10.69 million to £14.01 million. This assumes that all borrowing included within current and future business cases will be drawn down. Note that the Barley Homes repayments are likely to be reinvested in the delivery of further housing sites as subsequent business plans are agreed.
- 6.7 The calculation of interest income used in the medium-term plans is based on the use of existing and anticipated capital expenditure and receipts, and external borrowing where the business cases assumed funding would come from borrowing.
- 6.8 Borrowing rates have been assumed in line with previous business case assumptions. A review of the total interest payable budget assumption has been carried out during the 2023 to 2024 budget process to assess the adequacy of the total annual budget given the increase in external borrowing rates. This review has considered the Council's overall need to borrow based on its cash flow requirements (including the revised capital programme and assumed borrowing requirements) and the current and future external interest rate projections. The outcome of that review is that the current total interest payable budget, supported by any in year fluctuations from the capital financing reserve, is sufficient to cover the interest payable expected over the medium-term plans.
- 6.9 The Prudential Code for Capital Finance and matters relating to the affordability of the capital programme are addressed in Attachment D, Appendix 4. The revenue cost of the capital programme is achievable across the medium term provided the savings and income streams indicated in the MTFS are implemented.

7. Minimum revenue provision (MRP)

- 7.1 The Treasury Management and Annual Investment Strategy included elsewhere on this agenda (Report CAB/WS/23/007) and the Prudential Indicators (Attachment D Appendix 4), provide a framework within which borrowing limits for the Council are established and will confirm our MRP policy for 2023 to 2024.

8. General fund balance

- 8.1 The revenue budget, Attachment A, based on current budget projections, shows a balanced budget position for 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025. However, many of the assumptions supporting the budget projections for 2023 to 2024 (and future years) are subject to significant uncertainty. This includes assumptions regarding:
- sustainability of income stream estimates (including commercial property rental, car parking, trade waste and planning income)

- impact of business rates retention scheme and Suffolk pooling arrangements
- pay inflation and employer’s pension liabilities.

8.2 The Council holds general fund balances as a contingency to cover the cost of unexpected expenditure during the year. As outlined in Attachment C (Adequacy of Reserves and Robustness of Budget Estimates) the Council’s general fund balance is set at a minimum of £5 million.

8.3 The recommended level of general fund balance has been established by taking into account the following:

- allowance for a working balance to cushion the impact of any unexpected events or emergencies
- the new risks placed at a local level under the new business rates retention scheme, such as appeals
- the addition of greater income targets and project returns linked to being more commercial and the selling of council services
- other risks detailed in the Scenario Planning and Sensitivity Analysis provided at Attachment D, Appendix 5.

9. Earmarked reserves

9.1 At the beginning of the 2023 to 2024 financial year the Council will have an estimated £39.95 million in earmarked reserves. The current level of earmarked reserves and contributions during 2023 to 2024 has been reviewed and where appropriate annual contributions have been adjusted. Attachment D, Appendix 3, provides details of the proposed contributions to, and projected expenditure from, earmarked reserves during 2023 to 2027.

9.2 At the end of 2026 to 2027 these reserve balances are estimated to fall to £34.15 million, in support of financing a number of key investment projects. It should be noted that the closing balance at attachment D appendix 3 includes around £5.5 million contributed to reserves for the 2 years 2023 to 2025 in respect of business rates retention of growth at present. This is likely to be rebased going forward as part of Government reforms to the scheme, and as such has not been included in the £34.15 million closing balance as referenced in this paragraph.

9.3 The Council has a five-year asset management plan that is included within the proposed revenue and capital budgets. The capital element is detailed in attachment D appendix 2a. The five-year asset management plan is fully funded through an annual revenue contribution and use of the building maintenance reserve with the exception of larger leisure centre replacements beyond that of Bury St Edmunds Leisure centre in the medium term and an historical paths liability in the former Forest Heath area - estimated to be in the region of £500,000 to £1 million. Work is scheduled on urgent repairs and maintenance for these works. However, a longer term management plan is being prepared along with funding options. Work will

continue during 2023 to 2024 to establish the Council’s full liability and to consider options for future budget processes.

10. Strategic priorities and MTFS reserve

10.1 This reserve acts as a one-off fund to provide the financial capacity, either through direct investment (revenue and/or capital) or through servicing external borrowing, for the Council to drive forward the delivery of a sustainable Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the West Suffolk Strategic Plan priorities. This reserve is forecast to move from £3.97 million at the beginning of 2023 to 2024 up to £4.95 million by the end of 2026 to 2027.

10.2 The following table shows the total New Homes Bonus (NHB) grant payments made to the predecessor councils since the scheme began in 2011 to 2012, including the expected West Suffolk Council receipts in both 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025, as well as the NHB element of the Funding Guarantee Grant. These NHB allocations were all put into this Strategic Priorities and MTFS reserve up to the financial year 2019 to 2020. In 2020 to 2021, £1.2 million of the grant was utilised towards the overall budget pressures which arose as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council also budgeted to utilise £0.7 million of the 2021 to 2022 grant as part of its budget position and the continued impact of COVID-19. For 2022 to 2023 onwards the full grant allocation has been contributed to the reserve.

New homes bonus (including Funding Guarantee from 2023 to 2024) – grant receipts

Year	Forest Heath millions	St Edmundsbury millions	West Suffolk millions
2011 to 2012	£0.562	£0.268	£0.830
2012 to 2013	£1.436	£0.559	£1.995
2013 to 2014	£1.679	£0.757	£2.436
2014 to 2015	£2.166	£0.886	£3.052
2015 to 2016	£2.437	£1.219	£3.656
2016 to 2017	£2.644	£1.754	£4.398
2017 to 2018	£1.278	£1.553	£2.831
2018 to 2019	£0.718	£1.272	£1.990
2019 to 2020	N/A	N/A	£1.848
2020 to 2021	N/A	N/A	£1.811
2021 to 2022	N/A	N/A	£1.320
2022 to 2023	N/A	N/A	£1.756

2023 to 2024	N/A	N/A	£1.756
2024 to 2025	N/A	N/A	£1.756

- 10.3 The 2023 to 2024 budget and MTFs includes a number of draws on this reserve as previously approved or under consideration through the democratic process. Attachment D Appendix 3a summarises the proposed draws on this reserve as part of the 2023 to 2024 budget and the medium term budgets. The proposed future of the New Homes Bonus scheme is set out in section 3 above.

11. Adequacy of reserves

- 11.1 Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Section 151 Officer (Director (Resources and Property)) to report to Council, as part of the tax setting report, her view of the robustness of estimates and the adequacy of reserves. The Council is required to take these views into account when setting the council tax at its meeting on 21 February 2023. The full statement is set out in Attachment C.
- 11.2 In summary, the Section 151 Officer’s overall assessment is that the estimates are robust (taking into account known risks and mitigating strategies) and reserves are adequate for the 2023 to 2024 budget plans.

12. Calculation of the council tax

- 12.1 At its meeting on 7 February 2023, Cabinet recommended that the band D council tax level for 2023 to 2024 is set at **£192.06**, which represents an increase of £4.95 (2.65 per cent) compared to 2022 to 2023.
- 12.2 This figure is within government expectations as set out in the Council Tax Referendum Principles 2023 to 2024, which set a cap for Shire District Councils of £5 or 3 per cent whichever is the higher.
- 12.3 The council tax is set for a band D property and then adjusted for the other council tax valuation bands. The number of band D equivalent properties (the Tax Base) is the national benchmark and for West Suffolk, the number of band D equivalents for 2023 to 2024 is **57,987.01** (an increase of 580.67 over the 2022 to 2023 figure of 57,406.34).
- 12.4 Since the meeting of Cabinet on 7 February, the precepts of the other organisations have been received and these are detailed below and in the schedules at Attachment H and Attachment I.
- 12.5 The parish councils have set their own council tax requirements for 2023 to 2024. These are detailed at Attachment H, Schedule A. The total Parish and

Town Council precepts for 2023 to 2024 amount to **£5,241,685** which result in an average West Suffolk Band D parish council tax of £90.39.

- 12.6 Suffolk County Council met on 9 February 2023 and set its precept at **£86,773,501.37** resulting in a band D council tax of £1,496.43, a 4 per cent increase (including 2 per cent increase for the Adult Social Care precept).
- 12.7 The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Suffolk set its precept of **£15,228,548.57** at the Police and Crime Panel (SCC) meeting on 27 January 2023, resulting in a band D council tax of £262.62, a 6.03 per cent increase on the 2022 to 2023 figure.
- 12.8 There are a number of statutory calculations that follow from this budgetary decision, and these are detailed in Attachment I.
- 12.9 If the formal Council Tax Resolution (Attachment I) is approved, the total band D Council Tax will be as follows:

	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024	Increase Per cent
West Suffolk Council	£187.11	£192.06	2.65
Suffolk County Council	£1,438.92	£1,496.43	4.00
Suffolk OPCC	£247.68	£262.62	6.03
Sub-Total	£1,873.71	£1,951.11	4.13
Town and Parish average	£82.48	£90.39	9.60
Total	£1,956.19	£2,041.50	4.36

- 12.10 Based on the figures above, the proportions of an average 2023 to 2024 council tax bill will be:

West Suffolk Council: 9.4 per cent
 Suffolk County Council: 73.3 per cent
 Suffolk OPCC: 12.9 per cent
 Parish/Town Council: 4.4 per cent

13. Alternative options that have been considered

- 13.1 The Council is required by statute to set a balanced budget and therefore there are no alternative options.

14. Consultation and engagement undertaken

- 14.1 All budget changes have been reviewed by and discussed with Leadership Team, Service Managers and Members.

15. Risks associated with the proposals

- 15.1 A risk assessment is included at Attachment C as part of the report by the Director (Resources and Property) (Section 151 Officer). Her conclusion is that overall, the estimates are robust, taking into account known risks and mitigating strategies and the reserves are adequate for the 2023 to 2024 budget plans. Cabinet and Council are advised to have regard to this report when making their decisions on the 2023 to 2024 budget.

16. Legal implications arising from the proposals

- 16.1 The Local Government Act 2003 imposed duties on local authorities in relation to financial management which covers the following areas:
- a. A power for the Secretary of State to determine a minimum reserve level for local authorities by regulations. The Government has indicated that their preference is to keep this power in reserve.
 - b. Section 25 of the Act places a requirement on the S151 Officer to report on the adequacy of reserves and robustness of budget estimates as part of the authority's annual budget setting process. The Council is required to take these views into account when setting the council tax at its meeting on 21 February 2023. This is included as Attachment C of the report.
 - c. Sections 28 and 29 of the Act place a statutory duty on local authorities to monitor their budgets and take such action as considered necessary in the case of overspends and shortfalls of income.
- 16.2 Section 30 of the Act relates to the provisions preventing local authorities entering into agreements following a Section 114 Report which a S151 Officer must produce when it appears that expenditure of the authority in a financial year is likely to exceed the resources available to meet the expenditure. No such report has been produced for West Suffolk this year.

17. Appendices referenced in this report

- 17.1 **Attachment A** – Revenue budget summary
- 17.2 **Attachment B** – Summary of major budget changes
- 17.3 **Attachment C** – Report by the Director (Resources and Property)
- 17.4 **Attachment D** – Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023 to 2027

- 17.5 **Attachment D Appendix 1** – Five year revenue budget (MTFS)
- 17.6 **Attachment D Appendix 2** – Capital programme
- 17.7 **Attachment D Appendix 2a** - 2023 to 2024 Capital Programme - Property Asset Management Plan Breakdown
- 17.8 **Attachment D Appendix 2b** - 2023 to 2024 Capital Programme - Leisure Asset Management Plan Breakdown
- 17.9 **Attachment D Appendix 2c** - 2023 to 2024 Capital Programme - Car Parking Improvements Breakdown
- 17.10 **Attachment D Appendix 3** – Earmarked revenue reserves
- 17.11 **Attachment D Appendix 3a** – Strategic Priorities and Medium Term Financial Strategy Reserve
- 17.12 **Attachment D Appendix 3b** - Investing in Our Growth Agenda reserve
- 17.13 **Attachment D Appendix 3c** - Business Rates Retention Pilot: Place-Based reserve
- 17.14 **Attachment D Appendix 3d** - Building Maintenance Reserve - Property
- 17.15 **Attachment D Appendix 4** – Prudential code for capital finance
- 17.16 **Attachment D Appendix 5** – Scenario planning and sensitivity analysis
- 17.17 **Attachment D Appendix 6** – Fees and charges changes
- 17.18 **Attachment D Appendix 6a** – Fees and charges prices increases
- 17.19 **Attachment E** – Capital Strategy
- 17.20 **Attachment F** – Flexible use of capital receipts strategy
- 17.21 **Attachment G** – Investing in the West Suffolk Council Net Zero 2030 Emissions Target
- 17.22 **Attachment H Schedule A** – Town and Parish Council Precepts
- 17.23 **Attachment H Schedule B** – Basic amount of tax in those parts of the council’s area to which special items relate
- 17.24 **Attachment H Schedule C** – Basic amount of tax for each precepting body across valuation bands
- 17.25 **Attachment H Schedule D** – Aggregate amount of tax across valuation bands
- 17.26 **Attachment I** – Council tax resolutions

18. Background documents associated with this report

- 18.1 Delivering a Sustainable Medium-Term Budget – report number: [PAS/WS/22/017](#) 29 September 2022
- 18.2 Delivering a Sustainable Medium-Term Budget – report number: [PAS/WS/22/021](#) 17 November 2022

- 18.3 Delivering a Sustainable Medium-Term Budget – report number:
[PAS/WS/23/001](#) 26 January 2023
- 18.4 2022-2023 Performance Report (Quarter 3) - report number:
[PAS/WS/23/002](#) 26 January 2023
- 18.5 Financial Resilience – Strategy Statement 2022 to 2023 and Treasury
Management Code of Practice [FRS/WS/23/002](#) ([CAB/WS/22/007](#))

(Income) and expenditure:	2023 to 2024	2024 to 2025	2025 to 2026	2026 to 2027
	Total Budget £	Projected Budget £	Projected Budget £	Projected Budget £
Government grants outside Aggregate External Funding (AEF)	(25,355,206)	(24,346,983)	(23,380,050)	(22,474,839)
Transfer Payments, the cost of payments to individuals for which no goods or services are received (primarily Benefits)	25,900,495	24,900,274	23,940,062	23,018,259
Overpayments recovered	(300,000)	(300,000)	(300,000)	(300,000)
Total housing benefits:	245,289	253,291	260,012	243,420
Income from business rates through the current 50 per cent business rates retention scheme (excluding baseline funding)	(5,773,730)	(3,430,796)	(2,019,975)	(2,066,051)
Council Tax income including Collection Fund surplus	(11,446,401)	(11,538,261)	(11,946,449)	(12,361,646)
Grants:				
Baseline funding - Business Rate Retention scheme	(4,693,030)	(5,040,314)	(5,146,161)	(5,249,084)
New Homes Bonus grant	(815,078)	(815,078)	0	0
Other grants (for example, council tax / housing benefit / business rates administration grants, Revenue Support Grant, Rural Services Delivery grant, Funding Guarantee and homelessness grants)	(3,827,689)	(3,844,578)	(1,784,473)	(1,784,473)
	(26,555,928)	(24,669,027)	(20,897,058)	(21,461,254)
Contributions:				
Contributions - Suffolk County Council (for example, net recycling performance payments and highway grass verge maintenance contributions)	(367,250)	(367,250)	(367,250)	(367,250)
Contributions - other organisations (for example, housing benefit payments towards bed and breakfast accommodation and employee contributions for leased cars)	(326,142)	(340,295)	(326,419)	(326,558)
	(693,392)	(707,545)	(693,669)	(693,808)
Reimbursements:				
Service Level Agreement (SLA) income	(998,382)	(1,018,332)	(1,038,682)	(1,059,432)
Other reimbursements (for example, payments from Anglia Revenues Partnership, and Babergh and Mid Suffolk councils, towards partnership costs)	(4,017,607)	(4,088,845)	(4,063,458)	(4,063,458)
	(5,015,989)	(5,107,177)	(5,102,140)	(5,122,890)
Sales:				
Sales - tickets (for example, the Apex and Bury Festival)	(1,528,998)	(1,559,598)	(1,590,798)	(1,622,598)
Fees - planning applications	(1,624,484)	(1,626,984)	(1,629,534)	(1,632,134)
Fees - building regulations	(374,390)	(381,890)	(389,540)	(397,340)
Fees - refuse collection and disposal	(4,621,582)	(4,714,032)	(4,808,332)	(4,904,482)
Fees - car parking	(7,329,874)	(7,329,874)	(7,329,874)	(7,329,874)
Growth income through the 'Investing in our growth agenda' fund	0	0	(120,000)	(120,000)
Other sales (for example, solar income, land charges, licencing)	(7,530,399)	(7,590,799)	(7,662,449)	(7,735,699)
	(23,009,727)	(23,203,177)	(23,530,527)	(23,742,127)
Rental:				
Rents - industrial units	(2,823,560)	(2,826,227)	(2,827,560)	(2,827,560)
Rents - shops	(1,949,400)	(1,999,400)	(1,999,400)	(1,999,400)
Rents - land	(1,035,293)	(1,035,293)	(1,035,293)	(1,035,293)
Other rentals (for example, other properties such as garages and desk space rental at council offices)	(1,059,387)	(1,059,387)	(1,059,387)	(1,059,387)
	(6,867,640)	(6,920,307)	(6,921,640)	(6,921,640)
Investment and loan interest, and dividends received	(1,465,275)	(1,155,275)	(825,275)	(825,275)
Total income (excluding benefits):	(63,607,951)	(61,762,507)	(57,970,308)	(58,766,993)
Expenditure:				
Total cost of employment	31,214,734	32,318,528	33,546,302	35,022,325
Premises costs	9,040,575	8,795,362	8,926,190	9,043,858
Transport costs	1,893,778	1,949,528	2,008,078	2,069,578
Supplies & services costs	8,607,457	7,789,278	8,523,128	8,584,628
Third party payments, for example provision of services by other organisations that could be performed in-house.	2,731,813	2,660,813	2,660,813	2,660,813
Capital costs (interest on borrowing, minimum revenue provision) including assumptions linked to the 'Investing in our growth agenda' fund	2,268,900	2,269,450	2,194,450	2,194,450
Net contribution to reserves (excluding employee-related contributions which are included under the total cost of employment) - see attachment D appendix 3 for further details.	7,605,405	5,726,257	2,520,063	2,640,063
Total expenditure (excluding benefits):	63,362,662	61,509,216	60,379,024	62,215,715
Total budget gap:	0	0	2,668,728	3,692,142

This page is intentionally left blank

Budget assumption changes pressures/(improvements)	2023 to 2024 £m	2024 to 2025 £m	2025 to 2026 £m	2026 to 2027 £m
Savings requirement - February 2022 budget process	1.16	1.71	2.98	3.42
Assumption changes/pressures - as reported to Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee (APSC) at November 2022 (PAS/WS/22/021) and January 2023 (PAS/WS/23/TBC)				
Pressures/Investments:				
Income Assumption reviews (primarily based on 2022 to 2023 forecast levels):				
- Car Parking (recovery across West Suffolk car parks, however still not to pre-COVID levels for some within Bury St Edmunds), £1.1m impact				
- Grounds Maintenance, cleansing and tree services – reduced income levels to focus resources towards increase demand for these type of council services £0.18m impact				
- Other incomes, £0.06m impact	1.34	1.34	1.34	1.34
Review of the council's (and our contribution towards the Anglia Revenue Partnership) establishment and overall cost of employment assumptions.	1.82	1.86	2.05	2.18
Additional utilities energy charges, resulting from worldwide economic pressures. Reduced by both £0.43m to reflect recharges to partners in shared buildings and £0.67m to reflect the use of the Toggam Solar generation in council buildings (this will ultimately show as an income to the solar cost centre in the final budgets).	0.18	0.27	0.37	0.47
Vehicle fuel costs, increased to reflect current prices	0.27	0.29	0.30	0.32
Land Charges income, element of fee income now payable to HM Land Registry	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06
Increased bank charges from transactional volumes as a result of customer behavioural changes	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03
Increased third party contractual payments resulting from inflationary and economic pressures	0.08	0.08	0.09	0.09
Additional costs relating to operational capacity and growth within district. Includes investments in additional waste and ground maintenance staff (including cost pressure from the reduction in some external ground maintenance contracts to focus on district wide work)	0.24	0.24	0.25	0.26
Verse facility management increases, resulting from national living wage and inflation changes, net of Suffolk County Council contribution	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06
Replacement bins - reduction to expected income due to take up	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
Market fees - income not recovered to pre-pandemic. Overview and Scrutiny review outcome and action plan in progress, likely to improve this position in the medium term.	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
Shared Legal Service - increased costs from Babergh Mid Suffolk linked to shared service agreement, mainly related to pay inflation.	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03
Members Allowances assumption only, members allowances will be the subject of a future report to Council in 2023.	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03
Reduce business rate growth from 2025 to 2026 to reflect expected reset of national business rates system (offset by removal of the contribution to the Business Rates Equalisation reserve shown below)	0.00	0.00	1.33	1.33

Budget assumption changes pressures/(improvements)	2023 to 2024 £m	2024 to 2025 £m	2025 to 2026 £m	2026 to 2027 £m
Removal of contribution to Business Rates Retention Reserve from 2025 to 2026	0.00	0.00	(1.33)	(1.33)
Adjust funding from Housing Benefit (HB) reserve following revised HB forecasts	0.07	0.04	0.04	0.01
Remove funding towards shop and industrial unit rents following review of Industrial Rents reserve - position now consistent across the medium term.	0.11	0.10	0.00	0.00
General Fund (GF) Replenishment - based on October forecast and replenishment to £5million GF policy level	0.83	0.00	0.00	0.00
One off support towards increased utility pressures at council owned leisure centres in West Suffolk	0.30	0.00	0.00	0.00
Support for utilities pressure at council owned leisure centres funded from the Strategic Priorities and MTFs reserve	(0.30)	0.00	0.00	0.00
Improvements/Savings:				
Increased solar income as a result of improved rates for 2023 to 2025. Total benefit to the solar cost centre to be £1.75m additional income, allowing for use of solar generation to council buildings under the new contract from April 2023. Reduced by £0.03m for increased R&M allowance and contractual increase in land lease.	(1.05)	(1.05)	(1.05)	(1.05)
Net overall increase in property rents as a result of improved occupancy and lease reviews	(0.32)	(0.37)	(0.37)	(0.37)
Increased investment interest as a result of rising interest rates on cash balances	(0.67)	(0.36)	(0.23)	(0.23)
Delivery of Solar for Business programme, increased power purchase rates on excess generation contracts. Reduced by £0.01 increase in repairs and maintenance costs.	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.11)
CCTV - net additional contract income, after allowing for increased costs	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.09)
Recycling Performance Payment - higher commodity prices (net impact as garden and multi bank rate/tonnage assumed to reduce creating a budget impact).	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Housing Options - provision of two additional properties, amount net of operational costs	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)
West Suffolk Taxi licence fee levels from April 2023 as per Cabinet report CAB/WS/22/052	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Other minor budget changes including West Suffolk Operational Hub and Mildenhall Hub. Various budget changes to reflect more recent cost profiles - netting off in the main	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.05)
Pension rate decrease due to triennial review (26 per cent for 2023 to 2024, increasing to 28 per cent in 2026 to 2027)	(1.48)	(1.42)	(1.45)	(0.98)
Increase garden waste subscriptions by £2 to reflect increased cost of delivering the service.	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Revised ARP partnership costs incorporating efficiency target	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Review of council business rate payments assuming multiplier freeze	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Strategic Housing structure review including additional Barley Homes service level agreement income	(0.09)	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.17)
Increased dividend from Barley Homes, the Councils wholly owned housing company (£0.3m in total per annum)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)

Budget assumption changes pressures/(improvements)	2023 to 2024 £m	2024 to 2025 £m	2025 to 2026 £m	2026 to 2027 £m
Budget delivery programme savings through reduced supplies and services and service and change programme.	(0.62)	(0.63)	(0.63)	(0.64)
Collection Fund surplus	(0.34)	0.00	0.00	0.00
Business Rate Reduction following 2023 revaluation	(0.32)	(0.27)	(0.26)	(0.26)
Final finance settlement:				
Revenue Support Grant including Family Annexe and Local Council Tax Support funding	(0.42)	(0.45)	0.00	0.00
Remove Family Annexe and Local Council Tax Support funding	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18
Additional Business Rate Baseline Funding	(0.14)	0.00	0.00	0.00
Transfer to Business Rates Equalisation Reserve	0.14	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rural Services Delivery Grant	(0.20)	(0.20)	0.00	0.00
New Homes Bonus (NHB)	(0.82)	(0.82)	0.00	0.00
Transfer NHB to Strategic Priorities and MTFS reserve	0.82	0.82	0.00	0.00
Services Grant	(0.18)	(0.18)	0.00	0.00
Funding Guarantee - NHB	(0.94)	(0.94)	0.00	0.00
Funding Guarantee - all other grants	(0.20)	(0.19)	0.00	0.00
Transfer Funding Guarantee - NHB element to Strategic Priorities and MTFS reserve	0.94	0.94	0.00	0.00
Additional Business Rate Baseline Funding Level resulting from update of CPI assumptions following provisional settlement	0.00	(0.40)	(0.50)	(0.57)
Other minor budget changes	(0.17)	(0.16)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Net balance:	0.00	0.00	2.67	3.69

This page is intentionally left blank

Adequacy of reserves and robustness of budget estimates report by the Director (Resources and Property) (Section 151 Officer)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Section 151 Officer/Chief Financial Officer (Director (Resources and Property)) to formally report to council as part of the tax setting report her view of the robustness of estimates and the adequacy of reserves. The council is required to take these views into account when setting the council tax at its meeting on 21 February 2023.

2. Financial controls

- 2.1 West Suffolk Council operates a comprehensive and effective range of financial management policies. These are contained in the Financial Procedure Rules, which form part of the council's Constitution. This Constitution is available on the council's internet and intranet.
- 2.2 The council conducts an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and reports on this in the Annual Governance Statement.
- 2.3 The council continues to implement effective risk management policies, identifying corporate, operational and budget risks and mitigating strategies. Capital projects are subject to our project management framework, a comprehensive work plan which includes detailed risk management strategies. The council operates a bi-monthly projects review through Leadership Team reporting by exception on corporate projects (the budget delivery programme meets monthly), which include capital and revenue projects.
- 2.4 The internal and external audit functions play a key role in ensuring that the council's financial controls and governance arrangements are operating satisfactorily.
- 2.5 This is backed up by the review processes of Cabinet, with the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee undertaking the role of the council's audit committee.

3. Adequacy of reserves

Unallocated general fund reserve

- 3.1 This statement focuses upon the unallocated general fund reserve. The minimum prudent level of reserves that the council should maintain is a matter of judgement and cannot be judged merely against the current risks facing the council as these can and will change over time.
- 3.2 The consequences of not keeping a prudent minimum level of reserves can be serious. In the event of a major problem or a series of events, the council would run a serious risk of a deficit or of being forced to cut spending during the year in a damaging and arbitrary way. The council's general fund balance played a significant role in managing the in-year (2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022) financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and more recently in 2022 to 2023 the impacts of the cost of living crisis, enabling the council to focus its efforts on mobilising and supporting the response to our communities.
- 3.3 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) have issued a notification from the Local Authority Accounting Panel stating that there should be no imposed limit on level or nature of balances required to be held by an individual council (except under section 26 where this has been imposed by ministers).
- 3.4 When setting the minimum level of reserves, the Section 151 Officer has taken into account strategic, operational and financial risks when recommending the minimum level of unallocated general fund reserves. These include:
- Specific risks such as the continued behavioural and recovery impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, taking into account the financial assumptions (through key income targets) already set out in the general fund budget
 - economy measures and service reductions always contain some degree of uncertainty as to whether their full effects will be achieved
 - the effect of the macro-economy on West Suffolk Council, and subsequent loss of income from council tax, business rates and from fees and charges
 - the delivery of all savings, projects and income targets
 - the risks placed at a local level under the 50 per cent business rates retention scheme, such as appeals
 - the addition of greater income targets linked to behaving more commercially and the selling of council services
 - unforeseeable events such as major inclement weather (for example floods) which may require urgent, material spending to be incurred

- risks in relation to litigation
- risks of grants being introduced or removed mid-year, requiring authority contributions
- the need to retain a general contingency to provide for unforeseen circumstances
- other earmarked reserves, specific to managing the financial planning risks associated with the West Suffolk medium term plans, such as the business rates equalisation reserve
- other risks detailed in the scenario planning and sensitivity analysis provided at Attachment D, Appendix 5.

3.5 As a consequence, it is recommended that the general fund reserve is set at a minimum of £5 million.

3.6 If an event occurs that is so serious, as with COVID, that it depletes the council reserves to below the limit of £5 million, then the council will take appropriate measures to raise the general fund reserve to the desired level as soon as possible, as it has done in the 2023 to 2024 budget, without undermining service provision.

Other reserves

3.7 The council has a variety of other reserves which are earmarked for specific purposes. The significant items to be drawn out as part of the 2023 to 2027 budget setting process are:

- Reserves expected to be utilised/committed to support the strategic objectives and medium-term financial strategy (MTFS) of the council:
 - Strategic priorities and MTFS reserve
 - Investing in our growth agenda reserve.
- Business rates pilot: place-based reserve – to hold the benefit of the Suffolk 100% business rates retention pilot in 2018 to 2019. To be utilised against projects as agreed by the West Suffolk Leaders (County/Districts).
- Business rates equalisation reserve – available to assist with significant impacts of the business rates retention scheme and appeals.
- Housing benefits equalisation reserve – available to assist with significant impacts of housing benefit subsidy rates/overpayment income fluctuations.
- Capital project financing and interest equalisation reserve – available to assist with significant impacts of interest rate and borrowing cost fluctuations.
- Invest to save reserve - to be utilised/committed to support the delivery of saving and efficiency requirements of the council.
- Building Maintenance Reserve: Property – utilised to fund the council's asset management plan.
- Vehicle, plant and equipment reserve - utilised to fund the council's replacement plan for these assets.

- Further professional fees associated with the Western Way Development, required to get to a position of being able to sign a construction contract are expected to be £5.2 million. Of this, £287,000 will be funded from the Business rates pilot fund. £3 million will be underwritten from the Capital Project Financing/Business equalisation reserves, with the remaining being underwritten by project partners through abortive cost agreements.

3.8 With reference to the Investment Framework all business cases will be assessed on the basis of borrowing as capital receipts are reducing in the medium term. Assessment of reserves balances will also be considered as part of any business case.

4. Robustness of estimates

The treatment of inflation, interest and borrowing rates

4.1 At the time of writing the pay award for staff from 1 April 2023 has not yet been agreed, however a 4 per cent increase has been included in the estimates for 2023 to 2024. Non pay related budgets have not been inflated unless there is a contractually committed rate of inflation where services can demonstrate a requirement to do so to maintain service delivery levels. Increases for fees and charges have been set in line with inflation and cost recovery principles where appropriate.

4.2 The average rate of return on council investments for 2023 to 2024 has been assumed at 3.25 per cent. Borrowing rates have been assumed in line with previous business case assumptions. A review of the total interest payable budget assumption has been carried out during the 2023 to 2024 budget process to assess the adequacy of the total annual budget given the increase in external borrowing rates. This review has considered the councils overall need to borrow based on its cash flow requirements (including the revised capital programme and assumed borrowing requirements) and the current and future external interest rate projections. The outcome of that review is that the current total interest payable budget, supported by any in year fluctuations from the capital financing reserve, is sufficient to cover the interest payable expected over the medium-term plans.

Budget and financial management

4.3 West Suffolk has a good record of budget and financial management and is expecting a balanced position for April 2023 to March 2024. All relevant reports to Cabinet and Committee have their financial effects identified and the Leadership Team keeps any emerging budget pressures under review during the year. Monthly reports are received by the Leadership Team and quarterly reports to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee detail both budgetary and performance indicators.

- 4.4 The council has a number of demand led budgets and historically it has been able to manage changes in demand to ensure a sound financial standing at the end of the financial year.

Adequacy of insurance and risk management

- 4.5 Strategic risk management is embedded throughout the council to ensure that all risks are identified, mitigated and managed appropriately. The council's insurance arrangements are in the form of external insurance premiums and internal funds to self-insure some items.
- 4.6 Projects will be subject to business case challenge on financial and risk matters and, to reflect their importance in the achievement of the balanced MTFS.
- 4.7 Income assumptions will be continually subject to review through project monitoring and regular finance reviews and reporting.

Overall financial standing of the council

- 4.8 The council has a strong vision and programme to deliver through our West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2021 to 2024, underpinned by robust financial planning and management. This enables us to deliver both our services and strategic aims.
- 4.9 As part of the consideration of the financial standing of the council, CIPFA provide a financial resilience index. This is a comparative analytical tool that may be used by Chief Financial Officers to support good financial management.
- 4.10 The index shows a council's position on a range of measures associated with financial risk, compared with similar authorities across a range of factors.
- 4.110 The overall picture for West Suffolk as set out below is one of average or lower risk across the indicators. The only higher risk indicators are that of council tax requirement proportionate to our net revenue expenditure and Growth above Baseline. Council Tax Requirement reflects the council's lower level of council tax and its approach to diversifying its income streams through fees and charges to support its net revenue requirement. As council tax is a statutory charge, councils are seen to have a greater financial resilience the higher the council tax requirement is as a proportion of net expenditure. For Growth above Baseline, there is a risk that a rebasing will result in reduced levels of Business Rates income retained by the council. However, the council has taken action to mitigate this risk by including a reduced level of growth beyond the current two year finance settlement period.



For further details regarding the council's financial resilience, please see the council's Annual Treasury Management and Financial Resilience Sub-Committee report 2021 to 2022 dated 11 July 2022, FRS/WS/22/003.

5. Risk assessment

- 5.1 A risk assessment is included at Attachment D, Appendix 5 as part of the scenario and sensitivity analysis. All areas will be monitored by the Director (Resources and Property), but they are the culmination of individual managers' responsibilities and combine to establish overall corporate responsibility.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 **Overall, the estimates are robust, taking into account known risks and mitigating strategies and the reserves are adequate for the 2023 to 2024 budget plans.**
- 6.2 **Cabinet and Council are asked to have regard to this report when making their decisions on the 2023 to 2024 budget.**

Rachael Mann
 Director (Resources and Property)
 February 2023



Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2023 to 2027

Contents

	Page
Foreword from the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Property of the Council	3
Purpose of this document	4
Changes to local government financing	5
Local context	6
Responding to the financial challenges and opportunities	8
Our approach to engagement and consultation	12
Summary of our financial position	12
• Revenue strategy and budget summary	
• Capital strategy and budget summary	
Glossary of terms	17

For more information about this document, or to request a copy in an alternative format, please email finance@westsuffolk.gov.uk or call 01638 719000

Foreword from the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Property of the council

I am delighted to introduce the West Suffolk Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2023 to 2027. Working more efficiently, through transforming services, moving to digital forms of communication, behaving more commercially and a range of other initiatives will continue to be at the heart of West Suffolk's approach over the next few years.

This approach is designed with the aim to drive growth in our local areas and increase locally generated funding. This is, and will be, increasingly important as 2025 to 2026 will see fundamental changes to the local government finance system with a national review of funding needs and funding allocation methods.

The wider economy is also extremely difficult to predict and, as we continue having local responsibility for the majority of our funding, any downturn will have a proportionally larger impact.

However, I welcome this opportunity to take control of our financial future in this way and we will be working with Government and other councils to ensure that the necessary checks and balances remain in place so that we can continue to support local families and communities.

Our strategy for managing the council's finances from 1 April 2023 will continue to be based on the six principles we adopted under the previous MTFS which have served us well and are set out within this document.

The aim in all of this is to continue to support and invest in our West Suffolk communities and businesses to encourage and manage ambitious growth in prosperity and quality of life for all – the vision we have set out in our West Suffolk Strategic Framework for 2020 to 2024.

Working towards this vision, and achieving the priorities and actions that support it, will need to be done in partnership with a wide range of other organisations, communities, families and individuals.

To achieve these aims will require new funding arrangements and approaches to borrowing and investment, but I am confident that we can build on our strong track record of sound financial management in the past to meet the new, ever more demanding, challenges of the future.

Councillor Sarah Broughton

Portfolio Holder for Resources & Property
West Suffolk Council

Purpose of this document

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) provides a high-level assessment of the financial resources required to deliver West Suffolk's strategic priorities and essential services over the next few years. It considers how the council can provide these resources within the anticipated financial context.

Like all local authorities, West Suffolk Council's MTFS is influenced by national government policy, funding and spending announcements. The government's spending plans continue to evolve, at the time of publication of the MTFS, highlights include:

- The main grant (Revenue Support Grant - RSG) to local government has been continued into 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025. This is a two year only extension of the grant which was due to be phased out previously.
- The New Homes Bonus will be retained into 2023 to 2024 and the government will decide whether to continue this into 2024 to 2025 before next year's settlement. The total money available for NHB has been cut partly to fund the new Funding Guarantee (see below) and will not attract any legacy payments.
- The one-off services grant in respect of 2022 to 2023 has been rolled forward to 2023 to 2024 albeit at a reduced level to reflect the reversal of the National Insurance increase This has been awarded to all tiers of local government in recognition of the vital services they provide.
- A new Funding Guarantee grant has been created to ensure every authority has an increase in Core Spending Power of 3 per cent before any council tax increases. It will be funded from the now discontinued Lower Tier Services Grant and the reduced cost of NHB.
- Consultation will continue in 2023 on changes to the local government finance system. This is including a review of local authorities' needs and resources (fairer funding review) to enable a new funding system to be devised.
- The current 50 per cent Business Rates Retention scheme is undergoing a full review and is expected to be replaced by a new scheme, accompanied by a full reset of the growth baseline, in April 2025 (at the earliest).
- The council tax referendum level (the level at which council tax can be increased) has been increased to 3 per cent or £5, whichever is the higher amount. In addition, local authorities with responsibility for social care (such as Suffolk County Council) may levy a precept to spend exclusively on adult social care.

The latest local government spending announcements can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/local-government-spending>

Changes to Local Government Financing

Over the last decade, a number of local government financing mechanisms have become embedded in the council's overall funding framework. For example:

- a share of business rates growth is now retained locally by the council, and by a Suffolk 'pool'
- the councils set council tax discounts locally, rather than eligible residents receiving council tax benefit
- the New Homes Bonus
- the funding of Disabled Facilities Grants from the Better Care Fund.

Local government is now funded from three main taxation/finance settlement sources; council tax, a share of business rates income and, to a lesser extent, government general grants as set out above. Council tax income continues to be the main source of funding, in total value, for local authorities. Council tax income represents just under 20 per cent of West Suffolk's annual income (excluding Housing Benefit Subsidy).

It is expected that each of these funding streams will continue in 2024 to 2025 however beyond this there is significant uncertainty in the basis and quantum of the business rates retention and government general grants.

The reform of the business rates retention scheme is now expected to be 2025 to 2026. It is assumed there will also be a full baseline reset in 2025 to 2026 (as suggested by Government). For authorities who have business rate growth and are significantly above their current funding baseline, such as West Suffolk, this will have a significant impact, subject perhaps to any damping arrangements, on our existing funding levels through the business rates retention scheme.

The Fairer Funding review, which looks at the overarching methodology that determines how much funding each authority receives each year is also now expected to be 2025 to 2026, creating further uncertainty to the council's funding assessment from central government.

The changes to local government finance form part of the government's devolution agenda, by reducing local authorities' reliance on central government, and encouraging greater self-sufficiency. West Suffolk continues to work with other authorities in East Anglia to consider the longer term implications of these changes for the future shape of local government and economic growth in the region.

Local context

West Suffolk Council's financial position is based on our financial circumstances, local demand and opportunities. The 'summary of our financial position' section of this document details our financial standing. The following section provides an overview of the local context in which the council operates. For more information, please see the data and statistics on our About the area webpage [About the area \(westsuffolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk) and West Suffolk Council's Strategic Framework [West Suffolk Council Strategic Framework 2020-2024](#).

The local economy

1) Economic growth

Our geographical position means while we are very much part of the county of Suffolk, we are also part of the wider Cambridge economy and the A14 and A11 transport links tie us into the wider geography of East Anglia for key issues. We play a significant part in the Cambridge Housing Sub-Region as well as the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). Councillors recognise the opportunities this creates and are committed to maximising them but there is also recognition that this proximity brings challenges as well, including high house prices and rental levels alongside demand for housing that is not being supplied within the Cambridge area. Meanwhile, West Suffolk businesses are continuing to face challenges relating to post-COVID recovery and the consequent economic shifts, as well as responding to changes in consumer habits.

2) Better housing

West Suffolk is facing increasing demands for housing both in the public and private sectors. There is a need to ensure housing is affordable whether to rent or buy, which is challenging in an area with historically low wages and pressures on house rental prices. We recognise the need not only for more homes but also a range of different types of housing suitable for the varying needs for our growing and ageing population as well as homes to suit local demand from first time buyers, those that are retiring, and sites for Gypsies and Travellers.

3) Families and communities

When measured at the local authority level, the population of West Suffolk appears to be relatively affluent and experiencing lower levels of deprivation and social upheaval than many other parts of the country. However, this overall picture masks pockets of real deprivation in certain wards and a wider lack of social mobility, often exacerbated by the cost of living pressures facing low-income households most acutely.

Increase in service demands

West Suffolk serves a population of 179,800 (mid-year estimate 2021) across a predominantly rural area in the heart of East Anglia. This is projected to increase by 2.6 per cent to 184,523 by 2027 (sub national population projections 2018 based).

The 2021 census showed that the percentage of over 65s in West Suffolk was 20.7 per cent; this is now above the England national average of 18.4 per cent and projected to increase to 23.3 per cent by 2027.

Many older people bring a wealth of experience and skills that they are willing to share voluntarily throughout their retirement, and these opportunities need to be developed. Some older people need extensive support to continue living independent lives and this inevitably creates pressures on all public sector services.

West Suffolk has experienced a period of sustained increase in demand for some of the key services it provides to the most vulnerable members of the community, particularly within our housing and homelessness services.

West Suffolk faces challenges around closing the gaps in educational attainment across the area. While some schools are performing well, some still face challenges in raising educational attainment.

Education is just one element of the complex social issues which have significant impacts on how we fund and deliver council services. As well as individual families, there are a number of neighbourhoods in West Suffolk where communities are experiencing real difficulties on a day-to-day basis. Further, many of the issues facing residents today are not picked up in statistical analyses, such as loneliness and isolation, a lack of practical support, or mental health problems.

At the same time, residents expect the public sector to match, or exceed, service levels delivered by the private sector. Council Tax is the only visible tax – others are hidden, for example, in VAT on purchases or through pay as you earn (PAYE) deductions from salaries. People expect value for their Council Tax and prompt, professional and seamless services. West Suffolk Council's customer service arrangements are transforming our delivery but need resourcing for support systems, such as an efficient, easily accessible and transactional website where people can access services any time of day.

Challenges and opportunities within the changing local government financing regime

The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement (December 2022), whilst giving certainty on continued funding through Revenue Support Grant and New

Homes Bonus for 2023 to 2024, alongside an indication of the funding methodology for 2024 to 2025, gives no indication of funding beyond this period.

The Fair Funding and Business Rates Retention Reviews will bring new approaches and challenges in how West Suffolk Council will fund its services. We will fully engage in these reviews and consultations to ensure our perspective is heard.

West Suffolk has already faced significant cuts in Government funding with revenue support grant (£4.3 million in 2014 to 2015) being assumed to be phased out completely by 2025.

A sustainable future for West Suffolk in the face of funding cuts and spending pressures is dependent upon continuing to change the way we think about funding local government and how we manage the system.

Responding to the financial challenges and opportunities

West Suffolk Council's response to the financial challenges and opportunities are based on six key themes. These themes have been developed for the new Council and they represent an appropriate response to the ongoing financial situation:

1. Aligning resources to West Suffolk's strategic framework and essential services.
2. Sharing services and transformation of service delivery.
3. Behaving more commercially.
4. Considering new funding models.
5. Encouraging the use of digital forms for customer access.
6. Taking advantage of new forms of local government finance.

1. Aligning resources to the West Suffolk strategic framework and essential services

Continuing in this MTFs, is the approach of allocating resources in line with the priorities set out in the West Suffolk Strategic framework 2020-2024 and essential services. This theme helps to identify areas of West Suffolk's work which could either be scaled back or where (either individually or together) further opportunities for the generation of income could be pursued. The budget-setting process focuses on these non-priority areas, and challenges whether West Suffolk should continue with the activities either at all, or in their current form, in order to ensure they provided value for money to council taxpayers.

The links to the changing role of local government from direct provision and reaction to enabling and preventing, as part of our Families and Communities

Strategy for West Suffolk, will also start to inform the allocation of the individual council's available resources.

The strategy builds from two key assumptions:

- Changing needs – challenging definitions of poverty and deprivation and also the presumption of public services' role as meeting needs rather than developing and working with the assets within communities.
- Preventing and reducing demand – there are fewer resources and a history of rising demands on public services; we cannot resolve this challenge by trying to do the same things with less money.

2. Sharing services and transformation of service delivery

The previous shared service agenda had already delivered in excess of £4 million per year in savings for West Suffolk which is in addition to other local savings. The creation of a single West Suffolk Council added a further £850,000 per year savings and efficiencies to this success.

West Suffolk shares a number of services with neighbouring councils including Human Resources and ICT support to the Anglia Revenue Partnership and Legal and data protection support services with Babergh and Mid Suffolk councils and will continue to explore further opportunity for sharing services where appropriate.

With demands increasing and uncertainty in local government funding beyond April 2025, it is critical that we continue to drive change and stay ahead of the financial curve to enable us to protect valuable local services and to continue to have the financial capacity to continue to invest in our communities. The growth in new and existing income streams will play a key role in our medium term sustainable and self-sufficient future, however our biggest focus must be on the continual review and transformation in the way we deliver our services.

The role that digital will play in our future state, alongside the role of our partners (public, private and voluntary) including the relationships across the tiers of local government within West Suffolk, will be critical in ensuring a system approach for our residents and businesses that is valued and sustainable. This transformational plan, which will include a series of service delivery reviews, began to take shape during the first quarter of 2021 to 2022. The resulting outcomes, both financial and improved services, will continue to contribute towards our financial challenges in 2023 to 2024.

The Business Partner model will continue to be operated through the MTF5 period, whereby corporate or support services provide specialist support and expertise to all service areas and project teams.

West Suffolk Council continues to work with other organisations in the Suffolk 'system' (districts and borough councils, county council, police and health partners) on a number of integrated working initiatives. Under the leadership of Suffolk Public Sector Leaders and the Suffolk Chief Officers Leadership Team, West Suffolk and other partners collaborate on joint programmes and projects in support of local communities and businesses, and funded through the Suffolk business rates pool. Examples of system-wide working to which West Suffolk contributes include the Suffolk Office of Data and Analytics (SODA), the Collaborative Communities Board, the Suffolk Growth Partnership, Suffolk Chief Finance Officers and Safer Stronger Communities Board.

The Council is also working with these partners on the implementation of the Suffolk 'County Deal' that was signed by the Leader of Suffolk County Council and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Local Government and Building Safety on 8 December 2022. Subject to further ratification, the deal will deliver £16 million each year of investment funding across the county as well as a range of delegated powers from Government.

3. Behaving more commercially

Over the last few years more commercial behaviours have been embedded in key parts of the council's work, with implications for the council's finances. On the one hand, a number of savings have been achieved as a result of more business-like behaviours, and on the other hand, significant additional income has been generated in some service areas. Behaving more commercially will therefore continue to be a key theme running through the work needed to deliver our outcomes and a sustainable MTF5.

4. Considering new funding models

West Suffolk Council will continue its work on being an 'investing authority' over the period 2023 to 2027. West Suffolk Council has had a long tradition of investing in its communities in support of the delivery of its strategic priorities, in particular to aid economic growth across West Suffolk.

Depleting capital and revenue reserves and increased pressure on external funding mean that the council will need to consider investing away from the traditional funding models such as using its own reserves. Instead, focus is now on the optimum use of borrowing and the various options for accessing the capital that is available.

The financing of the chosen funding model itself is a challenge, with limited reserve balances available in the medium term. In order to generate new cash into the authority and to enable our continued ambition of being an 'investing authority' means that borrowing or appropriate financing transactions, in order

to create new cash, is something that West Suffolk will have to embrace in order to deliver on its ambitious capital and investment programme.

There are ample precedents which demonstrate that prudential borrowing has become a valuable tool for local government to achieve its strategic objectives. The use of unsupported borrowing (no security to a particular council asset) is both flexible and relatively straightforward.

With this in mind, and as borrowing is required over the medium to long term for the authority, it is considered prudent to continue to assess each investment opportunity/project on the basis of borrowing and its cost, assessing each project on an equal playing field regardless of their timings within the MTFS or the funding model used.

There are two annual costs associated with borrowing:

- servicing the debt – the interest payable on the loan; and
- repayment of the loan/capital – effectively through a minimum revenue provision (MRP) into the revenue account.

At the time of writing this plan, these costs would be in the region of 4.50 per cent interest (based on a Public Works Loan Board, PWLB, rate over 40 years). MRP is calculated to ensure that the capital is fully repaid over the economic life of the asset. In order to assess each project on a level playing field these costs will be included in each business case. Naturally a change in interest rate or MRP rate would change the rates used in each potential project.

The choice of funding model for each investment opportunity/project will be based on its individual merits, financial return/costs including the overall risk exposure, considered as part of each business case. Any decision to invest or borrow would be subject to full scrutiny by councillors, through the usual democratic process.

5. Encouraging the use of digital forms for customer access

The ongoing implementation of our Customer Access Strategy is also an important part of our next phase of development and is inextricably linked to the need for commercial thinking and wider transformation programme.

The customer support team continues to embed the benefits of both integrated first-point-of-contact support and promoting channel shift.

There will always be some customers who cannot or do not want to access our services online – whether because they have limited access to the internet, or because they are unfamiliar with this technology. These customers will always be able to reach us in the traditional way. Our goal, though, is to encourage those people who can do their business with us online to do so.

In addition to making customer contact easier to handle, this solution can automate many of the duplicated tasks council employees normally perform when handling customer contact, thereby reducing call times and improving the quality of service.

6. Taking advantage of new forms of local government finance (for example business rate retention)

During the period covered by the MTFs, the new forms of local government finance will continue, in whatever guise it lands from April 2025, to be the key sources of income for councils. West Suffolk will therefore take the opportunity, through its service delivery and other MTFs themes, mainly 'behaving more commercially' and being an 'investing authority', to grow our own funding through a strong, and growing, local economy alongside the skills, infrastructure and housing to sustain it.

Our approach to engagement and consultation

The council regularly engages with residents, businesses, community groups and interest groups through a range of consultation mechanisms. Sometimes these are formal exercises, for example, public consultations or public meetings, and sometimes they are more informal, for example, focus groups, community engagement within localities and stakeholder liaison on a topic by topic basis. Our overall aim is to carry out timely and proportionate consultation that is available in an accessible format for everyone who wants to give us their views on a particular matter. Details of current and closed consultations by the councils are available here:

<http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/council/consultations/>

Summary of our financial position

The Medium Term Financial Strategy developed using the six themes laid out above gives rise to a financial plan containing forecasts for the revenue, capital and reserves position from 2023 to 2027 for West Suffolk Council.

The uncertain nature of local government funding and the volatile nature of locally generated funding streams means that there are limitations on the degree to which West Suffolk can identify all of the potential changes within these medium term financial projections.

However, these plans have been developed within insight and challenge from across the organisation to be as robust as possible given the current information available.

There is a legal requirement for a local authority to deliver an annual balanced budget position for the following year. West Suffolk Council has a balanced budget for both 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025.

Revenue Position

This is a statement of all the income and expenditure required to deliver the services of West Suffolk Council in each year. A summary statement is laid out in Table 1 below:

Table 1

(Income) and expenditure:	Item	2023 to 2024 Total budget £000s	2024 to 2025 Projected budget £000s	2025 to 2026 Projected budget £000s	2026 to 2027 Projected budget £000s
Net service expenditure before interest	1	23,247	21,260	20,191	21,779
Interest received on investments	2	(710)	(400)	(265)	(265)
Dividends received	3	(340)	(340)	(340)	(340)
Interest on borrowing	4	1,509	1,486	1,390	1,390
Minimum Revenue Provision	5	760	783	805	805
Net expenditure after interest & capital for General Fund Purposes	6	24,466	22,789	21,781	23,369
Transfer to/(from) General Fund	7	831	0	0	0
Net expenditure after interest & capital	8	25,297	22,789	21,781	23,369
Remaining budget gap	9	0	0	(2,669)	(3,691)
Budget Requirement (excluding parishes)	10	25,297	22,789	19,112	19,678
Collection Fund deficit/(surplus) - Council Tax	11	(309)	0	0	0
Collection Fund deficit/(surplus) - Business Rates	12	(627)	0	0	0
Business Rates Retention - Baseline funding	13	(4,693)	(5,040)	(5,146)	(5,249)
Business Rates Retention - Local Share of Growth/S31 Grants	14	(4,469)	(2,052)	(919)	(943)
Business Rates Retention - Share of Suffolk Pooling	15	(300)	(300)	0	0
Business Rates Retention - Renewable Energy	16	(632)	(679)	(693)	(707)
Business Rates Retention - Enterprise Zones	17	(372)	(400)	(408)	(417)
Revenue Support Grant	18	(420)	(451)	0	0
Rural Services Delivery Grant	19	(203)	(203)	0	0
New Homes Bonus Grant	20	(815)	(815)	0	0
Services Grant	21	(183)	(183)	0	0
Funding Guarantee	22	(1,137)	(1,128)	0	0
Amount to be charged to council taxpayers	23	11,137	11,538	11,946	12,362
Council Tax Base	24	57,987.01	58,566.88	59,152.55	59,744.07
Council Tax at band D - West Suffolk Council	25	£192.06	£197.01	£201.96	£206.91
Total Council Tax generated (excluding parishes)	26	11,137	11,538	11,946	12,362
Town and parish council precepts	27	5,242	5,242	5,242	5,242
Total Council Tax generated (including Parishes) – demand on the Council Tax Collection Fund	28	16,379	16,780	17,188	17,604

This revenue forecast includes several key assumptions, detailed in Table 2 below. Budget assumptions continue to be reviewed as more accurate information becomes available.

Table 2

DETAILS	2023 to 2024	2024 to 2025	2025 to 2026	2026 to 2027
INFLATIONARY CHANGES				
Pay inflation	4.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Employers Pension Contribution	26.00%	26.00%	26.00%	28.00%
Pension Take-Up Assumption	97.00%	97.00%	97.00%	97.00%
Vacancy Savings	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%
Drainage board precepts inflation	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%
General Inflation	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
ICT Inflation	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%
Business Rates Inflation - CPI at Sept	0.00%	7.40%	2.10%	2.00%
Business Rates Inflation - 0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Fees & Charges	Varies	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Utilities	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Electricity	7.5%	7.5%	7.5%	7.5%
Transport - Fuel	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Insurance Premium Increases	10.0%	7.5%	5.0%	5.0%

Capital Position

The Capital Programme is a statement of planned investment in the creation, purchase or improvement of West Suffolk Council's assets and how this investment will be funded.

There is significant investment planned within this medium term financial projection to support the key strategic priorities and the six key themes.

The Capital Strategy (Attachment E) sets out West Suffolk Council's approach to the allocation of capital resources and how future investment is evaluated and assessed and how it will be funded.

The planned capital expenditure and the source of funding out to 2026 to 2027 is laid out in the following table:

Table 3

	2023 to 2024 millions	2024 to 2025 millions	2025 to 2026 millions	2026 to 2027 millions	Total millions
Gross capital expenditure	£48.11	£54.27	£31.07	£3.19	£136.64
Funded by:					
Grants and contributions	£1.05	£0.90	£0.90	£0.90	£3.75
Earmarked revenue reserves	£4.57	£3.31	£3.30	£2.29	£13.47
Capital receipts reserve	£7.45	£0.20	£0.12	£0.00	£7.77
External borrowing	£35.04	£49.86	£26.75	£0.00	£111.65
Total	£48.11	£54.27	£31.07	£3.19	£136.64

The revenue forecast in Table 1 includes the cost of servicing the planned external borrowing included in Table 3.

Capital receipts are generated through the sale of assets. This income can only be used for future capital expenditure (with one exception – see Attachment F – Flexible Capital Receipts Strategy).

Reserves Position

West Suffolk is required to maintain adequate financial reserves to meet the needs of the authority. The reserves that are held are classified as either working balances (known as the general fund balance) or as specific reserves which are defined with a particular purpose (known as earmarked reserves).

The general fund balance is held as a contingency to meet the cost of unexpected expenditure or events during the year. The West Suffolk policy is to hold a balance of £5 million at all times. This equates to around 20 per cent of annual net expenditure.

Earmarked reserves are set aside to meet a known or predicted future expenditure. The planned movement in the balances of these reserves is laid out in the following table:

Table 4

	2022 to 2023 millions	2023 to 2024 millions	2024 to 2025 millions	2025 to 2026 millions	2026 to 2027 millions
Earmarked Reserves Closing Balance	£39.9	£41.3	£42.3	£40.3	£39.7

The revenue position in Table 1 includes prudent budget provisions for the replacement of key service delivery assets. The full schedule showing all the earmarked reserves and the annual forecast movements is in Attachment D Appendix 3.

Glossary of terms

Actuarial valuation

An independent report of the financial position of the Pension Fund that is carried out by an actuary every three years. Reviews the Pension Fund assets and liabilities as at the date of the valuation and the results of which, including recommended employer's contribution rates, the Actuary reports to the Council.

Baseline funding level

The amount of a local authority's start-up funding allocation which is provided through the local share of the estimated business rates aggregate (England) at the outset of the scheme as forecast by the Government. It forms the baseline against which tariffs and top-ups will be calculated.

Budget Requirement

The Council's revenue budget on general fund services after deducting funding streams such as fees and charges and any funding from reserves. (Excluding Council Tax, Revenue Support Grant, New Homes Bonus and Business Rates).

Business rate retention scheme

The Business Rates Retention Scheme introduced by Government from April 2013 is intended to provide incentives for local authorities to drive economic growth, as the authorities will be able to retain a share of the growth that is generated in business rates revenue in their areas, as opposed to the previous system where all business rates revenues are held centrally.

Under the scheme local authorities were also allowed to form pools for the purposes of business rates retention. West Suffolk along with the other Suffolk Authorities and the County Council have been designated as a Suffolk pool from April 2013.

In 2018 the Government announced the new 100% business rate pilot schemes, the Suffolk authorities were successful in being one of those pilots during 2018 to 2019.

The planned 75 per cent business rates retention scheme and re-baselining as part of the fairer funding review will be postponed until April 2025.

Capital expenditure

Spending on assets that have a lasting value, for example, land, buildings and large items of equipment such as vehicles. Can also be indirect expenditure in the form of grants to other persons or bodies.

Capital Programme

Council's plan of future spending on capital projects such as buying land, buildings, vehicles and equipment.

Capital Receipts

The proceeds from the disposal of land or other assets. Capital receipts can be used to finance new capital expenditure but cannot be used to finance revenue expenditure.

CIPFA

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. One of the UK accountancy institutes. Uniquely, CIPFA specialise in the public sector. Consequently, CIPFA holds the responsibility for setting accounting standards for local government.

Collection fund

A statutory account maintained by the council recording the amounts collected from council tax and business rates and from which it pays the precept to the major precepting authorities.

Collection Fund surplus (or deficit)

If the council collects more or less than it expected at the start of the financial year, the surplus or deficit is shared with the major precepting authorities - Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Police Authority.

Contingency

Money set-aside centrally in the council's base budget to meet the cost of unforeseen items of expenditure, such as higher than expected inflation or new responsibilities.

Council Tax Base

The Council Tax Base for a council is used in the calculation of council tax and is equal to the number of Band D equivalent properties. To work this out, the council counts the number of properties in each band and works out what this equates to in terms of Band D equivalent properties. The band proportions are expressed in ninths and are specified in the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Fairer Funding Review

Central government funding for local authorities is currently based on an assessment of its relative needs and resources. The overarching methodology that determines how much funding each authority receives each year was introduced over ten years ago and has not been updated since funding baselines were set at the start of the 50 per cent business rates retention scheme in 2013 to 2014.

The government is undertaking a 'Fairer Funding Review'. This is aimed at designing a new system for allocating funding between councils, the review will:

- set new baseline funding allocations for local authorities

- deliver an up-to-date assessment of the relative needs of local authorities
- examine the relative resources of local authorities
- focus initially on the services currently funded through the local government finance settlement
- be developed through close collaboration with local government to seek views on the right approach

The Fairer Funding review is expected to come into force from April 2025.

General Fund Balance

The main unallocated reserve of the council, set aside to meet any unforeseen pressures.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

GDP is defined as the value of all goods and services produced within the overall economy.

Gross expenditure

The total cost of providing the council's services, before deducting income from Government grants, or fees and charges for services.

Individual authority business rates baseline

Derived by apportioning the billing authority business rates baseline between billing and major precepting authorities on the basis of major precepting authority shares.

Local share of business rates

This is the percentage share of locally collected business rates that will be retained by local government. This is currently set at 50 per cent. At the outset, the local share of the estimated business rates aggregate is divided between billing authorities on the basis of their proportionate shares.

Net expenditure

Gross expenditure less services income, but before deduction of government grant.

National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR)

Also known as 'business rates', Non-Domestic Rates are collected by billing authorities such as West Suffolk Council and, up until 31 March 2013, paid into a central national pool, then redistributed to authorities according to resident population. From 2013 to 2014 local authorities will retain 50 per cent of the value of any increase in business rates. The aim is to provide an incentive to help businesses set up and grow.

New Homes Bonus

Under this scheme councils receive a new homes bonus (NHB) per property for the year following completion. Payments are based on match funding the council tax raised on each property with an additional amount for affordable homes. It is paid in the form of an unringfenced grant.

Precept

The precepting authority's council tax, which billing authorities collect on behalf of the major preceptor.

Prudential Borrowing

Set of rules governing local authority borrowing for funding capital projects under a professional code of practice developed by CIPFA to ensure councils' capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable.

Referendum

Power under which the Government may limit the level of council tax increase year on year. Any shire district authority in England wanting to raise council tax by more than 3 per cent or £5 whichever is the higher amount, must consult the public in a referendum. Councils losing a referendum would have to revert to a lower increase in bills.

Revenue Expenditure

The day-to-day running expenses on services provided by the council.

Revenue Support Grant (RSG)

All authorities receive Revenue Support Grant from central government but this is expected to be phased out by April 2025.

Risk Management

We define risk as being uncertainty of outcome, whether relating to 'positive' opportunities or 'negative' threats/hazards. Our new, positive approach to risk is based on context, proportionality, judgement and evidence-based decision making that considers risk on a case by case basis and is documented at all stages. We will be joined-up in our decisions, and will draw on one another's skills and experience to take responsibility for sound and reasonable decisions about the use of public funds, avoiding a blame culture when things go wrong.
<http://westsuffolkintranet/howto/risk-management.cfm>

Section 151 officer (or Chief Financial Officer)

Legally Councils must appoint under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 a named chief financial officer to give them financial advice, for West Suffolk Council this role is held by the post holder of Director (Resources and Property).

Specific Grants

Funding through a specific grant is provided for a specific purpose and cannot be spent on anything else, for example: Housing Benefits Subsidy.

Spending Review

The Spending Review is an internal Government process in which the Treasury negotiates budgets for each government department.

Suffolk Business Rate Pool

All district/borough councils in Suffolk, along with Suffolk County Council have created the Suffolk Business Rates Pool. The pooling of business rates across Suffolk will:

- through its governance arrangement ensure no individual council is financially any worse off for being in the Suffolk pool
- maximise the proportion of business rates that are retained in Suffolk
- benefit the wider communities within the county led by the Suffolk Leaders' collective vision for a 'Better Suffolk'
- provide incentives for councils to work together to improve outcomes for Suffolk.

Tariffs and top-ups

Calculated by comparing an individual authority business rates baseline against its baseline funding level. Tariffs and top-ups are fixed at the start of the scheme and index linked to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) in future years. West Suffolk is a 'tariff' authority.

Treasury Management

Managing the council's cash flows, borrowing and investments to support the council's finances. Details are set out in the Treasury Management Strategy which will be considered and approved by Cabinet and Council in February each year.

This page is intentionally left blank

(Income) and expenditure:	Item	2023 to 2024 Total budget £000s	2024 to 2025 Projected budget £000s	2025 to 2026 Projected budget £000s	2026 to 2027 Projected budget £000s
Net service expenditure before interest	1	23,247	21,260	20,191	21,779
Interest received on investments	2	(710)	(400)	(265)	(265)
Dividends received	3	(340)	(340)	(340)	(340)
Interest on borrowing	4	1,509	1,486	1,390	1,390
Minimum Revenue Provision	5	760	783	805	805
Net expenditure after interest & capital for General Fund Purposes	6	24,466	22,789	21,781	23,369
Transfer to/(from) General Fund	7	831	0	0	0
Net expenditure after interest & capital	8	25,297	22,789	21,781	23,369
Remaining budget gap	9	0	0	(2,669)	(3,691)
Budget Requirement (excluding parishes)	10	25,297	22,789	19,112	19,678
Collection Fund deficit/(surplus) - Council Tax	11	(309)	0	0	0
Collection Fund deficit/(surplus) - Business Rates	12	(627)	0	0	0
Business Rates Retention - Baseline funding	13	(4,693)	(5,040)	(5,146)	(5,249)
Business Rates Retention - Local Share of Growth/S31 Grants	14	(4,469)	(2,052)	(919)	(943)
Business Rates Retention - Share of Suffolk Pooling	15	(300)	(300)	0	0
Business Rates Retention - Renewable Energy	16	(632)	(679)	(693)	(707)
Business Rates Retention - Enterprise Zones	17	(372)	(400)	(408)	(417)
Revenue Support Grant	18	(420)	(451)	0	0
Rural Services Delivery Grant	19	(203)	(203)	0	0
New Homes Bonus Grant	20	(815)	(815)	0	0
Services Grant	21	(183)	(183)	0	0
Funding Guarantee	22	(1,137)	(1,128)	0	0
Amount to be charged to council taxpayers	23	11,137	11,538	11,946	12,362
Council Tax Base	24	57,987.01	58,566.88	59,152.55	59,744.07
Council Tax at band D - West Suffolk Council	25	£192.06	£197.01	£201.96	£206.91
Total Council Tax generated (excluding parishes)	26	11,137	11,538	11,946	12,362
Town and parish council precepts	27	5,242	5,242	5,242	5,242
Total Council Tax generated (including Parishes) - demand on the Council Tax Collection Fund	28	16,379	16,780	17,188	17,604

General Fund					
Balance as at 1 April	29	4,169	5,000	5,000	5,000
Transfer to / (from) reserve	30	831	0	0	0
Closing General Fund balance as at 31 March	31	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Net expenditure for General Fund purposes	32	24,466	22,789	21,781	23,369
General Fund balance as percentage of net expenditure	33	20.44%	21.94%	22.96%	21.40%
Earmarked Reserves					
Balance as at 1 April	34	39,955	41,325	42,340	40,359
Contributions to / (from) reserves	35	1,370	1,015	(1,981)	(664)
Closing earmarked reserves balances as at 31 March	36	41,325	42,340	40,359	39,695

This page is intentionally left blank

Project Description	2023 to 2024 Total Budget	2024 to 2025 Total Budget	2025 to 2026 Total Budget	2026 to 2027 Total Budget	2027 to 2028 Total Budget	2028 to 2029 Total Budget	2029 to 2030 Total Budget	2030 to 2031 Total Budget	2031 to 2032 Total Budget	2032 to 2033 Total Budget	Total Budget (Over 10 Years)	Overall Total Project Cost
Resources & Property												
Western Way Development - report number: CAB/WS/22/068 This is the last modelling sum for a phase 1 scheme, plus works to residual frame (£75m - £2m of this is in 2022 to 2023) reported to Council in December 2022.	14,000,000	34,000,000	25,000,000								73,000,000	75,000,000
Abbeycroft Leisure Loan (report number CAB/WS/20/072)	750,000										750,000	1,000,000
Asset Management Plan - Property												
Property Asset Management Plan (see Appendix i for further breakdown)	1,635,000	1,979,500	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	11,614,500	
Net Zero Plan - Asset Management Investment	1,000,000	1,000,000	500,000								2,500,000	2,840,000
Planning & Regulatory												
Private Sector Disabled Facilities Grants	900,000	900,000	900,000	900,000	900,000	900,000	900,000	900,000	900,000	900,000	9,000,000	
Community Energy Solar Investment	500,000	500,000									1,000,000	10,240,000
Net Zero Plan	2,250,000	1,250,000	1,250,000								4,750,000	5,000,000
Operations												
Car Parking Improvements (see Appendix ii for further breakdown)	440,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	1,160,000	
Vehicle & Plant Purchases	1,629,527	947,000	2,043,000	913,800	1,240,000	1,300,000	1,300,000	1,300,000	1,300,000	1,300,000	13,273,327	
Net Zero Plan - Electric Vehicle Fleet Investment	627,000	510,000									1,137,000	1,160,000
Asset Management Plan - Leisure												
Leisure Asset Management Scheme (see Appendix iii for further breakdown)	386,726	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	3,086,726	
Growth												
Barley Homes Investment Facility - report number: CAB/WS/20/079	6,700,000	6,250,000									12,950,000	14,250,000
Investing in our Growth Agenda (Available for projects under the Investing in our Growth Agenda Strategy), Originally a total fund of £40 million, this has increased as other projects have been approved - funding has subsequently been allocated to projects such as Incubation Units at Suffolk Business Park	12,108,692	3,000,000									15,108,692	Originally a total fund of £40m - funding has subsequently been allocated to projects such as Barley Homes
Haverhill Research Park - Loan Facility Balance - report number: CAB/JT/19/007	586,818										586,818	3,500,000
Incubation Units, Suffolk Business Park - report number: CAB/WS/21/052	4,598,716	3,553,737									8,152,453	12,100,000
Capital Totals:	48,112,479	54,270,237	31,073,000	3,193,800	3,520,000	3,580,000	3,580,000	3,580,000	3,580,000	3,580,000	158,069,516	134,890,000

Page 95

Summary of Capital Financing

Capital Receipts	7,450,000	200,000	120,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7,770,000	
Capital Borrowing	35,044,225	49,863,737	26,750,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	111,657,963	
Earmarked Reserves	4,564,601	3,306,500	3,303,000	2,293,800	2,620,000	2,680,000	2,680,000	2,680,000	2,680,000	2,680,000	29,487,901	
Grants & Contributions	1,053,652	900,000	900,000	900,000	900,000	900,000	900,000	900,000	900,000	900,000	9,153,652	
Total Capital Financing:	48,112,479	54,270,237	31,073,000	3,193,800	3,520,000	3,580,000	3,580,000	3,580,000	3,580,000	3,580,000	158,069,516	

This page is intentionally left blank

	2023 to 2024	2024 to 2025	2025 to 2026	2026 to 2027	2027 to 2028	2028 to 2029	2029 to 2030	2030 to 2031	2031 to 2032	2032 to 2033	Total Budget (Over 10 Years)
Project Description	Total Budget	Total Budget	Total Budget	Total Budget	Total Budget	Total Budget	Total Budget	Total Budget	Total Budget	Total Budget	Total Budget
Property Asset Management Plan Breakdown											
Properties											
Asset Management Plan			412,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	7,412,000
George Lambton Pavilion, Newmarket - roofing works			25,000								25,000
Athenaeum, Bury St Edmunds - roofing works and structural repairs	250,000										250,000
Guineas Public Toilets, Newmarket - provision of changing places and refurbishment	200,000										200,000
Haverhill House - roof and boiler replacement		310,000									310,000
West Stow Country Park - roofing Work to Museum	100,000										100,000
Abbey Gardens Toilets - provision of changing places and refurbishment	160,000										160,000
Jubilee Walk Toilets - provision of changing places		30,000									30,000
Recreation Ground Toilets - roof renewal	30,000										30,000
Bury Bus Station - bus shelter refurbishments	75,000										75,000
Fitzroy Street Housing, Newmarket - basement tanking	41,000										41,000
Hollands Road Industrial Units - roof renewal and unit refurbishment	575,000	25,000									600,000
Severn Road Enterprise Units - roof renewal	77,000										77,000
Chiswick Avenue Industrial Units, Mildenhall - unit refurbishment	65,000										65,000
Leisure Centre Bury St Edmunds - leisure pool plant (to be linked to Western Way Development)		250,000									250,000
Leisure Centre Bury St Edmunds - replacement glazing (to be linked to Western Way Development)		200,000									200,000
Leisure Centre Haverhill - flume replacement & Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) lighting		582,000									582,000
Highbury Road Industrial Units, Brandon - roof renewal and unit refurbishment		150,000									150,000
31 High Street Brandon - roof renewal	20,000										20,000
St Johns Close Mildenhall - car park resurfacing	20,000										20,000
Vicon House - roof renewal			430,000								430,000
For EPC Rating Changes - industrial units											

West Suffolk - 2023 to 2024 Capital Programme - Property Asset Management Plan Breakdown

Attachment D Appendix 2a

	2023 to 2024	2024 to 2025	2025 to 2026	2026 to 2027	2027 to 2028	2028 to 2029	2029 to 2030	2030 to 2031	2031 to 2032	2032 to 2033	Total Budget (Over 10 Years)
Project Description	Total Budget	Total Budget	Total Budget	Total Budget	Total Budget	Total Budget	Total Budget	Total Budget	Total Budget	Total Budget	Total Budget
Bunting Road, Bury St Edmunds - roof renewal and LED lighting		142,500									142,500
Chiswick Avenue, Mildenhall - roof renewal and LED lighting			35,000								35,000
Gregory Road, Mildenhall - roof renewal and LED lighting	22,000										22,000
Hampstead Avenue, Mildenhall - roof renewal and LED lighting		90,000									90,000
James Carter Road, Mildenhall - roof renewal and LED lighting		80,000									80,000
Craven Way, Newmarket - roof renewal and LED lighting			98,000								98,000
57 Eastern Way, Bury St Edmunds - roof renewal and LED lighting		120,000									120,000
TOTAL	1,635,000.00	1,979,500.00	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	11,614,500.00

West Suffolk - 2023 to 2024 Capital Programme - Leisure Asset Management Plan Breakdown

Attachment D Appendix 2b

Project Description	2023 to 2024 Total Budget	2024 to 2025 Total Budget	2025 to 2026 Total Budget	2026 to 2027 Total Budget	2027 to 2028 Total Budget	2028 to 2029 Total Budget	2029 to 2030 Total Budget	2030 to 2031 Total Budget	2031 to 2032 Total Budget	2032 to 2033 Total Budget	Total Budget (Over 10)
Leisure Asset Management Plan Breakdown											
Leisure Asset Management Scheme			300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	2,400,000
Babwell Meadows Landscaping - works associated with enabling public access	28,074										28,074
Mildenhall Pump Track - replacement for former facility removed from Mildenhall Woods	55,000										55,000
Gainsborough Recreation Ground, Bury St Edmunds - renewal of play area	30,000										30,000
St Johns Close, Mildenhall - renewal of MUGA	60,000										60,000
Henry Close, Haverhill - renewal of play area	58,652										58,652
St James Park, Bury St Edmunds - renewal of play area	60,000										60,000
Peterhouse Close, Mildenhall - renewal of play area	60,000										60,000
Granby Street, Newmarket - renewal of play area	35,000										35,000
Hopton Rise, Haverhill - renewal of play area		60,000									60,000
Manderston Road, Newmarket - renewal of play area		60,000									60,000
Motts Field (East Town Park) Haverhill - refurbish Multi Use Games Area and remove play area		20,000									20,000
Woodcock Rise, Brandon - renewal of play area		40,000									40,000
Bramley Road/Bergamot Vale, - renewal of play area Haverhill		60,000									60,000
Hepworth Avenue, Bury St Edmunds - renewal of play area		60,000									60,000
TOTAL	386,726.00	300,000.00	300,000.00	300,000.00	300,000.00	300,000.00	300,000.00	300,000.00	300,000.00	300,000.00	3,086,726.00

This page is intentionally left blank

West Suffolk - 2023 to 2024 Capital Programme - Car Parking Improvements Breakdown

Attachment D Appendix 2c

	2023 to 2024	2024 to 2025	2025 to 2026	2026 to 2027	2027 to 2028	2028 to 2029	2029 to 2030	2030 to 2031	2031 to 2032	2032 to 2033	Total Budget (Over 10 Years)
Project Description	Total Budget	Total Budget	Total Budget	Total Budget	Total Budget	Total Budget	Total Budget	Total Budget	Total Budget	Total Budget	Total Budget
Car Parks Improvements Breakdown											
Newmarket improvements - market place car park resurfacing works	80,000										80,000
Electric Vehicle Charging Points (across the district)	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	800,000
Car Park in Clare (subject to business case)	100,000										100,000
Parkway Car Park, Bury St Edmunds - resurfacing car park and access road	80,000										80,000
West Stow Country Park - Car Park resurfacing	100,000										100,000
TOTAL	440,000.00	80,000.00	80,000.00	80,000.00	80,000.00	80,000.00	80,000.00	80,000.00	80,000.00	80,000.00	1,160,000.00

This page is intentionally left blank

Reserve details - see councils statement of accounts (link below) for further details on reserve descriptions.	2023 to 2024	2023 to 2024	2023 to 2024	2023 to 2024	2023 to 2024	2024 to 2025	2024 to 2025	2024 to 2025
	Forecast opening balance £	Budgeted contribution to reserve £	Budgeted contribution from reserve £	Budgeted reserve transfers £	Budgeted closing balance £	Budgeted contribution to reserve £	Budgeted contribution from reserve £	Budgeted closing balance £
Strategic reserves								
Strategic priorities and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) reserve - see also appendix 3a	3,966,222	1,756,110	(1,024,373)	0	4,697,959	1,756,110	(501,700)	5,952,369
Investing in our growth agenda reserve - see also appendix 3b	693,004	0	(122,535)	0	570,469	0	(124,985)	445,484
Business rates retention pilot: place-based reserve - see also appendix 3c	1,454,461	0	0	0	1,454,461	0	0	1,454,461
Financial planning reserves								
Invest to save reserve	4,793,356	0	(284,454)	1,000,000	5,508,902	0	(206,073)	5,302,829
COVID-19 reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Business rates retention equalisation reserve	9,083,830	4,699,496	0	(5,000,000)	8,783,326	1,476,568	0	10,259,894
Housing benefits equalisation reserve	320,292	0	0	0	320,292	0	0	320,292
Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) reserve	748,813	4,616	0	0	753,429	7,022	0	760,451
Capital project financing and interest equalisation reserve	6,101,046	0	0	0	6,101,046	0	0	6,101,046
Self insured reserve	360,624	20,000	(20,000)	0	360,624	20,000	(20,000)	360,624
Election reserve	275,274	60,000	(200,000)	0	135,274	60,000	0	195,274
Planning reserve	293,360	150,000	(205,551)	0	237,809	150,000	(140,500)	247,309
Service delivery reserves								
Computer equipment reserve	136,428	132,000	(132,000)	0	136,428	132,000	(132,000)	136,428
Office equipment reserve	318,331	74,000	(20,000)	0	372,331	74,000	(20,000)	426,331
Vehicle, plant and equipment reserve	1,136,167	907,798	(2,256,527)	2,000,000	1,787,438	907,798	(947,000)	1,748,236
Waste management reserve	195,024	118,600	(153,450)	0	160,174	118,600	(153,450)	125,324
Car park development reserve	880,246	565,792	(640,000)	0	806,038	565,792	(80,000)	1,291,830
Building repairs reserve - property - see also appendix 3d	4,525,331	1,425,002	(3,169,373)	2,000,000	4,780,960	1,425,002	(3,402,454)	2,803,508
Industrial unit service charge reserve	113,897	0	0	0	113,897	0	0	113,897
Industrial rent reserve	323,061	0	0	0	323,061	0	0	323,061
Building repairs reserve - leisure	230,930	300,000	(233,074)	0	297,856	300,000	(300,000)	297,856
Abbey gardens donation reserve	38,766	0	0	0	38,766	0	0	38,766
Newmarket Stallion statue reserve	20,809	0	0	0	20,809	0	0	20,809
Housing options reserve	1,855,405	1,146,795	(1,440,040)	0	1,562,160	1,156,540	(1,020,370)	1,698,330
Section 106 reserves								
Commuted maintenance reserve	1,327,237	0	(82,930)	0	1,244,307	0	(82,930)	1,161,377
Public Service Village (PSV) reserve	79,699	0	0	0	79,699	0	0	79,699
S106 monitoring officer reserve	12,930	60,000	(68,084)	0	4,846	60,000	(64,846)	0
S106 revenue reserve	80,287	0	0	0	80,287	0	0	80,287
Other reserves								
Gershom Parkington reserve	589,914	8,300	(6,042)	0	592,172	8,300	(6,163)	594,309
Total budgeted reserves:	39,954,744	11,428,509	(10,058,433)	0	41,324,820	8,217,732	(7,202,471)	42,340,081

Please click the link below to access the council's Statement of Accounts webpage where further explanations of the purposes of these reserves can be found

[Statement of accounts \(westsuffolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/statement-of-accounts)

Reserve details - see councils statement of accounts (link below) for further details on reserve descriptions.	2025 to 2026	2025 to 2026	2025 to 2026	2025 to 2026	2026 to 2027	2026 to 2027	2026 to 2027
	Budgeted opening balance £	Budgeted contribution to reserve £	Budgeted contribution from reserve £	Budgeted closing balance £	Budgeted contribution to reserve £	Budgeted contribution from reserve £	Budgeted closing balance £
Strategic reserves							
Strategic priorities and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) reserve - see also appendix 3a	5,952,369	0	(501,700)	5,450,669	0	(501,700)	4,948,969
Investing in our growth agenda reserve - see also appendix 3b	445,484	0	(73,885)	371,599	0	0	371,599
Business rates retention pilot: place-based reserve - see also appendix 3c	1,454,461	0	0	1,454,461	0	0	1,454,461
Financial planning reserves							
Invest to save reserve	5,302,829	0	(13,445)	5,289,384	0	0	5,289,384
COVID-19 reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Business rates retention equalisation reserve	10,259,894	0	0	10,259,894	0	0	10,259,894
Housing benefits equalisation reserve	320,292	0	0	320,292	0	0	320,292
Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) reserve	760,451	2,341	0	762,792	2,341	0	765,133
Capital project financing and interest equalisation reserve	6,101,046	0	0	6,101,046	0	0	6,101,046
Self insured reserve	360,624	20,000	(20,000)	360,624	20,000	(20,000)	360,624
Election reserve	195,274	60,000	0	255,274	60,000	0	315,274
Planning reserve	247,309	150,000	(140,499)	256,810	150,000	(140,500)	266,310
Service delivery reserves							
Computer equipment reserve	136,428	132,000	(132,000)	136,428	132,000	(132,000)	136,428
Office equipment reserve	426,331	74,000	(20,000)	480,331	74,000	(20,000)	534,331
Vehicle, plant and equipment reserve	1,748,236	907,798	(2,043,000)	613,034	907,798	(913,800)	607,032
Waste management reserve	125,324	118,600	(153,450)	90,474	118,600	(153,450)	55,624
Car park development reserve	1,291,830	565,792	(80,000)	1,777,622	565,792	(80,000)	2,263,414
Building repairs reserve - property - see also appendix 3d	2,803,508	1,425,002	(2,221,850)	2,006,660	1,425,002	(2,101,850)	1,329,812
Industrial unit service charge reserve	113,897	0	0	113,897	0	0	113,897
Industrial rent reserve	323,061	0	0	323,061	0	0	323,061
Building repairs reserve - leisure	297,856	300,000	(300,000)	297,856	300,000	(300,000)	297,856
Abbey gardens donation reserve	38,766	0	0	38,766	0	0	38,766
Newmarket Stallion statue reserve	20,809	0	0	20,809	0	0	20,809
Housing options reserve	1,698,330	1,082,805	(1,039,051)	1,742,084	1,082,805	(1,057,732)	1,767,157
Section 106 reserves							
Commuted maintenance reserve	1,161,377	0	(82,930)	1,078,447	0	(82,930)	995,517
Public Service Village (PSV) reserve	79,699	0	0	79,699	0	0	79,699
S106 monitoring officer reserve	0	60,000	(60,000)	0	60,000	(60,000)	0
S106 revenue reserve	80,287	0	0	80,287	0	0	80,287
Other reserves							
Gershom Parkington reserve	594,309	8,300	(6,286)	596,323	8,300	(6,412)	598,211
Total budgeted reserves:	42,340,081	4,906,638	(6,888,096)	40,358,623	4,906,638	(5,570,374)	39,694,887

Please click the link below to access the council's Statem

[Statement of accounts \(westsuffolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk)

This reserve was set up in order to provide the financial capacity, either through direct investment - revenue and/or capital - or through servicing external borrowing, for West Suffolk Council to drive forward the delivery of a sustainable Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the delivery of the Strategic Plan.

The primary source for the funding of this reserve is the New Homes Bonus Grant.

The projections below currently assume a level of New Homes Bonus contributions up to 2024 to 2025, however this will be reviewed annually in line with the revised grant determinations and the overall budget position.

The table below summarises the proposed contributions to and from this reserve for the term of the MTFS.

Details	2023 to 2024 Total budget £	2024 to 2025 Projected budget £	2025 to 2026 Projected budget £	2026 to 2027 Projected budget £
Budgeted opening balance	3,966,222	4,697,959	5,952,369	5,450,669
Budgeted contributions to reserve				
Contribution to reserve from New Homes Bonus grant (see also attachment D appendix 1 - Medium Term Financial Strategy)	815,078	815,078	0	0
Element of New Homes Bonus reduction from the Funding Guarantee Grant	941,032	941,032	0	0
Total contributions to reserve:	1,756,110	1,756,110	0	0
Budget Contributions from Reserve				
Community chest and locality budget funding	(548,373)	(501,700)	(501,700)	(501,700)
"One-off contribution to Abbeycroft Leisure in respect of utility costs	(300,000)	0	0	0
Social prescribing project (part funding, balance to be funded from the business rates pilot reserve, see attachment E appendix iii)	(94,000)	0	0	0
Housing Options: Net Zero funding towards refurbishment of 2 Newmarket Road, Bury St Edmunds	(82,000)	0	0	0
Total contributions from reserve:	(1,024,373)	(501,700)	(501,700)	(501,700)
Budgeted closing balance:	4,697,959	5,952,369	5,450,669	4,948,969

This page is intentionally left blank

This reserve has been set up in order to support the delivery of the council's growth agenda.

The table below shows the current balance on this reserve over the term of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The 2018 to 2019 budget setting process included a four year funding agreement for additional resourcing capacity to deliver the "Investing in our Growth Agenda" Strategy. These resources had a four year funding agreement from this reserve. Following a review in 2020, those resources that were still deemed necessary to continue the delivery of the council's ambitions under this strategy were included in the base budget from April 2022.

The balance on this remains earmarked towards support of the strategy and delivery of our growth priorities, alongside the balance of the "Investing in our Growth Agenda" capital fund (detailed in the capital programme).

Details	2023 to 2024 Total budget £	2024 to 2025 Projected budget £	2025 to 2026 Projected budget £	2026 to 2027 Projected budget £
Budgeted opening balance	693,004	570,469	445,484	371,599
Budget contributions from reserve				
Property Services Resourcing	(71,016)	(72,436)	(73,885)	0
Communications Team resourcing	(51,519)	(52,549)	0	0
Further utilisation of this reserve will be considered as and when further projects and opportunities are identified.				
Total contributions from reserve:	(122,535)	(124,985)	(73,885)	0
Budgeted closing balance:	570,469	445,484	371,599	371,599

This page is intentionally left blank

Business Rates Retention Pilot: Place-Based Reserve

Attachment D Appendix 3c

This reserve has been set up in order to hold the benefit from the Suffolk 100 per cent Business Rate retention Pilot in 2018 to 2019. It will be utilised against projects as agreed by the district and county leaders in West Suffolk.

The table below summarises the proposed contributions from this reserve for the term of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Details	2018 to 2019 Actuals £	2019 to 2020 Actuals £	2020 to 2021 Actuals £	2021 to 2022 Actuals £	2022 to 2023 Forecast spend £	2023 to 2024 Projected budget £	2024 to 2025 Projected budget £	2025 to 2026 Projected budget £
Opening balance	0	2,588,514	3,128,848	3,057,796	2,146,604	1,454,461	1,454,461	1,454,461
Contributions to reserve								
Business rates pilot monies received	2,788,514	119,254	0	0	0	0	0	0
Additional agreed contribution from Suffolk public sector leaders	0	500,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total contributions to reserve:	2,788,514	619,254	0	0	0	0	0	0
Contributions from reserve								
Western Way feasibility	(200,000)	(78,920)	(37,387)	(611,097)	(338,903)	0	0	0
Youth unemployment/not in employment, education or training (NEET) scheme (West Suffolk College)	0	0	(27,000)	0	0	0	0	0
Social prescribing project - £500,000 maximum funding from 2021 to 2023 (see also attachment E appendix I - Strategic Priorities and MTFs reserve)	0	0	(6,665)	(300,095)	(193,240)	0	0	0
Part funding for renovation of 17/18 Cornhill, Bury St Edmunds	0	0	0	0	(160,000)	0	0	0
Total contributions from reserve:	(200,000)	(78,920)	(71,052)	(911,192)	(692,143)	0	0	0
Budgeted Closing Balance:	2,588,514	3,128,848	3,057,796	2,146,604	1,454,461	1,454,461	1,454,461	1,454,461

This page is intentionally left blank

This reserve has been set up in order to support the delivery of the council's asset management plan.

The table below summarises the proposed contributions from this reserve for the term of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Details	2023 to 2024 Total budget £	2024 to 2025 Projected budget £	2025 to 2026 Projected budget £	2026 to 2027 Projected budget £
Budgeted opening balance	4,525,331	4,780,960	2,803,508	2,006,660
Budgeted contributions to reserve				
Revenue contributions from services	1,425,002	1,425,002	1,425,002	1,425,002
Transfer from Business Rates Equalisation reserve to support overall plan funding.	2,000,000	0	0	0
Total contributions from reserve:	3,425,002	1,425,002	1,425,002	1,425,002
Budget contributions from reserve				
Contributions toward revenue repair and maintenance spend	(1,534,373)	(1,422,954)	(1,221,850)	(1,101,850)
Capital Programme:				
Asset Management Plan (see also attachment D, appendix 2)	(1,635,000)	(1,979,500)	(1,000,000)	(1,000,000)
Total contributions from reserve:	(3,169,373)	(3,402,454)	(2,221,850)	(2,101,850)
Budgeted closing balance:	4,780,960	2,803,508	2,006,660	1,329,812

This page is intentionally left blank

West Suffolk Council Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy 2023 to 2024

1. Background

- 1.1 Each year the council sets an annual budget, which details the revenue and capital resources required to meet its priorities for service delivery. Under the provisions of The Local Government Act 2003, local authorities are able to make their own decisions about capital expenditure plans providing they assess the financing of this to be affordable, prudent and sustainable. The council must also ensure treasury management decisions are made in accordance with good professional practice and understanding the risks involved while managing the risks to levels acceptable by the council. In addition to complying with the Act they must comply with:
 - a. the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003; and
 - b. the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA's) Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.
- 1.2 The Prudential Code was developed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA) to assist local authorities in taking their decisions.
- 1.3 The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2008 (SI 2008/414) place a duty on local authorities to make a prudent provision for debt redemption. The Secretary of State has issued guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision and local authorities are required to "have regard" to such Guidance under section 21(1A) of the Local Government Act 2003.

2. Objectives

- 2.1 The key objectives are to ensure, within a clear framework, that the capital expenditure plans of local authorities are affordable, prudent and sustainable, that risks are proportionate to their financial capacity and that treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice and in full understanding of the risks involved and how these risks will be managed to levels that are acceptable to the organisation.
- 2.2 The Prudential Code requires authorities to look at capital expenditure, investment plans and debt in the light of overall organisational strategy and resources and ensure that decisions are being made with sufficient regard to the long run financing implications and potential risks to the authority. Effective financial planning, option appraisal, risk management and governance processes are essential in achieving a prudential approach to capital expenditure, investment and debt.

- 2.3 To demonstrate that local authorities have fulfilled these objectives, the Prudential Code sets the indicators that must be used, and the factors that must be taken into account.
- 2.4 These targets are known as the “Prudential Indicators” and particular indicators will be used to separately assess:
- Capital Expenditure
 - External Debt
 - Affordability
 - Treasury Management

Process and Governance

- 2.5 The Prudential Code sets out that responsibility for decision making and ongoing monitoring in respect of capital expenditure, investment and borrowing, including prudential indicators, remains with full council. Although detailed implementation and monitoring may be delegated to a committee, ultimate responsibility lies with full council. The chief finance officer, the Director (Resources and Property), are responsible for ensuring that matters required to be taken into account when setting or revising prudential indicators are reported to the decision-making body for consideration.
- 2.6 In setting the indicators due regard was paid to the following matters:
- service objectives, e.g. strategic planning for the authority
 - stewardship of assets, e.g. asset management planning
 - value for money, e.g. option appraisal
 - prudence and sustainability, e.g. risk, implications for external debt and whole life costing
 - affordability, e.g. implications for council tax/district rates
 - practicality, e.g. achievability of the forward plan.
- 2.7 Set out below are the indicators for 2023 to 2024 and beyond. For each indicator, the CIPFA requirements of the code are set out in bold italics. An explanation is provided, unless the indicator and limits are completely self-explanatory.
- 2.8 The figures used to compile the indicators which are detailed in this report are based on the latest five year capital programme and medium term financial strategy (MTFS).

3 Capital Strategy

- 3.1 In accordance with the CIPFA Prudential Code 2021 and in order to demonstrate the council takes capital expenditure and investment decisions in line with service objectives and properly takes account of stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability and affordability the council has in place a capital strategy that sets out the long term context in which capital expenditure, borrowing and investment decisions are made and gives due

consideration to both risk and reward and impact on the achievement of priority outcomes. Authorities should report on and clearly distinguish investments for treasury management, service and commercial purposes.

4 Prudential Indicators 2023 to 2024 – 2026 to 2027

Capital Expenditure

Estimates of Capital Expenditure and Actual Capital Expenditure 2023 to 2024

4.1 The local authority will make reasonable estimates of the total of capital expenditure that it plans to incur during the forthcoming financial year and at least the following two financial years. These prudential indicators shall be referred to as:

'Estimate of total capital expenditure to be incurred in years 1, 2 and 3.'

4.2 This indicator is set to ensure that the level of proposed capital expenditure remains within sustainable and affordable limits.

	2023 to 2024 millions	2024 to 2025 millions	2025 to 2026 millions	2026 to 2027 millions	Total millions
Gross capital expenditure	£48.11	£54.27	£31.07	£3.19	£136.64
Funded by:					
Grants and contributions	£1.05	£0.90	£0.90	£0.90	£3.75
Earmarked revenue reserves	£4.57	£3.31	£3.30	£2.29	£13.47
Capital receipts reserve	£7.45	£0.20	£0.12	£0.00	£7.77
Borrowing	£35.04	£49.86	£26.75	£0.00	£111.65
Total	£48.11	£54.27	£31.07	£3.19	£136.64

These figures may decrease/increase if the S151 Officer uses her delegated authority under the MRP Policy to use greater amounts of usable capital receipts instead of borrowing. The total capital expenditure will remain the same.

Estimates of Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) and Actual CFR 2023 to 2024

4.3 The local authority will make reasonable estimates of the total capital financing requirement at the end of the forthcoming financial year and the following two years. These prudential indicators shall be referred to as:

'Estimate of capital financing requirement as at the end of years 1, 2 and 3'

- 4.4 The capital financing requirement can simply be understood as the Council's underlying need to borrow money long term. It does not necessarily mean that borrowing will be undertaken. The calculation of the CFR is taken from the amounts held in the Balance Sheet relating to capital expenditure and its financing. It is an aggregation of the amounts shown for Investment Property, Non-Current and Intangible assets, the Revaluation Reserve, the Capital Adjustment Account and any other balances treated as capital expenditure. The indicator takes account of the borrowing requirement and the minimum revenue provision.

	31 March 22 Actual £million	31 March 23 Approved Budget £million	31 March 23 Forecast £million	31 March 24 Forecast £million	31 March 25 Forecast £million	31 March 26 Forecast £million
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	55.49	81.07	59.14	93.42	142.50	168.45

These figures may increase/decrease if the S151 Officer uses her delegated authority under the MRP Policy to use greater amounts of usable capital receipts instead of borrowing. The total capital expenditure will remain the same.

- 4.5 The forecast capital financing requirement reflects the changes to the overall capital programme, including pending projects.

External Debt

Authorised Limit

- 4.6 The local authority will set for the forthcoming financial year and the following two financial years an authorised limit for its total gross external debt, separately identifying borrowing from other long term liabilities. This prudential indicator shall be referred to as:

Authorised limit for external debt = authorised limit for borrowing + authorised limit for other long term liabilities for years 1, 2 and 3.'

- 4.7 This limit represents the maximum amount the council may borrow at any point in the year. It has to be at a level the council considers is 'prudent'. It is ultra vires to exceed the authorised limit, and therefore the limits are set so as to avoid circumstances in which the council would need to borrow more money than this limit.
- 4.8 It is consistent with the council's existing commitments, its proposals for capital expenditure and financing and its approved treasury management policy, strategy and practices.

- 4.9 Other long term liabilities include items that would appear on the balance sheet of the council that are related to borrowing. For example, the capital cost of leases would be included.

	31 March 22 Actual £million	31 March 23 Approved Budget £million	31 March 23 Forecast £million	31 March 24 Forecast £million	31 March 25 Forecast £million	31 March 26 Forecast £million
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	55.49	81.07	59.14	93.42	142.50	168.45
External Debt Limit	61.65	88.05	64.94	99.71	149.30	175.77

Operational Boundary

- 4.10 The local authority will also set for the forthcoming financial year and the following two years an operational boundary for its total gross external debt, excluding investments, separately identifying borrowing from other long term liabilities. This prudential indicator shall be referred to as the:

Operational Boundary for external debt = operational boundary for borrowing + operational boundary for other long term liabilities for years 1, 2 and 3'

- 4.11 The operational boundary is a measure of the most money the Council would normally borrow at any time during the year. The code recognises that circumstances might arise when the boundary might be exceeded temporarily, but suggest a sustained or regular pattern of borrowing above this level ought to be investigated, as a potential symptom of a more serious financial problem. Any movement between these separate limits will be reported to the next available council meeting.

	31 March 22 Actual £million	31 March 23 Approved Budget £million	31 March 23 Forecast £million	31 March 24 Forecast £million	31 March 25 Forecast £million	31 March 26 Forecast £million
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	55.49	81.07	59.14	93.42	142.50	168.45
Operational Boundary	55.49	79.24	58.45	89.74	134.37	158.19

Gross debt and the capital financing requirement

4.12 The council ensures that total gross debt does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of capital financing requirement in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the current and next two financial years. If in any of these years there is a reduction in the capital financing requirement, this reduction is ignored in estimating the cumulative increase in the capital financing requirement, which is used for comparison with gross external debt. Where the gross debt is greater than the capital financing requirement the reasons for this are clearly stated in the annual treasury management strategy.

Actual External Debt

4.13 The council’s actual external debt, borrowings, at 31 December 2022 was £13,750,000. There were no other long term liabilities.

Affordability

4.14 The fundamental objective in the consideration of the affordability of the authority’s capital plans is to ensure that the level of investment in capital assets proposed means that the total capital investment of the authority remains within sustainable limits.

4.15 In considering the affordability of its capital plans, the authority is required to consider its forecast financial position, including all of the resources currently available to it and estimated for the future, together with the totality of its capital, borrowing and investment plans, income and expenditure forecasts and risks.

Estimates of financing costs to net revenue stream & Actual financing costs to net revenue stream 2023 to 2024

4.16 The local authority will estimate for the forthcoming financial year and following two financial years the proportion of financing costs to net revenue stream. This prudential indicator shall be referred to as estimates of the proportion of financing costs to net revenue stream and shall be expressed in the following manner:

Estimates of the proportion of financing costs to net revenue stream = Estimate of financing costs ÷ estimate of net revenue stream x 100%

4.17 This is an indicator of affordability and highlights the revenue implications of existing and proposed capital expenditure by identifying the proportion of the revenue budget required to meet borrowing costs.

Indicator	2021 to 2022 Actual	2022 to 2023 Forecast	2023 to 2024 Estimate	2024 to 2025 Estimate	2025 to 2026 Estimate
Ratio %	7.29%	6.11%	11.28%	10.67%	10.92%

Net income from commercial and service investments to net revenue stream

4.18 The local authority will estimate for the forthcoming financial year and the following two financial years the proportion of net income from commercial and service investments compared to the budgeted net revenue stream and shall be referred to as:

Estimates of net income from commercial and service investments to net revenue stream = Estimate of net income from commercial and service investments ÷ estimate of net revenue stream x 100%

4.19 This indicator is intended to show the financial exposure of the authority to the loss of these investment income channels. The indicator excludes treasury management investments which have their own indicators. For the purpose of this indicator, commercial investments are taken primarily for financial return. Service investments are taken for the delivery of public services.

Indicator	2021 to 2022 Actual	2022 to 2023 Forecast	2023 to 2024 Estimate	2024 to 2025 Estimate	2025 to 2026 Estimate
Ratio %	3.75%	3.78%	3.73%	3.53%	2.76%

Treasury Management

4.20 The council has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services. Treasury Management Practices (TMPs) have been established by the Director (Resources and Property) and are kept up to date.

Prudential limits for the maturity structure of borrowing

4.21 The local authority will set for the forthcoming year both upper and lower limits with respect to the maturity structure of its borrowing, calculated as follows:

- Amount of projected borrowing that is fixed rate maturing in each period

4.22 Expressed as a percentage of total projected borrowing that is fixed rate at the start of the period where the periods in question are:

- Under 12 months.
- 12 months and within 24 months.
- 24 months and within 5 years.
- 5 years and within 10 years.
- 10 years+

4.23 All councils undertaking borrowing need to ensure that the maturity structure of its borrowing is both prudent and affordable. This indicator highlights the existence of any large concentrations of fixed rate debt needing to be replaced at times of uncertainty over interest rates, and is designed to protect against

excessive exposure to interest rate changes in any one period, in particular in the course of the next ten years.

4.24 The proposed prudential limits are as follows:

Period (years)	Lower Limit	Upper Limit
Under 12 months	0%	100.00%
1 – 2 years	0%	20.00%
2 – 5 years	0%	20.00%
5 – 10 years	0%	20.00%
Over 10 years	0%	100.00%

4.25 The profiled limits set out above apply to the start of each financial year within the period 2023 to 2024 to 2026 to 2027.

Total Principal Sums invested for longer than 364 days

4.26 Where a local authority invests, or plans to invest, for periods longer than 364 days, the local authority will set an upper limit for each financial year period for the maturing of such investments. The prudential indicators will be referred to as prudential limits for principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days.

Period (years)	Upper limit £million
31/3/2023	30
31/3/2024	30
31/3/2025	30
31/3/2026	30
31/3/2027	30

5 Minimum Revenue Policy – Annual Policy Statement

5.1 This system for establishing the Minimum Revenue Provision has been radically revised by the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 [SI 2008/414], (“the 2008 Regulations”) in conjunction with the publication by the Department for Communities and Local Government of detailed MRP guidance.

5.2 All local authorities are required to establish annually their policy regarding Minimum Revenue Provision for the forthcoming year.

5.3 This is the limit on the statutory requirements for MRP. However, the requirements are supported by Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision, issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government in February 2012. The status of the Guidance is established by section 21(1B) of the Local Government Act 2003: a local authority must have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State about accounting practices.

5.4 This is normally taken to mean guidance must be considered when taking accounting decisions but can be disregarded where an authority can make a

reasonable case for doing so. The onus is on the authority to demonstrate that it can better meet its statutory duties by acting differently.

- 5.5 For MRP, this sets up a situation where an authority has a basic duty to determine a prudent level for MRP each year and is not constrained in the methodology that it applies. However, where this methodology is different from that recommended in the Guidance, the authority must be able to demonstrate that the outcome is as prudent as would have been arrived at applying the Guidance:

Method	Explanation
Supported debt	
Option 1	MRP is equal to the amount determined in accordance with the former regulations 28 and 29 of the 2003 Regulations, as if they had not been revoked by the 2008 Regulations.
Option 2	The CFR method MRP is equal to 4% of the non-housing CFR at the end of the preceding financial year.
Unsupported debt	
Option 3	Where capital expenditure on an asset is financed wholly or partly by borrowing or credit arrangements, MRP is to be determined by reference to the life of the asset.
a)	Equal instalment method MRP is the amount given by the following formula: (Capital expenditure in respect of the asset less total provision made before the current financial year), divided by the estimated life of the asset.
b)	Annuity Method MRP is the principal element for the year of the annuity required to repay over the asset life the amount of capital expenditure financed by borrowing or credit arrangements.
Option 4	Depreciation method Charging MRP in accordance with the standard rules for depreciation accounting. (If only part of the expenditure on the asset was financed by debt, the depreciation provision is proportionately reduced.)

- 5.6 It is proposed that the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement for West Suffolk Council is set as follows for 2023 to 2024.

Application of capital receipts or other sources

- The MHCLG Guidance only applies to expenditure that has not been financed from other sources, primarily capital receipts and grant funding. Where the Council has usable capital receipts that are not needed for other purposes in that year, it can at the discretion of the Section 151 Officer to apply where prudent to do so some or all of it to meet capital expenditure incurred in the current year or previous years under paragraph 23 of the 2003 Regulations to reduce or eliminate any MRP that might need to be set aside.

Loans

- In circumstances where a loan to a third party to fund capital expenditure is secured and there is no risk of default, the Council will not charge MRP because the principal sum of such a loan will have no consequences for the Council's revenue expenditure and it would be over-prudent to provide for the loan¹.
- In circumstances where a loan to a third party to fund capital expenditure is unsecured and there is no risk of default, the Council will not charge MRP because the principal sum of such a loan will have no consequences for the Council's revenue expenditure and it would be over-prudent to provide for the loan. However the Council will access these on a case by case basis.

Equity Share Capital

- In circumstances where the Council purchases Equity Share Capital in a company, MRP will be charged over a maximum period of 20 years.

Capital Investment with a Defined Life

- To apply Option 3 to projects as a 4% reducing balance amount would under-recover the expenditure over its useful life. The basis for projects over £250,000 (i.e. equal instatement or annuity basis) to be determined as part of each projects financing considerations. Projects under £250,000 will be grouped and a weighted average life across an equal instalment basis will be used.

Other elements of remaining debt

- That, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 the council continues to use the CFR method for calculating the Minimum Revenue Provision for supported capital expenditure.

5.7 The MRP included in the revenue estimates is as follows:

MRP estimates	2022 to 2023 Forecast £'000	2023 to 2024 Budget £'000	2024 to 2025 Budget £'000	2025 to 2026 Budget £'000
MRP	719	760	783	805

¹ The council may make loans to other parties to fund their capital expenditure. Government guidance is that MRP should be charged on the outstanding amount of any loan, based on amortising the loan principal over the estimated life of the assets in relation to which the other parties' expenditure is incurred. This is because lending to other parties has the same impact on the underlying need for an authority to borrow as expenditure on acquiring property.

5.8 Members' attention is drawn to the fact that notwithstanding the MRP policy loan repayments continue to be made when they fall due.

This page is intentionally left blank

Risk Area	2023 to 2024 Budget Impact £000s	2023 to 2027 MTFS Impact £000s
<p>Car Park Income recovery</p> <p>The lockdowns experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic during 2020 and 2021 have understandably had an adverse effect on town centre footfall and consequentlv car parking income.</p> <p>During 2022 to 2023 income has risen but not to pre-pandemic levels. For the purpose of setting the 2023 to 2024 budget it has been assumed that current behaviours around town centre shopping and hybrid working are embedded. However, the current worldwide economic situation may have an impact on shopping habits and business closures that could affect future car parking income.</p> <p>A 5 per cent fall in annual income assumptions could result in an additional pressure on the council's budgets of around £1,014,000.</p>	253	1,014
<p>Pay inflation</p> <p>The council's MTFS currently assumes a 4 per cent inflationary increase for 2023 to 2024 and a 2 per cent pay inflationary increase for 2024 to 2025 onwards.</p> <p>An annual 1 per cent increase in pay inflation over what is already assumed in the MTFS would result in an additional £1,080,000 pressure on the council's finances.</p>	258	1,080
<p>Employer's pensions - contribution rate</p> <p>The council's MTFS currently assumes a 26 per cent employer's pension contribution for 2023 to 2026 and 28 per cent for 2026 to 2027.</p> <p>An increase of 1 per cent to the contribution rate on top of that already budgeted would result in an additional pressure of £974,000 on the council's MTFS.</p>	235	974
<p>Employer's pensions - take-up</p> <p>Pension costs budgeted in the MTFS reflect the actual level of staff currently opting into the superannuation scheme.</p> <p>An increase in opt-in levels of 2 per cent would result in an additional pressure of £537,000 across the MTFS.</p>	128	537
<p>Council tax collection</p> <p>The level of council tax receipts in the MTFS are based upon in year collection rates of 98 per cent.</p> <p>A fall of 1 per cent in this collection rate would have a detrimental effect of £477,000 across the council's MTFS.</p>	113	477

Risk Area	2023 to 2024 Budget Impact £000s	2023 to 2027 MTFS Impact £000s
<p>Housing benefit subsidy</p> <p>The MTFS currently assumes a 98.4 per cent subsidy rate for rent allowance payments and a 80 per cent subsidy rate for rent rebates within the budgets.</p> <p>A 0.5 per cent reduction in these subsidy rates for the council for each year would result in an additional £485,000 pressure on the council’s MTFS position.</p>	129	485
<p>Interest receipt rates</p> <p>The council’s current assumption around interest receipts is 3.25 per cent for 2023 to 2024, 2.25 per cent for 2024 to 2025 and 1.50 per cent thereafter.</p> <p>A 0.5 per cent reduction would result in approximately £380,000 pressure on the council’s MTFS.</p>	110	380
<p>Borrowing costs - interest</p> <p>The MTFS includes borrowing costs (interest) amounting to £1,339,500 in 2023 to 2024 to fund the ambitious project agenda (£5,096,550 across the MTFS).</p> <p>If the interest rates assumed increase by 0.5 per cent, there will be an additional pressure of £1,050,000.</p>	274	1,050
<p>Homeless Prevention and Rough Sleeping Grants</p> <p>The council’s budgets currently assume a continuation of the Homeless Prevention and Rough Sleeping Initiative Grants across the term of its MTFS. There is currently a consultation underway which is looking at the future of these grants which provide a significant source of funding as part of the council’s approach to homelessness and rough sleeping. The reduction or discontinuation of either of these grants would result in additional financial pressures on the overall budget position.</p>	0	3,791
<p>Planning income</p> <p>The council’s building control and planning application fees have been set to reflect actual levels currently being achieved. There is, however, a risk that the desired levels of income may not be achieved.</p> <p>If planning income levels were to drop by 10 per cent, this would have a £754,000 detrimental impact on the council’s MTFS.</p>	187	754
<p>Rental income</p> <p>The council’s MTFS currently allows for no inflationary increase in industrial unit, shop and other rental income.</p> <p>If income from rents falls by 10% this would put an additional £2,457,000 pressure on the MTFS.</p>	610	2,457

Risk Area	2023 to 2024 Budget Impact £000s	2023 to 2027 MTFS Impact £000s
<p>Business rate retention - amount collectable</p> <p>The business rates retention scheme commenced from 1 April 2013. Under the scheme, the council benefits from a proportion of the additional business rates generated through economic growth in its area. Conversely the risks inherent in such a scheme have now been passed down to local authorities and as such the council could suffer from an economic decline or the cessation of business from one of its major business ratepayers.</p> <p>A 1 per cent decrease in the business rates collectable across the district would result in additional pressure on the MTFS of around £277,000 per year.</p>	277	1,110
<p>Business rate retention - post 2025</p> <p>The future of the 50 per cent business rate retention scheme is uncertain. Plans to move to a 75 per cent scheme and rebaseline growth have been deferred due to COVID-19 and the economic crisis. Furthermore, the government has frozen the business rate multiplier for the last 3 years and introduced a range of reliefs, compensating councils for the resulting lost income through complex Section 31 grants. The current expectation is that the 75 per cent scheme and rebaselining will not come in until 2025 to 2026 although the government have not confirmed this.</p> <p>The council's budgets for 2023 to 2025 assume continuation of the current scheme, including annual growth partially being contributed to the business rate equalisation reserve. From 2025 to 2026 the contribution to reserves has been removed from the budget and the growth assumption reduced accordingly to around £0.9 million annually. If the baseline funding levels are not reset and rebaselining resulted in a loss of all income above the funding baseline, this would have the impact of £1,861,000 across the MTFS.</p> <p>The council has created a business rate equalisation reserve to assist with significant impacts of business rate retention and appeals. This reserve would be potentially available to support a short term drop in business rate income. However, medium term plans would have to be reviewed.</p>	N/A	1,861
<p>External audit fees</p> <p>In October 2022 Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA) announced the outcome of their procurement for audit services for opted-in bodies (including West Suffolk Council) from 2023 to 2024 onwards. The bid prices for the procurement reflected a significant increase compared to the previous procurement in 2017. PSAA will not be consulting with authorities on the scale of fees payable for 2023 to 2024 until Autumn 2023. PSAA have advised that the fee reset could be up to 150 percent of the fees for 2022 to 2023, but the actual fees payable will depend on the amount of work required for individual councils.</p> <p>Due to the uncertainty, the budget has not been increased at this stage. However, an increase of 150 percent would result in an additional pressure of £513,000 across the MTFS.</p>	128	513

Risk Area	2023 to 2024 Budget Impact £000s	2023 to 2027 MTFS Impact £000s
<p>Government funding settlement</p> <p>The future of government funding for councils remains very uncertain. The provisional settlement, announced in December 2022, was effectively a two year rollover settlement, although in reality it only contained numbers for 2023 to 2024 and a set of principles for 2024 to 2025. It confirmed that the fairer funding review (FFR) and business rate baseline reset would not now take place until 2025 to 2026 at the earliest. Furthermore, it implied that Ministers would be monitoring the impact of the Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging (EPR) on council revenue, and this could be factored into the settlement for 2024 to 2025.</p> <p>The MTFS assumes that the funding settlement for 2024 to 2025 will be at the same level as the 2023 to 2024 provisional figures, inflated for CPI where this has been implied in the principles. No adjustment has been made for the impact of EPR as this is currently unknown. It has been assumed that the FFR and baseline reset will take place from 2025 to 2026.</p> <p>If the assumed level of grant income that has been built into the 2024 to 2025 budget (after allowing for transfers to reserves) is not received then there will be an additional pressure of £1,024,000 across the MTFS.</p>	N/A	1,024
TOTALS (£000s):	2,702	17,507

Attachment D Appendix 6 – Fees and Charges Changes

1. Background and process

- 1.1 In line with the agreed West Suffolk Council Fees and Charges Policy, the following principles are applied when reviewing fees and charges:
 - When the law allows.
 - When charging is in line with the council's strategic framework and Medium Term Financial Strategy
 - For discretionary services (in line with the principle of 'user pays')
 - For services provided through a Service Level Agreement
 - When the receipt from charging outweighs the cost of administration
 - Fees and charges will not be applied where their use would have significant negative consequences in terms of the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity and protect groups who share a protected characteristic.

- 1.2 The principles governing what level the Fees and Charges should be considered at, are set out in the agreed Policy and the review as part of the 2023 to 2024 budget process looked to ensure:
 - Ensure consistency of approach alongside the new Policy specifically against the principles such as cost recovery/user pay/behaving more commercially
 - Capture all proposed price changes within one review
 - Provide appropriate visibility for those pricing decisions that are likely to have significant public interest (including those over 5% annual increase - in line with Constitution

- 1.3 As part of the process of arriving at the budget and medium term income forecasts each of the individual fees and charges were reviewed with each service manager.

2 Changes in Fees and Charges for 2023 to 2024

- 2.1 The table in Attachment A(i) lays out the individual Fees and Charges that are changing with the 12 months of the annual budget for 2023 to 2024. They are split between the price increase of more than 5% and those that are less than 5% but still of public interest.

3 Fees and Charges – Out of Scope

- 3.1 There are a number of Fees and Charges which are out of scope of this Appendix due to:
- Being part of a specific review.
 - Charges set on a longer review time-table.
 - Being statutorily set and therefore out of the control of West Suffolk Council
 - Are event specific and therefore not standard.
 - Commercial sensitivity.
- 3.2 These areas that are not included within the table at 3.1 are:
- Car Parking Charges.
 - Trade Waste – Not published due to commercial sensitivity.
 - Apex Tickets – Event specific pricing.
 - Fees & Charges that are not in the control (statutory) of West Suffolk i.e.
 - o Planning Fees
 - o Gambling Licences
 - o Environmental Licences
 - o Premises Licences
 - o Hazardous Waste Collection
 - o Rental costs which are not included as part of Fees & Charges.

Fees and charges - price increases greater than 5 per cent

Service Area - Parks	Fee/Charge Description	Current Fee/Charge Amount	New Fee/Charge Amount	Increase	% Increase	Cost Recovery?
The setting of fees and charges for activities and facilities in West Suffolk's parks and open spaces are reviewed on an annual basis from a cost recovery perspective in terms of time and resource required to deliver the service. An annual review of fees and charges is an integral part of the annual service planning cycle and the anticipated income forms part of the councils base budget. The only items that come through with a greater than 5% price increase for 2023 to 2024 are related to the These increases reflect the worldwide rise in utility prices.						
Parks Service	Utilities - Water (access per day)	£6.00	£7.50	£1.50	25%	Yes
Parks Service	Utilities - Electricity (access per day)	£12.00	£20.00	£8.00	67%	Yes
Service Area - Licensing	Fee/Charge Description	Current Fee/Charge Amount	New Fee/Charge Amount	Increase	% Increase	Cost Recovery?
The Land Charges fees were last fully reviewed in 2014. The aim of this review has been to ensure that the Council recovers the costs associated with processing CON29 request (a form is used to request information held by a local authority about a property). This has also been benchmarked across other Suffolk authorities.						
Land Charges	CON29 Requests	£120.00	£161.45	£41.45	35%	Yes
Land Charges	CON29 Requests - additional parcel of land	£12.00	£16.14	£4.14	35%	Yes
Land Charges	CON29 part 2, 4 to 22 (excluding 16 and 21 which should be referred to Suffolk County Council)	£12.00	£16.14	£4.14	35%	Yes
Land Charges	CON29 Additional enquiry	£30.00	£40.35	£10.35	35%	Yes
Land Charges	Individual CON29 questions (component data)	£3.00	£4.04	£1.04	35%	Yes

Price increase of less than 5 per cent but of public interest

Service Area - Garden Waste	Fee/Charge Description	Current Fee/Charge Amount	New Fee/Charge Amount	Increase	% Increase	Cost Recovery?
The Garden Waste (Brown Bin) subscription fees are planned to increase by £2 in June 2023. this increase is to cover the increasing costs of supplying the services and is also benchmarked across other Garden Waste services supplied across Suffolk (East Suffolk £47 pa, Babergh £54 pa, Mid Suffolk £57 pa)						
Garden Waste	Annual subscription for garden waste	£45.00	£47.00	£2.00	4.4%	Yes

This page is intentionally left blank



Capital Strategy 2023 to 2024



CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction and Purpose of this document	2
Capital Expenditure	4
Debt, Borrowing and Treasury Management	11
Investments for service or commercial purposes	12
Knowledge and Skills	15

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

West Suffolk Council's main vision is to be ambitious in supporting and investing in our West Suffolk communities, business and the environment, to encourage and manage growth in prosperity and quality of life for all.

Our energies and resources will therefore be continued to be focused on the following strategic priorities:

- Growth in West Suffolk's economy for the benefit of all out residents and UK plc
- Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active
- Increased and improved provision of appropriate housing in West Suffolk in both our towns and rural areas

This Capital Strategy is intended to give a high-level overview of how capital expenditure and financing plans are decided upon and how they contribute to the delivery of the Council's Strategic Framework, Medium Term Financial Strategy and overall service delivery.

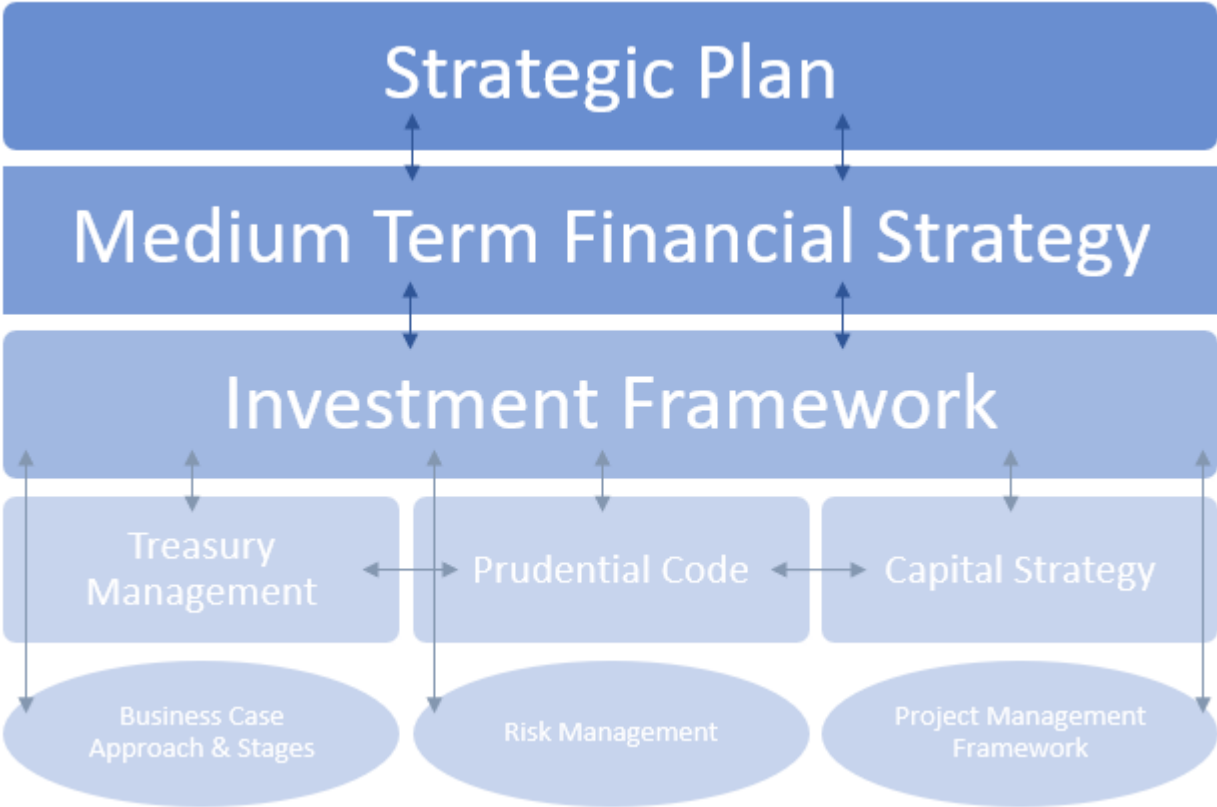
With our West Suffolk Strategic Priorities, statutory and discretionary responsibilities and increasingly complex demands on the Council's services, investment activity covers many areas over and above the normal treasury management of our cash balances and borrowing.

West Suffolk has a number of agreed strategies, frameworks, policies and guidance to support its capital and investment decisions. This strategy seeks to reference these from a single document. See diagram below.

Adherence to the principles of this Capital Strategy should ensure that capital expenditure and investment decisions are taken in line with the West Suffolk Strategic Framework and Medium Term Financial Strategy and take account of stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability, proportionality and affordability. This Capital Strategy has been written in conjunction with the Council's Treasury Management Policy Statement and Investment Strategy 2023 to 2024.

This Capital Strategy has been developed in line with the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities 2021. This is a working document, which officers will keep under review.

Diagram of West Suffolk’s wider strategies and frameworks (non-exhaustive)



Capital Expenditure

Capital Programme

As part of the annual budget setting process, the Council sets its capital programme for the next ten years. This process is done in conjunction with service areas and takes into account both service plans and the overall council strategic plan.

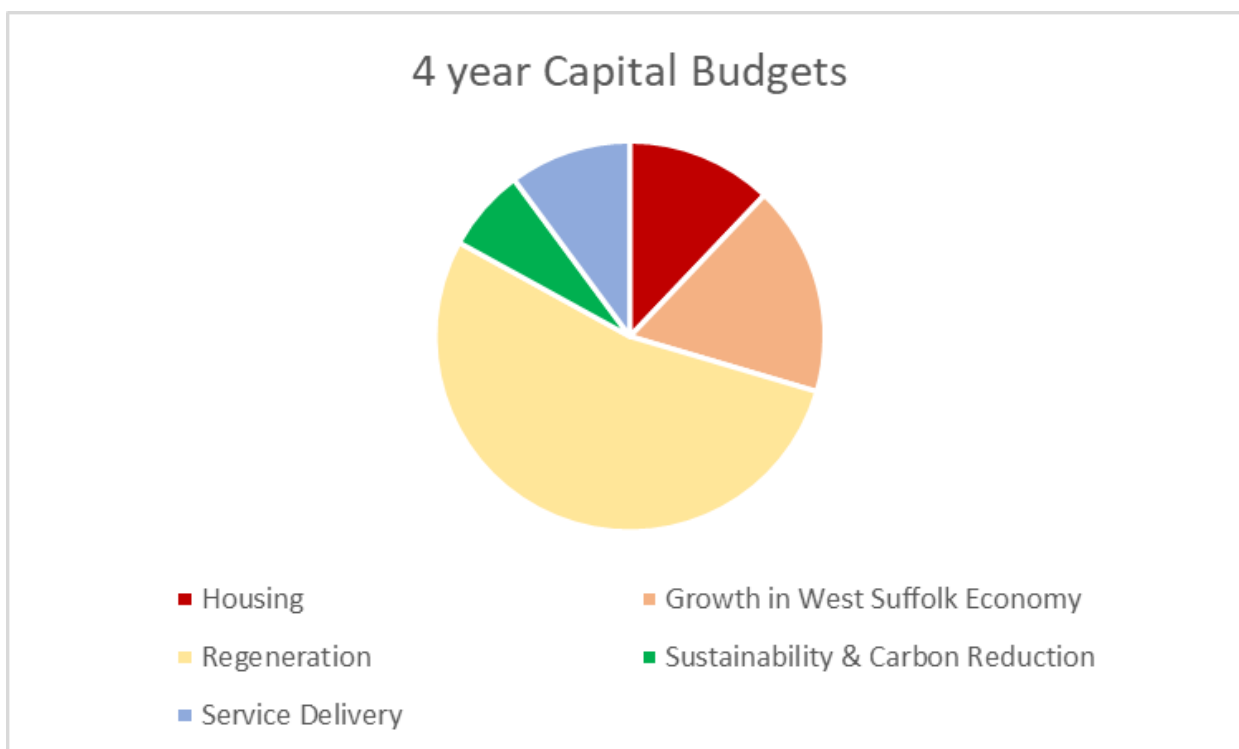
The detail of planned capital expenditure for West Suffolk Council over the next ten years is set out within the West Suffolk Medium Term Financial Strategy (Attachment D, Appendix 2). The below table gives details of planned capital expenditure over the next four years.

Project Description	2023 to 2024 Total Budget	2024 to 2025 Total Budget	2025 to 2026 Total Budget	2026 to 2027 Total Budget	Total Budget (Over 4 Years)
Resources & Property					
Western Way Development - report number: CAB/WS/22/068	14,000,000	34,000,000	25,000,000		73,000,000
This is the last modelling sum for a phase 1 scheme, plus works to residual frame (£75m - £2m of this is in 2022 to 2023) reported to Council in December 2022.					
Abbeycroft Leisure Loan (report number CAB/WS/20/072)	750,000				750,000
Asset Management Plan - Property					
Property Asset Management Plan	1,635,000	1,979,500	1,000,000	1,000,000	5,614,500
Net Zero Plan - Asset Management Investment	1,000,000	1,000,000	500,000		2,500,000
Planning & Regulatory					
Private Sector Disabled Facilities Grants	900,000	900,000	900,000	900,000	3,600,000
Community Energy Solar Investment	500,000	500,000			1,000,000
Net Zero Plan	2,250,000	1,250,000	1,250,000		4,750,000
Operations					
Car Parking Improvements	440,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	680,000
Vehicle & Plant Purchases	1,629,527	947,000	2,043,000	913,800	5,533,327
Net Zero Plan - Electric Vehicle Fleet Investment	627,000	510,000			1,137,000
Asset Management Plan - Leisure					
Leisure Asset Management Scheme	386,726	300,000	300,000	300,000	1,286,726
Growth					
Barley Homes Investment Facility - report number: CAB/WS/20/079	6,700,000	6,250,000			12,950,000
Investing in our Growth Agenda (Available for projects under the Investing in our Growth Agenda Strategy), Originally a total fund of £40 million, this has increased as other projects have been approved - funding has subsequently been allocated to projects such as Incubation Units at Suffolk Business Park	12,108,692	3,000,000			15,108,692
Haverhill Research Park - Loan Facility Balance - report number: CAB/JT/19/007	586,818				586,818
Incubation Units, Suffolk Business Park - report number: CAB/WS/21/052	4,598,716	3,553,737			8,152,453
Capital Totals:	48,112,479	54,270,237	31,073,000	3,193,800	136,649,516

The budget presented for approval for the years 2023 to 2024 to 2026 to 2027 totals £136.6 million. This also sets out the annual corporate investment being sponsored by each directorate within West Suffolk. This shows where organisational leadership and accountability for delivering our capital investment portfolio are located across the Council.

The rolling nature of our capital programme allows the Council the opportunity to consider new and additional investment into new projects which deliver it’s organisational and political objectives.

The chart below details the areas of capital budget over the next four years. Regeneration is the largest area due to the inclusion of the Western Way Development. Details of the main capital expenditure items are below.



Western Way Development

The Western Way Development (WWD) is part of a network of existing or planned community hub projects across the whole West Suffolk area being delivered by partners in the public, charity and community sectors. As well as delivering new employment space, it aims to integrate council and government services, health provision, leisure facilities, an advice centre, third sector organisations and both community and education services on a single site to create better outcomes and save money. The project also offers a significant opportunity to deliver the Council’s decarbonisation objectives.

Barley Homes

Barley Homes Ltd is the Council’s wholly owned Housing Company, which aims to develop housing for sale in the West Suffolk area. As a principle, it is expected that the sites Barley Homes develop should seek to be compliant with the Council’s planning policies in ensuring affordable housing is delivered and commitments to the wider public sector (such as education contributions) are met.

Incubation Units, Suffolk Business Park

The development of 40,000 sq ft of start-up / incubation space for companies mainly in the advanced manufacturing and engineering (AME) sector and its supply chain. This will deliver on the Council's original vision for the employment allocation at Suffolk Business Park.

Financing of Capital Expenditure

The total value of the capital programme over the next four years is approximately £136.6 million. The table below details how this expenditure will be funded, through a combination of grants and contributions, earmarked revenue reserves, useable capital receipts and external borrowing.

	2023 to 2024 millions	2024 to 2025 millions	2025 to 2026 millions	2026 to 2027 millions	Total millions
Gross capital expenditure	£48.11	£54.27	£31.07	£3.19	£136.64
Funded by:					
Grants and contributions	£1.05	£0.90	£0.90	£0.90	£3.75
Earmarked revenue reserves	£4.57	£3.31	£3.30	£2.29	£13.47
Capital receipts reserve	£7.45	£0.20	£0.12	£0.00	£7.77
Borrowing	£35.04	£49.86	£26.75	£0.00	£111.65
Total	£48.11	£54.27	£31.07	£3.19	£136.64

Subject to the year-end outturn position, any carry forwards from the 2022 to 2023 budget will be added to the 2023 to 2024 capital programme budget at the year end.

Actual borrowing requirements may be lower compared to the business cases in the capital programme. This is because it is not prudent for the Council to borrow until the cashflow is required. The borrowing process is a matter for the Treasury Management team to manage in line with the agreed Treasury Management and Investment Strategies.

Capital Receipts

Part of the funding arrangements for the capital programme is the use of useable capital receipts. Capital receipts can only be replenished through the disposal of surplus assets and repayment of capital loans. The table below is a summary estimate of the likely level of new capital receipts over the next four years.

	2023 to 2024 millions	2024 to 2025 millions	2025 to 2026 millions	2026 to 2027 millions
Council share of right to buy receipts	£0.50	£0.50	£0.50	£0.50
Barley Home loan repayments to be made available through agreed loan facility	£0.00	£6.01	£0.89	£0.00
Other asset disposals	£3.36	£0.06	£0.17	£0.05
Total	£3.86	£6.57	£1.56	£0.55

In the short to medium term, the council's useable capital receipts reserves move from £10.69 million to £14.01 million. Note that the Barley Homes repayments are likely to be reinvested in the delivery of further housing sites as subsequent business plans are agreed, so £6.9 million of the total balance will be reserved for this purpose.

The Prudential Code

This Capital Strategy draws together the framework for capital investment decisions. The strategy for funding this investment portfolio is underpinned by the Prudential Code for Local Authority Investment, which was introduced by the Local Government Act 2003.

The Prudential Code has the following key objectives:

- a local authority's capital expenditure plans and investment plans are affordable and proportionate
- all external borrowing and other long-term liabilities are within prudent and sustainable levels
- the risks associated with investments for commercial purposes are proportionate to their financial capacity, and
- treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice.

To demonstrate that these objectives have been fulfilled, the Prudential Code details the indicators that must be set and monitored. These are designed to support and record local decision-making, and not to be comparative performance indicators. The Prudential Indicators are approved annually as part of the budget setting process by Council (Attachment D, Appendix 4).

Capital Expenditure Governance For Projects

Projects that are identified, that will support our Strategic Priorities and Medium Term Financial Strategy, are assessed against our approved Investment Framework and are required to go through an approval process prior to accessing any capital funding. This approval is subject to the Council's democratic decision making process. However, each proposal is required to go through a rigorous process of evaluation and scrutiny prior to reaching a formal council report.

Each project will be subject to a highly competent professional business case. Evidencing the strategic case, economic case, commercial case, financial case and management case.

Each project will need to demonstrate that it positively contributes towards the delivery and desired outcomes set out in our strategic priorities, unless investment is required to maintain our statutory obligations.

Each project will be assessed for the opportunity for innovative delivery and financing solutions, exploring where appropriate investments away from the traditional local government funding models.

Each project and potential partner will be considered against the general ethos and values of local government and the wider public sector.

The project evaluation, assessment framework and business case development stages will focus on the following areas for each proposal:

- strategic fit;
- deliverability within existing resource commitments;
- risk profile;
- added value; and
- financial return.

An opportunity will be rejected at any stage if it is not appraised by members as an appropriate investment decision. For example, it doesn't have a sufficient strategic fit or bears an imbalance between investment, risk and returns.

As projects are developed, they require production of:

- Project Initiation Document;
- Stakeholder engagement analysis;
- Risk log;
- Issues log;
- Lessons learned log; and
- Detailed project plan including delivery and decision timetable and resource requirements.

During implementation, project plans, risk registers and financial schedules are reviewed monthly, and a Project Status Report (PSR) is submitted to the Programme Office Support Team each month. Any significant variance from any component of the plan is elevated for Leadership Team review.

The overall capital programme is monitored monthly by the Leadership Team and reported to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis, highlighting forecast variances to plan in terms of investment.

Affordability

Affordability is critical in applying the Capital Strategy and assisting the decision making process when considering projects for inclusion into the Capital Programme.

All projects need to have a clear funding source with commitment for the entirety of the projects. Funding can come from:

- Capital receipts;
- Borrowing;
- Revenue Reserves;
- External Grants; or
- S106 funding.

Where external borrowing is to be used, the affordability is of greater importance as the interest costs and capital repayment of that borrowing need to be considered and included in the evaluation.

The current and projected affordability position of West Suffolk Council is shown below.

	Actuals 31 March 2022 millions	Forecast 31 March 2023 millions	Budget 31 March 2024 millions	Budget 31 March 2025 millions	Budget 31 March 2026 millions
Annual Interest payable	£0.23	£0.35	£1.51	£1.49	£1.39
Annual repayment cost (MRP)	£0.76	£0.72	£0.76	£0.78	£0.80
Annual Interest payable as % of gross revenue income budget	0.40%	0.82%	4.21%	4.25%	3.66%
Annual repayment cost as % of gross revenue income budget	1.31%	1.69%	2.12%	2.24%	2.12%

Proportionality

The concept of proportionality, alongside that of affordability, is a key consideration when considering funding projects through borrowing.

The costs and risks associated with that borrowing should be looked at as part of the whole financial position of the council. Awareness of the scale and relationship with the asset base and revenue delivery is essential to informed decision making.

This relationship and trend between borrowing, asset base and yield from the investments that the council has made will be monitored on a regular basis and referred to when any new projects that require borrowing are proposed. This will provide key insight on the proportionality and affordability of each new project within the context of the whole portfolio and financial position of the council.

Risk Management

Our approach to risk, as set out in our approved risk management framework, is based on context, proportionality, judgement and evidence-based decision making that considers each capital investment project on a case by case basis and is documented at all stages, following the core principles below:

- a positive approach;
- contextual decision making;
- informed risk-taking;
- proportionality;
- decision risk vs delivery risk;
- documented decision; and
- continuous improvement.

In addition our Investment Framework requires that projects are assigned an overall investment risk, based on an assessment of the individual business cases including risk and likelihood of returns, (high, medium or low) in order to manage the Council's overall investment portfolio and exposure.

It also requires that projects are assessed against the Council's wider capital programme commitments, aspirations and asset management plans to ensure that the overall capital programme is affordable, prudent and sustainable.

Project management risk is identified and monitored in West Suffolk's Risk Register. Controls and actions are in place to mitigate this risk. Ensuring this risk is monitored and within an acceptable residual range. Staff training is acknowledged as a control. Therefore part of our wider risk management process and proportional to our risk appetite.

Statement of Accounts

The capital expenditure carried out in the year is reflected in the Balance Sheet of the Statement of Accounts ensuring stewardship of assets is demonstrated.

The accurate monitoring and recording of capital expenditure ensures that this document is free from material error. The Statement of Accounts is externally audited at the end of each financial year to certify that it presents a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council.

Procurement Strategy

The manner in which capital monies are spent is determined by the Procurement Strategy which, along with the Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Regulations, set the framework for the supply of goods and services to the Council, and how these goods and services should best be obtained to secure value for money.

Debt, Borrowing and Treasury Management

For the purposes of this document, "Treasury Management Activities" are defined as:-

"The management of the Local Authority's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of the optimum performance consistent with those risks."

The West Suffolk approved Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy links to the Capital Strategy and programme in determining the Council's approach to borrowing and investment, including borrowing to fund capital expenditure. The Treasury Management Strategy is closely related to the Prudential Code and Prudential Indicators discussed above.

The Council has an integrated Treasury Management Strategy, and has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Public Services. The Treasury Management Strategy deals with borrowing and investment arising as a consequence of all the financial transactions of the authority, not exclusively those arising from capital spending.

The Treasury Management Code of Practice lays out the Treasury Management Practices (TMPs) that have been adopted by the Council and the indicators that will be used to ensure that the correct approach is taken to:

- Risk management;
- Performance measurement;
- Decision making and analysis;
- Approved instruments, methods and techniques;
- Organisation, clarity and segregation of responsibilities and dealing arrangements;
- Reporting requirements and management information arrangements;
- Budgeting, accounting and audit arrangements;
- Cash and cash flow management;
- Money laundering;
- Training and qualifications;
- Use of external service providers; and
- Corporate governance.

The detail behind each of these can be found within the Council's approved Treasury Management Code of Practice.

Investments for service or commercial purposes

The Council (not its wholly owned companies) does not embark on capital projects / investments where the outcome is purely to generate a financial return. Project outcomes are always assessed with an eye to the social and economic outcomes, as well as the financial returns that could be generated.

This is even more in focus with the recent changes to the PWLB lending criteria, which will mean that access to the PWLB is restricted if authorities undertake debt for yield investments. That is, investments which are purely for financial returns.

The Council has developed strategies which detail how it will go about investing in both our communities (through the Investing in our Growth Agenda) and our own property estate (through the Asset Management Strategy and Plan). More information on these strategies is detailed below.

This strategy ensures compliance with paragraphs 51 to 53 of the Prudential Code in relation to investments for commercial purposes.

The council makes investments for service delivery purposes, with details of these below:

Service Investments - Loans

The Council can lend money to a variety of organisations, but will only do this where the loan furthers the Council's statutory duties or supports its Strategic objectives.

The service loans the Council have provided have supported the following:

- Building of a number of new affordable and open market homes in the area through its wholly owned housing company, Barley Homes.
- Building of a new innovation centre on one of the designated Enterprise Zones in the area.
- Support for the leisure provider who runs the Council's leisure centres.

The main risk when making service loans is that the borrower will be unable to repay the principal lent and / or the interest due. In order to limit this risk an assessment is made of the creditworthiness of the borrower, including the use of external credit reports where available. Security is also sought for each loan if possible. Loans are generally only granted in exceptional circumstances, with the approval of Council required for any loan over £25,000.

The portfolio of loans (£3.48 million at the end of December 2022) can be categorised as follows:

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| - Service loans to support leisure provider | £0.50 million |
| - Service loans to support economic development | £2.91 million |
| - Service loans to local businesses | £0.07 million |

Service Investments – Shares

The Council has invested in shares of its subsidiary company, Barley Homes, whose aim is to provide housing within the district that meets local needs and complies with all relevant policies. The Council also holds a small number of tradable shares that

relate to some of the heritage collections that have been bequeathed to it in the past – these shares are not considered service investments for these purposes.

One of the risks of investing in shares is that they could fall in value meaning that the initial outlay may not be recovered. In order to limit this risk the Council has not itself invested in traded shares and will only invest in new shares for companies it has formed directly. Currently the value of shares the Council holds in its subsidiary companies is £600,100 with Barley Homes (Group) Limited.

The Council's direct share investment is limited to its subsidiaries with the intention that they will provide services over the foreseeable future. With this in mind, the Council has not set a maximum period for which such shares should be held. The Council does not have set procedures for ensuring liquidity in the market as it intends to hold the shares indefinitely.

Shares are the only type of investment that the Council has identified that meets the definition of a non-specified investment in the government guidance. The Council's upper limits on non-specified investments will therefore continue to be limited by the Council's holdings in subsidiaries. This is not currently expected to be in excess of the £0.6 million it currently holds with Barley Homes. The Council has not adopted any procedures for determining further categories of non-specified investments since non are likely to meet the definition.

Commercial Investments: Property

The Council invests in local property with the primary intention of promoting economic development and regeneration. It does not currently hold property for investment purposes.

It is unlikely that the Council will look to invest in commercial property with the primary aim of generating yield, as this goes against the latest update of the Prudential Code, and will also restrict access to borrowing from the Public Work Loans Board for the years that spend is incurred on such assets within the Capital Programme.

Growth Investment Strategy

This strategy covers investments in projects that support our Strategic Framework priorities and objectives, particularly around our growth priority and fall outside of standard treasury management activities.

This strategy has been devised in order to meet the following aims:

- Ambitious vision for the towns and rural communities of West Suffolk, set out in the Strategic Framework 2020-2025;
- Delivery on capital and revenue investment to deliver our Growth Agenda;
- All our activities and duties are investments in our communities and our places, seeking to create positive returns from all we do;
- Behaving more commercially – financial returns for investment in our communities; and
- Seeking blended returns across social, economic and financial investments.

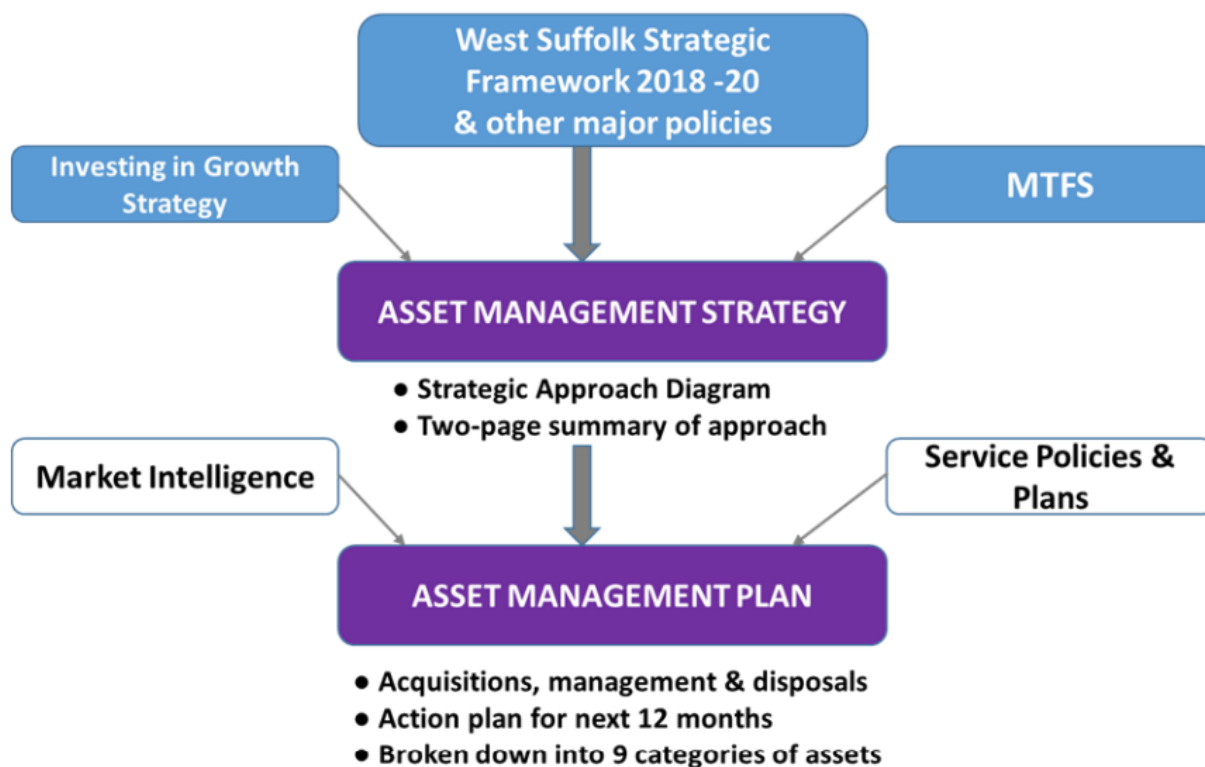


Asset Management

The Capital Strategy is supported by the Council’s Corporate Asset Management Strategy and Plan (AMSaP) which was approved by Council in December 2019.

The West Suffolk Asset Management Strategy and Plan supports our behaving more commercially approach and provides the framework to both enable the Council to maximise the value of its existing assets. Plus through potential future acquisitions ensure we continue to achieve the management of an overall balanced (risk/return) asset portfolio whilst generating a blended return of economic development outcomes and additional revenue income streams to support the delivery of council services. The AMSaP therefore sets out a clear strategic and planned approach to how we acquire, manage, dispose, develop and maximise the potential of the Council’s portfolio of land and property assets and interests.

The AMSaP does not sit on its own, but with a clear strategic and contextual link with other policies and documents across the Council. The following diagram demonstrates how these link together:



Knowledge and Skills

The Council's utilises a matrix approach to management of capital projects. We are able to utilise the skills and knowledge from across the organisation including our in house legal, estates and surveying teams. We are also able to source internal and external project management and quantity surveying where appropriate to the size and scale of the project.

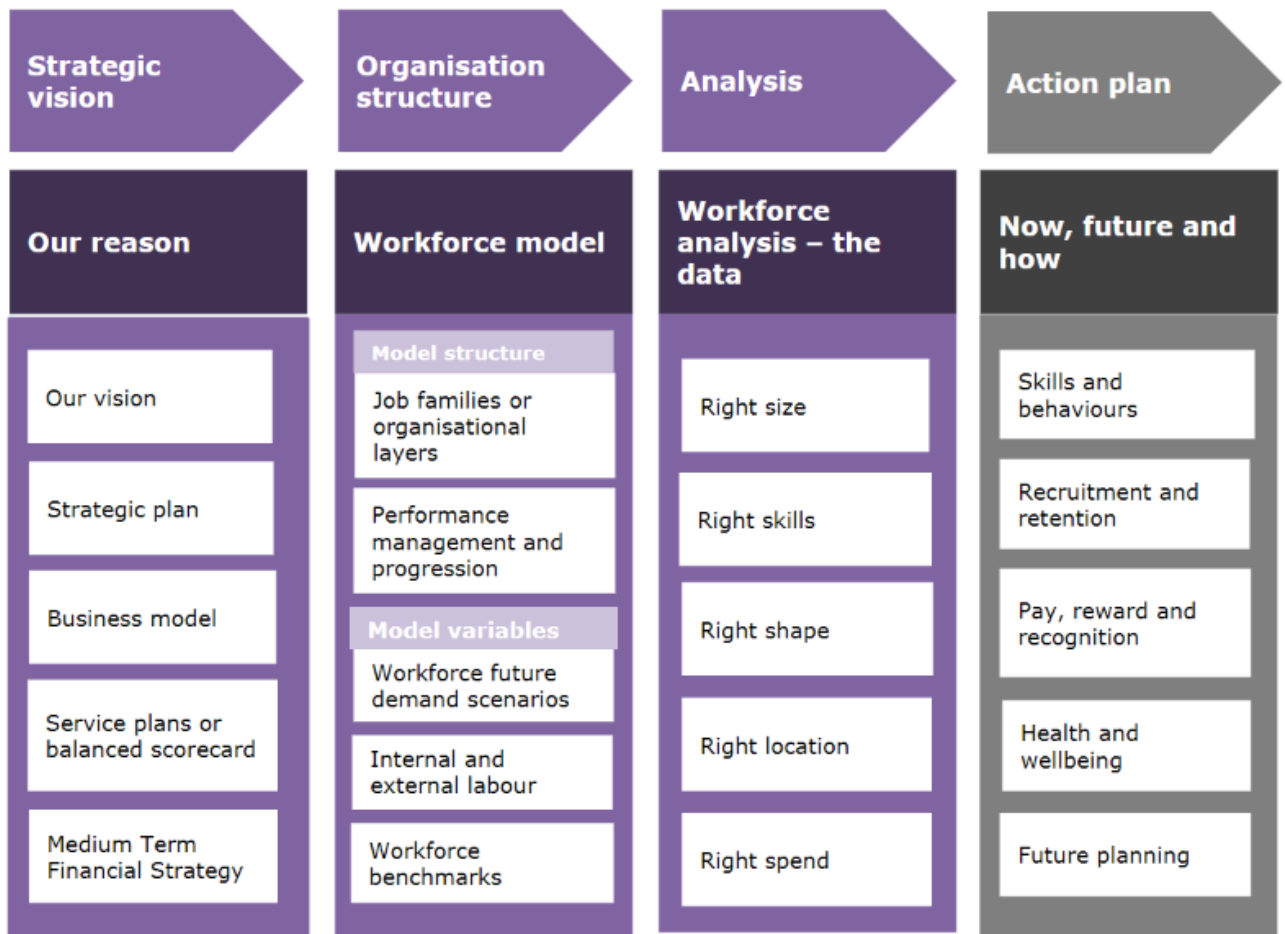
We recognise that certain key projects due to their nature, complexity, scale or overall capacity will likely require appointment of external skills or resource. External services may also need to be appointed where there are a number of partners involved, when it is considered appropriate to appoint independent skill such as a property valuer.

The West Suffolk Workforce Strategy links to the Capital Strategy with the first focus being Skills and Behaviours. The Workforce Strategy is our vision for our people and identifies the areas we need to focus on to achieve our ambitions. It seeks to create the best conditions to influence capacity, capability, cost, culture and customer service; thus increasing productivity and effectiveness.

It aims to look at the composition of the workforce and the current skills set but also to look beyond today and consider the skills sets needed for the future in order to ensure our people are resilient and resourceful and able to meet the challenges ahead.

It identifies skills and behaviours as a property because our ability to lead and manage through a changing agenda, with our focus on a wide range of challenging projects is essential. It is therefore critical that our learning and development programme focuses on skills which are responsive to the needs and demands on our staff.

West Suffolk Workforce Strategy:



This page is intentionally left blank

West Suffolk Council Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy 2023 to 2024

1. Background

- 1.1 As part of the November 2015 Spending Review, the Government announced that it would introduce flexibility for the period of the Spending Review for local authorities to use capital receipts from the sale of non-housing assets to fund the revenue costs of service reform and transformation. Guidance on the use of this flexibility was issued in March 2016 which applied to the financial years 2016 to 2017 through to 2019 to 2020.
- 1.2 As part of the final government settlement announced on 6 February 2018 this timeframe for flexible use of capital receipts was extended for a further three years out to 2022 to 2023. Another extension for a further three years was announced in the 2021 to 2022 Final Finance Settlement on 4 February 2021
- 1.3 In order to comply with this Direction, the Council must consider the Statutory Guidance issued by the Secretary of State. This Guidance requires authorities to prepare, publish and maintain a Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy with the initial strategy being effective from 1 April 2016 with future Strategies included within future Annual Budget documents.
- 1.4 Government has provided a definition of expenditure which qualifies to be funded from capital receipts. This is:

“Qualifying expenditure is expenditure on any project that is designed to generate ongoing revenue savings in the delivery of public services and/or transform service delivery to reduce costs and/or transform service delivery in a way that reduces costs or demand for services in future years for any of the public sector delivery partners. Within this definition, it is for individual local authorities to decide whether or not a project qualifies for the flexibility.”

2. Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy

- 2.1. In 2018 to 2019 and 2019 to 2020 West Suffolk Council used capital receipts to fund the transition costs resulting from the move to a single council.

	2018 to 2019	2019 to 2020	2020 to 2021	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
Transition costs – Single Council	£367,790	£132,210	£0	£0	£0

- 2.2. The savings generated by this expenditure as set out in the table below.

	2019 to 2020	2020 to 2021	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
Transition costs – Single Council	£300,000	£300,000	£300,000	£300,000

- 2.3. The Council is continuing with the transformation programme which has led to achieving annual savings in excess of £5 million a year through initiatives such as sharing of services and the most recent creation of a new single West Suffolk Council.
- 2.4. The service and change programme, which will accelerate the delivery of a number of our financial strategy themes such as transformation of service delivery, encouraging the use of digital forms for customer access and behaving more commercially, will feature as our key approach to delivering across our medium term plans.
- 2.5. This service and change plan, which will include a series of service delivery reviews, will take shape during the financial year to ensure delivery of the outcomes both financial and improved services, can start taking shape to contribute towards our financial challenges over the course of the MTFS. The projected budget gaps over across the MTFS are as follows:

	2023 to 2024	2024 to 2025	2025 to 2026	2026 to 2027
Projected Budget Gap	£0	£0	£2,668,700	£3,692,100

- 2.6. No budget has currently been allocated to assist with the service and change programme, however any budget required could be funded through the flexible use of capital receipts, in line with this strategy.
- 2.7. There are allowable capital receipts that have not been earmarked as funding for any other proposed capital expenditure which could be used to fund expenditure from the transformation programme. This would mean that any additional budget utilising the flexible use of capital receipts will not have any impact on the Council's prudential indicators as set out in the Councils' Treasury Management Strategy.
- 2.8. This strategy will be monitored throughout the financial year and may be updated as proposals are developed and expenditure is finalised.

Net Zero Decarbonisation Fund – January 2023 Update

Background

As part of its 2022/23 budget, West Suffolk Council committed to an additional £9 million Capital Investment facility to support its net zero ambitions. This investment fund sits within the Investing in Our Growth Agenda Fund (funded in the main by external borrowing), in the capital programme to deliver environmental projects. Overall, this is anticipated to deliver a **31 percent carbon saving on council operations**, together with a return to the council of **2 percent** after allowing for borrowing costs.

The Decarbonisation fund is being utilised across the following projects:

- **Council Buildings:** Improve the energy efficiency and incorporate renewable energy (electricity and/or heat) into buildings
- **Electric Vehicle fleet (EV) and associated infrastructure investment:** replace small vehicles on fleet with EVs when replacement falls due
- **Expansion of our West Suffolk Solar for Business scheme.**

Further benefits of this work include adding insulation to homes, lowering ongoing costs, and reducing risk of mould for tenants, and energy cost savings for businesses that help protect against market volatility.

This report provides an update on progress in 22/23 to date. A full report will be provided in the annual Environment and Climate change action plan update to Cabinet in July 2023.

External Factors

Since creating the fund, there have been several external developments that have impacted the work of the council in this space. Globally, inflation has risen significantly – with the UK experiencing an increase of over 10%. While this trend began during the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, since 24 February 2022, has injected additional uncertainty into the global economy, impacting on energy and food, and causing added inflationary factor.

Wholesale energy prices, as well as the cost of borrowing, have increased rapidly since the second half of 2021. West Suffolk Council's efforts to reduce emissions and improve the environment are increasingly framed against the need to help meet the challenge of inflationary costs.

Overview of progress

This appendix explains how the programme of investment, when considered as a package, would generate around £163,950 This is showing a high return on investment after borrowing of 12.89% (net saving of £93,211.38 against a cost of £723,203.98), this is largely due to the fact we have done a lot of the quick wins first (i.e. LED and hand driers which are high return items), and this number will come down as some of the less financially viable projects come forward.

NB. The savings are full year savings and not what has been generated to date.

The most significant area of investment is focused on building improvements, which ranges from the 'quick wins' (i.e. LED, hand driers) to more substantial investment (such as roof insulation). The buildings that have had improvements made are:

- The Apex
- The Avenue
- The Athenaeum
- Brandon country park bungalow and toilets
- Bury St Edmunds Bus Station
- East Town Park toilets
- Heldhaw Road Changing Rooms
- James Carter Road, Mildenhall
- Lake Avenue Housing
- Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre
- Moyses Hall
- Nowton Park Lodge Cottage and toilets
- Provincial House
- Rangers Flat, Hardwick Heath
- The Severn Road Enterprise Units
- The Elms, Brandon Housing
- Jubilee Walk toilets
- Ram Meadow toilets
- Recreation Ground toilets
- West Stow Country Park toilets
- West Suffolk House

The council continues to explore the potential for further large-scale floor mounted solar investment (a solar farm). A number of sites have been evaluated, but to date none have been suitable. At this stage the proposed £9 million capital fund does not include any financial provision for such large-scale solar investment. Any such project would be the subject of a separate full business case. The allocation assumes the council will capitalise any council costs including project management and legal expenditure where possible.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and overall programme management of this fund is undertaken by the officer Environment Management Group, which annually provides an update to Cabinet. The activities support West Suffolk's Climate Action Plan, and the outputs are included in the council's annual environmental statement that forms part of the council's Annual Report.

Net Zero Fund - Update

	Activity	Lifetime Carbon Savings (tonnes)	Annual Carbon savings (tonnes)	Cost of improvements (£)	Expected Annual Revenue Savings (£)
Council Building Improvements	LED Lighting	633.75	77.47	232,690	66,340
	Low Energy Hand Driers	-	2.77	23,501	10,727
	Insulation	25.81	24.99	213,696	52,433
	Solar PV	1,846.86	73.89	57,905	11,158
	Air Source Heat Pumps	268.00	38.29	183,781	13,049
	Radiators	77.21	7.73	11,631	10,243
	Gross Total	2,851.63	225.14	723,204	163,950
	Borrowing Costs *				(70,739)
	Net Total				93,211
Electric Vehicle Fleet and associated infrastructure investment	Purchase of Electric Vehicles - 4 ordered in 2022 to 2023			38,586	6,177
	Borrowing Costs **				-
	Net Total				6,177
Overall Net Total		2,851.63	225.14	761,790	99,388
Initial Return on investment					13.05%

* Different activities have different expected lives, borrowing costs have been calculated to reflect the different useful lives.

** Funded through vehicle replacement reserve, therefore no borrowing costs associated with this spend.

This fund continues to be delivered, with many elements of the project still pending.

Planned for remainder of 22/23:

- Installation of EV infrastructure at the operational hubs – this is estimated to cost £70k.
- There are currently 23 more businesses in the Solar for Business pipeline.
- Work is being undertaken on HMOs (Houses of Multiple Occupation) that would have the wider benefit of reducing costs for most vulnerable residents. Initial scoping is being undertaken in 22/23, however this work will take place in 23/24.
- Vehicles purchased are: one E-transit and three Renault Kangoo. All vehicles should arrive before end of 22/23. Costs reflect additional cost of an EV vehicle.

Expansion of our West Suffolk Solar for Business scheme

While not part of the Net Zero Fund it is worth noting that Solar for business has completed 10 installations in 22/23 funded from original fund. New installations are in the pipeline to use this Net Zero fund. The installations completed in 22/23 so far will save 123 tonnes for carbon per year with an income of £139,057 per year.

PARISH	2022 to 2023			2023 to 2024			Increase in Band D Parish Council Tax %
	Parish Precept £	Tax Base	Band D Parish Council Tax £	Parish Precept £	Tax Base	Band D Parish Council Tax £	
Ampton, Timworth & Livermere	-	48.69	-	-	50.35	-	-
Bardwell	15,828	311.96	50.74	16,005	315.42	50.74	0.00%
Barnardiston	-	58.31	-	-	59.19	-	-
Barnham	8,545	232.28	36.79	8,555	236.44	36.18	-1.66%
Barningham	34,758	350.38	99.20	34,758	350.01	99.31	0.11%
Barrow cum Denham	26,692	755.50	35.33	28,243	783.74	36.04	2.01%
Barton Mills	27,350	424.27	64.46	27,920	425.36	65.64	1.83%
Beck Row	52,000	1,206.01	43.12	53,530	1,213.19	44.12	2.32%
Bradfield Combust with Stanningfield	14,559	226.76	64.20	14,559	226.23	64.35	0.23%
Bradfield St Clare	3,184	71.04	44.82	3,335	71.00	46.97	4.80%
Bradfield St George	5,500	159.39	34.51	5,500	159.65	34.45	-0.17%
Brandon (and Wangford)	303,819	2,553.24	118.99	327,956	2,543.72	128.93	8.35%
Brockley	8,866	132.49	66.92	8,866	131.19	67.58	0.99%
Bury St Edmunds	579,974	13,710.95	42.30	603,029	14,256.01	42.30	0.00%
Cavendish	27,450	424.99	64.59	27,500	426.00	64.55	-0.06%
Cavenham	800	63.31	12.64	800	63.60	12.58	-0.47%
Chedburgh	10,872	260.44	41.74	11,000	264.86	41.53	-0.50%
Chevington	7,377	273.18	27.00	7,808	270.59	28.86	6.89%
Clare	105,900	875.29	120.99	116,490	873.76	133.32	10.19%
Coney Weston	8,740	172.15	50.77	9,710	172.19	56.39	11.07%
Cowlinge	16,822	137.48	122.36	15,000	135.44	110.75	-9.49%
Culford West Stow and Wordwell	10,087	274.10	36.80	11,200	270.55	41.40	12.50%
Dalham	7,029	131.89	53.29	7,579	118.42	64.00	20.10%
Denston	600	56.74	10.57	100	49.98	2.00	-81.08%
Depden	2,700	89.34	30.22	2,800	87.04	32.17	6.45%
Elveden	1,200	118.73	10.11	1,300	106.88	12.16	20.28%
Eriswell	14,549	316.97	45.90	14,549	292.83	49.68	8.24%
Euston	1,780	62.79	28.35	1,780	59.89	29.72	4.83%
Exning	79,350	870.64	91.14	82,524	886.53	93.09	2.14%
Fakenham Magna	3,974	61.63	64.48	4,333	62.35	69.49	7.77%
Flempton-cum-Hengrave	7,500	147.95	50.69	7,500	150.46	49.85	-1.66%
Fornham All Saints	24,175	274.67	88.01	25,109	279.71	89.77	2.00%
Fornham St Martin-cum-St Genevieve	29,285	489.70	59.80	29,605	495.07	59.80	0.00%
Freckenham	14,385	140.01	102.74	14,906	145.09	102.74	0.00%
Gazeley	16,600	282.61	58.74	20,500	278.50	73.61	25.31%
Great & Little Whelnetham	12,035	388.72	30.96	12,920	384.60	33.59	8.49%
Great Barton	33,587	953.97	35.21	33,570	953.62	35.20	-0.03%
Great Bradley	13,000	161.48	80.51	13,960	157.62	88.57	10.01%
Great Livermere	7,500	83.26	90.08	8,239	81.64	100.92	12.03%
Great Thurlow	6,900	87.89	78.51	6,900	83.12	83.01	5.73%
Great Wratting	6,500	88.29	73.62	7,000	88.44	79.15	7.51%
Hargrave	5,002	116.41	42.97	5,200	118.91	43.73	1.77%
Haverhill	1,139,918	7,671.05	148.60	1,364,232	7,780.90	175.33	17.99%
Hawkedon	696	66.04	10.54	751	66.32	11.32	7.40%
Hawstead	7,400	131.59	56.24	7,400	129.89	56.97	1.30%
Hepworth	7,561	216.89	34.86	7,855	218.77	35.91	3.01%
Herringswell	7,220	132.77	54.38	7,890	145.09	54.38	0.00%
Higham	-	73.30	-	-	75.24	-	-
Honington-cum-Sapiston	21,300	305.74	69.67	21,930	311.66	70.37	1.00%
Hopton cum Knettishall	8,043	256.94	31.30	8,316	262.18	31.72	1.34%
Horringer	29,566	411.92	71.78	20,696	413.92	50.00	-30.34%
Hundon	20,905	440.58	47.45	23,060	442.91	52.06	9.72%
Icklingham	8,900	153.67	57.92	9,651	152.37	63.34	9.36%
Ickworth	434	8.33	52.10	304	8.62	35.27	-32.30%
Ingham	5,500	166.09	33.11	5,500	167.11	32.91	-0.60%
Ixworth cum Ixworth Thorpe	48,465	782.15	61.96	47,115	782.85	60.18	-2.87%
Kedington	81,570	680.30	119.90	85,576	684.09	125.09	4.33%
Kentford	11,502	407.49	28.23	18,000	433.47	41.53	47.11%
Lackford	5,385	105.23	51.17	5,727	104.42	54.85	7.19%
Lakenheath	170,400	1,427.61	119.36	177,800	1,453.42	122.33	2.49%
Lidgate	7,166	98.76	72.56	8,921	100.36	88.89	22.51%
Little Bradley	-	18.42	-	-	18.80	-	-
Little Thurlow	10,969	106.71	102.79	10,651	105.17	101.27	-1.48%
Little Wratting	-	65.64	-	-	65.30	-	-
Market Weston	8,000	100.25	79.80	8,500	102.12	83.24	4.31%
Mildenhall High Town	293,702	2,253.29	130.34	339,029	2,259.91	150.02	15.10%
Moulton	32,384	431.54	75.04	35,043	429.15	81.66	8.82%
Newmarket	715,210	5,611.06	127.46	823,069	5,655.60	145.53	14.18%
Nowton	3,984	64.57	61.70	3,769	67.60	55.75	-9.64%
Ousden	8,504	122.66	69.33	9,583	129.22	74.16	6.97%
Pakenham	12,180	342.17	35.60	11,965	345.28	34.65	-2.67%
Poslingford	4,174	94.44	44.20	4,174	94.31	44.26	0.14%
Red Lodge	186,415	1,771.65	105.22	202,135	1,824.45	110.79	5.29%
Rede	1,463	53.70	27.24	1,463	55.41	26.40	-3.08%
Risby	11,405	300.23	37.99	15,847	299.46	52.92	39.30%
Rushbrooke with Rougham	19,380	644.10	30.09	28,211	416.29	67.77	125.22%
Santon Downham	7,402	89.85	82.38	7,698	91.52	84.11	2.10%
Stansfield	5,768	91.10	63.32	8,182	93.24	87.75	38.58%
Stanton	73,710	937.35	78.64	71,010	934.47	75.99	-3.37%
Stoke By Clare	18,822	223.81	84.10	18,822	223.53	84.20	0.12%
Stradishall	8,395	172.40	48.69	9,644	175.09	55.08	13.12%
The Saxhams	6,000	123.07	48.75	6,500	123.36	52.69	8.08%

PARISH	2022 to 2023			2023 to 2024			Increase in Band D Parish Council Tax %
	Parish Precept £	Tax Base	Band D Parish Council Tax £	Parish Precept £	Tax Base	Band D Parish Council Tax £	
Thelnetham	1,800	99.95	18.01	1,800	100.98	17.83	-1.00%
Troston	14,000	289.81	48.31	14,000	272.43	51.39	6.38%
Tuddenham St Mary	14,310	164.39	87.05	14,310	169.18	84.58	-2.84%
West Row	59,451	568.13	104.64	60,941	568.26	107.24	2.48%
Westley	2,180	93.00	23.44	2,180	92.57	23.55	0.47%
Whepstead	9,560	224.84	42.52	9,560	219.13	43.63	2.61%
Wickhambrook	38,413	509.33	75.42	42,739	528.38	80.89	7.25%
Withersfield	9,440	327.21	28.85	9,440	327.66	28.81	-0.14%
Wixoe	1,100	65.94	16.68	800	63.09	12.68	-23.98%
Worlington	17,893	263.38	67.94	17,758	223.27	79.54	17.07%
Total Parish Precepts	4,734,719			5,241,685			
Total Tax Base		57,406.34			57,987.01		
Average Band D Parish Tax			82.48			90.39	9.59%

Basic amount of council tax in those parts of the council's area to which special items relate

**Attachment H
Schedule B**

Part of the Council's Area	Valuation Band D
	£ p
Bardwell	242.80
Barnham	228.24
Barningham	291.37
Barrow cum Denham	228.10
Barton Mills	257.70
Beck Row	236.18
Bradfield Combust with Stanningfield	256.41
Bradfield St Clare	239.03
Bradfield St George	226.51
Brandon (and Wangford)	320.99
Brockley	259.64
Bury St Edmunds	234.36
Cavendish	256.61
Cavenham	204.64
Chedburgh	233.59
Chevington	220.92
Clare	325.38
Coney Weston	248.45
Cowlinge	302.81
Culford West Stow and Wordwell	233.46
Dalham	256.06
Denston	194.06
Depden	224.23
Elveden	204.22
Eriswell	241.74
Euston	221.78
Exning	285.15
Fakenham Magna	261.55
Flempton-cum-Hengrave	241.91
Fornham All Saints	281.83
Fornham St Martin-cum-St Genevieve	251.86
Freckenham	294.80
Gazeley	265.67
Great & Little Whelnetham	225.65
Great Barton	227.26
Great Bradley	280.63
Great Livermere	292.98
Great Thurlow	275.07
Great Wratting	271.21
Hargrave	235.79
Haverhill	367.39
Hawkedon	203.38
Hawstead	249.00
Hepworth	227.97

Part of the Council's Area	Valuation Band D
	£ p
Herringswell	246.44
Honington-cum-Sapiston	262.43
Hopton cum Knettishall	223.78
Horringer	242.06
Hundon	244.12
Icklingham	255.40
Ickworth	227.33
Ingham	224.97
Ixworth cum Ixworth Thorpe	252.24
Kedington	317.15
Kentford	233.59
Lackford	246.91
Lakenheath	314.39
Lidgate	280.95
Little Thurlow	293.33
Market Weston	275.30
Mildenhall High Town	342.08
Moulton	273.72
Newmarket	337.59
Nowton	247.81
Ousden	266.22
Pakenham	226.71
Poslingford	236.32
Red Lodge	302.85
Rede	218.46
Risby	244.98
Rushbrooke with Rougham	259.83
Santon Downham	276.17
Stansfield	279.81
Stanton	268.05
Stoke by Clare	276.26
Stradishall	247.14
The Saxhams	244.75
Thelnetham	209.89
Troston	243.45
Tuddenham St Mary	276.64
West Row	299.30
Westley	215.61
Whepstead	235.69
Wickhambrook	272.95
Withersfield	220.87
Wixoe	204.74
Wolton	271.60

This page is intentionally left blank

Basic amounts of council tax in respect of different valuation bands

**Attachment H
Schedule C**

Authority	Valuation Bands							
	A £ p	B £ p	C £ p	D £ p	E £ p	F £ p	G £ p	H £ p
Suffolk County Council	997.62	1,163.89	1,330.16	1,496.43	1,828.97	2,161.51	2,494.05	2,992.86
Suffolk OPCC	175.08	204.26	233.44	262.62	320.98	379.34	437.70	525.24
West Suffolk Council	128.04	149.38	170.72	192.06	234.74	277.42	320.10	384.12
Ampton, Timworth & Livermere	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bardwell	33.83	39.46	45.10	50.74	62.02	73.29	84.57	101.48
Barnardiston	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Barnham	24.12	28.14	32.16	36.18	44.22	52.26	60.30	72.36
Barningham	66.21	77.24	88.28	99.31	121.38	143.45	165.52	198.62
Barrow cum Denham	24.03	28.03	32.04	36.04	44.05	52.06	60.07	72.08
Barton Mills	43.76	51.05	58.35	65.64	80.23	94.81	109.40	131.28
Beck Row	29.41	34.32	39.22	44.12	53.92	63.73	73.53	88.24
Bradfield Combust with Stanningfield	42.90	50.05	57.20	64.35	78.65	92.95	107.25	128.70
Bradfield St Clare	31.31	36.53	41.75	46.97	57.41	67.85	78.28	93.94
Bradfield St George	22.97	26.79	30.62	34.45	42.11	49.76	57.42	68.90
Brandon (and Wangford)	85.95	100.28	114.60	128.93	157.58	186.23	214.88	257.86
Brockley	45.05	52.56	60.07	67.58	82.60	97.62	112.63	135.16
Bury St Edmunds	28.20	32.90	37.60	42.30	51.70	61.10	70.50	84.60
Cavendish	43.03	50.21	57.38	64.55	78.89	93.24	107.58	129.10
Cavenham	8.39	9.78	11.18	12.58	15.38	18.17	20.97	25.16
Chedburgh	27.69	32.30	36.92	41.53	50.76	59.99	69.22	83.06
Chevington	19.24	22.45	25.65	28.86	35.27	41.69	48.10	57.72
Clare	88.88	103.69	118.51	133.32	162.95	192.57	222.20	266.64
Coney Weston	37.59	43.86	50.12	56.39	68.92	81.45	93.98	112.78
Cowlinge	73.83	86.14	98.44	110.75	135.36	159.97	184.58	221.50
Culford West Stow and Wordwell	27.60	32.20	36.80	41.40	50.60	59.80	69.00	82.80
Dalham	42.67	49.78	56.89	64.00	78.22	92.44	106.67	128.00
Denston	1.33	1.56	1.78	2.00	2.44	2.89	3.33	4.00
Depden	21.45	25.02	28.60	32.17	39.32	46.47	53.62	64.34
Elveden	8.11	9.46	10.81	12.16	14.86	17.56	20.27	24.32
Eriswell	33.12	38.64	44.16	49.68	60.72	71.76	82.80	99.36
Euston	19.81	23.12	26.42	29.72	36.32	42.93	49.53	59.44
Exning	62.06	72.40	82.75	93.09	113.78	134.46	155.15	186.18
Fakenham Magna	46.33	54.05	61.77	69.49	84.93	100.37	115.82	138.98
Flempton-cum-Hengrave	33.23	38.77	44.31	49.85	60.93	72.01	83.08	99.70
Fornham All Saints	59.85	69.82	79.80	89.77	109.72	129.67	149.62	179.54
Fornham St Martin-cum-St Genevieve	39.87	46.51	53.16	59.80	73.09	86.38	99.67	119.60
Freckenham	68.49	79.91	91.32	102.74	125.57	148.40	171.23	205.48
Gazeley	49.07	57.25	65.43	73.61	89.97	106.33	122.68	147.22
Great & Little Whelnetham	22.39	26.13	29.86	33.59	41.05	48.52	55.98	67.18
Great Barton	23.47	27.38	31.29	35.20	43.02	50.84	58.67	70.40
Great Bradley	59.05	68.89	78.73	88.57	108.25	127.93	147.62	177.14
Great Livermere	67.28	78.49	89.71	100.92	123.35	145.77	168.20	201.84
Great Thurlow	55.34	64.56	73.79	83.01	101.46	119.90	138.35	166.02
Great Wratting	52.77	61.56	70.36	79.15	96.74	114.33	131.92	158.30
Hargrave	29.15	34.01	38.87	43.73	53.45	63.17	72.88	87.46
Haverhill	116.89	136.37	155.85	175.33	214.29	253.25	292.22	350.66
Hawkedon	7.55	8.80	10.06	11.32	13.84	16.35	18.87	22.64
Hawstead	37.98	44.31	50.64	56.97	69.63	82.29	94.95	113.94
Hepworth	23.94	27.93	31.92	35.91	43.89	51.87	59.85	71.82
Herringswell	36.25	42.30	48.34	54.38	66.46	78.55	90.63	108.76
Higham	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Honington-cum-Sapiston	46.91	54.73	62.55	70.37	86.01	101.65	117.28	140.74
Hopton cum Knettishall	21.15	24.67	28.20	31.72	38.77	45.82	52.87	63.44
Horringer	33.33	38.89	44.44	50.00	61.11	72.22	83.33	100.00
Hundon	34.71	40.49	46.28	52.06	63.63	75.20	86.77	104.12
Icklingham	42.23	49.26	56.30	63.34	77.42	91.49	105.57	126.68
Ickworth	23.51	27.43	31.35	35.27	43.11	50.95	58.78	70.54
Ingham	21.94	25.60	29.25	32.91	40.22	47.54	54.85	65.82
Ixworth cum Ixworth Thorpe	40.12	46.81	53.49	60.18	73.55	86.93	100.30	120.36
Kedington	83.39	97.29	111.19	125.09	152.89	180.69	208.48	250.18
Kentford	27.69	32.30	36.92	41.53	50.76	59.99	69.22	83.06
Lackford	36.57	42.66	48.76	54.85	67.04	79.23	91.42	109.70
Lakenheath	81.55	95.15	108.74	122.33	149.51	176.70	203.88	244.66
Lidgate	59.26	69.14	79.01	88.89	108.64	128.40	148.15	177.78
Little Bradley	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Authority	Valuation Bands							
	A £ p	B £ p	C £ p	D £ p	E £ p	F £ p	G £ p	H £ p
Little Thurlow	67.51	78.77	90.02	101.27	123.77	146.28	168.78	202.54
Little Wrating	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Market Weston	55.49	64.74	73.99	83.24	101.74	120.24	138.73	166.48
Mildenhall High Town	100.01	116.68	133.35	150.02	183.36	216.70	250.03	300.04
Moulton	54.44	63.51	72.59	81.66	99.81	117.95	136.10	163.32
Newmarket	97.02	113.19	129.36	145.53	177.87	210.21	242.55	291.06
Nowton	37.17	43.36	49.56	55.75	68.14	80.53	92.92	111.50
Ousden	49.44	57.68	65.92	74.16	90.64	107.12	123.60	148.32
Pakenham	23.10	26.95	30.80	34.65	42.35	50.05	57.75	69.30
Poslingford	29.51	34.42	39.34	44.26	54.10	63.93	73.77	88.52
Red Lodge	73.86	86.17	98.48	110.79	135.41	160.03	184.65	221.58
Rede	17.60	20.53	23.47	26.40	32.27	38.13	44.00	52.80
Risby	35.28	41.16	47.04	52.92	64.68	76.44	88.20	105.84
Rushbrooke with Rougham	45.18	52.71	60.24	67.77	82.83	97.89	112.95	135.54
Santon Downham	56.07	65.42	74.76	84.11	102.80	121.49	140.18	168.22
Stansfield	58.50	68.25	78.00	87.75	107.25	126.75	146.25	175.50
Stanton	50.66	59.10	67.55	75.99	92.88	109.76	126.65	151.98
Stoke by Clare	56.13	65.49	74.84	84.20	102.91	121.62	140.33	168.40
Stradishall	36.72	42.84	48.96	55.08	67.32	79.56	91.80	110.16
The Saxhams	35.13	40.98	46.84	52.69	64.40	76.11	87.82	105.38
Thelnetham	11.89	13.87	15.85	17.83	21.79	25.75	29.72	35.66
Troston	34.26	39.97	45.68	51.39	62.81	74.23	85.65	102.78
Tuddenham St Mary	56.39	65.78	75.18	84.58	103.38	122.17	140.97	169.16
West Row	71.49	83.41	95.32	107.24	131.07	154.90	178.73	214.48
Westley	15.70	18.32	20.93	23.55	28.78	34.02	39.25	47.10
Whepstead	29.09	33.93	38.78	43.63	53.33	63.02	72.72	87.26
Wickhambrook	53.93	62.91	71.90	80.89	98.87	116.84	134.82	161.78
Withersfield	19.21	22.41	25.61	28.81	35.21	41.61	48.02	57.62
Wixoe	8.45	9.86	11.27	12.68	15.50	18.32	21.13	25.36
Worlington	53.03	61.86	70.70	79.54	97.22	114.89	132.57	159.08

Parish/Town Area	Valuation Bands							
	A £ p	B £ p	C £ p	D £ p	E £ p	F £ p	G £ p	H £ p
Ampton, Timworth and Livermere	1,300.74	1,517.53	1,734.32	1,951.11	2,384.69	2,818.27	3,251.85	3,902.22
Bardwell	1,334.57	1,556.99	1,779.42	2,001.85	2,446.71	2,891.56	3,336.42	4,003.70
Barnardiston	1,300.74	1,517.53	1,734.32	1,951.11	2,384.69	2,818.27	3,251.85	3,902.22
Barnham	1,324.86	1,545.67	1,766.48	1,987.29	2,428.91	2,870.53	3,312.15	3,974.58
Barningham	1,366.95	1,594.77	1,822.60	2,050.42	2,506.07	2,961.72	3,417.37	4,100.84
Barrow cum Denham	1,324.77	1,545.56	1,766.36	1,987.15	2,428.74	2,870.33	3,311.92	3,974.30
Barton Mills	1,344.50	1,568.58	1,792.67	2,016.75	2,464.92	2,913.08	3,361.25	4,033.50
Beck Row	1,330.15	1,551.85	1,773.54	1,995.23	2,438.61	2,882.00	3,325.38	3,990.46
Bradfield Combust with Stanningfield	1,343.64	1,567.58	1,791.52	2,015.46	2,463.34	2,911.22	3,359.10	4,030.92
Bradfield St Clare	1,332.05	1,554.06	1,776.07	1,998.08	2,442.10	2,886.12	3,330.13	3,996.16
Bradfield St George	1,323.71	1,544.32	1,764.94	1,985.56	2,426.80	2,868.03	3,309.27	3,971.12
Brandon (and Wangford)	1,386.69	1,617.81	1,848.92	2,080.04	2,542.27	3,004.50	3,466.73	4,160.08
Brockley	1,345.79	1,570.09	1,794.39	2,018.69	2,467.29	2,915.89	3,364.48	4,037.38
Bury St Edmunds	1,328.94	1,550.43	1,771.92	1,993.41	2,436.39	2,879.37	3,322.35	3,986.82
Cavendish	1,343.77	1,567.74	1,791.70	2,015.66	2,463.58	2,911.51	3,359.43	4,031.32
Cavenham	1,309.13	1,527.31	1,745.50	1,963.69	2,400.07	2,836.44	3,272.82	3,927.38
Chedburgh	1,328.43	1,549.83	1,771.24	1,992.64	2,435.45	2,878.26	3,321.07	3,985.28
Chevington	1,319.98	1,539.98	1,759.97	1,979.97	2,419.96	2,859.96	3,299.95	3,959.94
Clare	1,389.62	1,621.22	1,852.83	2,084.43	2,547.64	3,010.84	3,474.05	4,168.86
Coney Weston	1,338.33	1,561.39	1,784.44	2,007.50	2,453.61	2,899.72	3,345.83	4,015.00
Cowlinge	1,374.57	1,603.67	1,832.76	2,061.86	2,520.05	2,978.24	3,436.43	4,123.72
Culford West Stow and Wordwell	1,328.34	1,549.73	1,771.12	1,992.51	2,435.29	2,878.07	3,320.85	3,985.02
Dalham	1,343.41	1,567.31	1,791.21	2,015.11	2,462.91	2,910.71	3,358.52	4,030.22
Denston	1,302.07	1,519.09	1,736.10	1,953.11	2,387.13	2,821.16	3,255.18	3,906.22
Depden	1,322.19	1,542.55	1,762.92	1,983.28	2,424.01	2,864.74	3,305.47	3,966.56
Elveden	1,308.85	1,526.99	1,745.13	1,963.27	2,399.55	2,835.83	3,272.12	3,926.54
Eriswell	1,333.86	1,556.17	1,778.48	2,000.79	2,445.41	2,890.03	3,334.65	4,001.58
Euston	1,320.55	1,540.65	1,760.74	1,980.83	2,421.01	2,861.20	3,301.38	3,961.66
Exning	1,362.80	1,589.93	1,817.07	2,044.20	2,498.47	2,952.73	3,407.00	4,088.40
Fakenham Magna	1,347.07	1,571.58	1,796.09	2,020.60	2,469.62	2,918.64	3,367.67	4,041.20
Flempton-cum-Hengrave	1,333.97	1,556.30	1,778.63	2,000.96	2,445.62	2,890.28	3,334.93	4,001.92
Fornham All Saints	1,360.59	1,587.35	1,814.12	2,040.88	2,494.41	2,947.94	3,401.47	4,081.76
Fornham St Martin-cum-St Genevieve	1,340.61	1,564.04	1,787.48	2,010.91	2,457.78	2,904.65	3,351.52	4,021.82
Freckenham	1,369.23	1,597.44	1,825.64	2,053.85	2,510.26	2,966.67	3,423.08	4,107.70
Gazeley	1,349.81	1,574.78	1,799.75	2,024.72	2,474.66	2,924.60	3,374.53	4,049.44
Great & Little Whelnetham	1,323.13	1,543.66	1,764.18	1,984.70	2,425.74	2,866.79	3,307.83	3,969.40
Great Barton	1,324.21	1,544.91	1,765.61	1,986.31	2,427.71	2,869.11	3,310.52	3,972.62
Great Bradley	1,359.79	1,586.42	1,813.05	2,039.68	2,492.94	2,946.20	3,399.47	4,079.36
Great Livermere	1,368.02	1,596.02	1,824.03	2,052.03	2,508.04	2,964.04	3,420.05	4,104.06
Great Thurlow	1,356.08	1,582.09	1,808.11	2,034.12	2,486.15	2,938.17	3,390.20	4,068.24
Great Wrating	1,353.51	1,579.09	1,804.68	2,030.26	2,481.43	2,932.60	3,383.77	4,060.52
Hargrave	1,329.89	1,551.54	1,773.19	1,994.84	2,438.14	2,881.44	3,324.73	3,989.68
Haverhill	1,417.63	1,653.90	1,890.17	2,126.44	2,598.98	3,071.52	3,544.07	4,252.88
Hawkedon	1,308.29	1,526.33	1,744.38	1,962.43	2,398.53	2,834.62	3,270.72	3,924.86
Hawstead	1,338.72	1,561.84	1,784.96	2,008.08	2,454.32	2,900.56	3,346.80	4,016.16
Hepworth	1,324.68	1,545.46	1,766.24	1,987.02	2,428.58	2,870.14	3,311.70	3,974.04
Herringswell	1,336.99	1,559.83	1,782.66	2,005.49	2,451.15	2,896.82	3,342.48	4,010.98
Higham	1,300.74	1,517.53	1,734.32	1,951.11	2,384.69	2,818.27	3,251.85	3,902.22
Honington-cum-Sapiston	1,347.65	1,572.26	1,796.87	2,021.48	2,470.70	2,919.92	3,369.13	4,042.96
Hopton cum Knettishall	1,321.89	1,542.20	1,762.52	1,982.83	2,423.46	2,864.09	3,304.72	3,965.66
Horringer	1,334.07	1,556.42	1,778.76	2,001.11	2,445.80	2,890.49	3,335.18	4,002.22
Hundon	1,335.45	1,558.02	1,780.60	2,003.17	2,448.32	2,893.47	3,338.62	4,006.34
Icklingham	1,342.97	1,566.79	1,790.62	2,014.45	2,462.11	2,909.76	3,357.42	4,028.90
Ickworth	1,324.25	1,544.96	1,765.67	1,986.38	2,427.80	2,869.22	3,310.63	3,972.76
Ingham	1,322.68	1,543.13	1,763.57	1,984.02	2,424.91	2,865.81	3,306.70	3,968.04
Ixworth cum Ixworth Thorpe	1,340.86	1,564.34	1,787.81	2,011.29	2,458.24	2,905.20	3,352.15	4,022.58
Kedington	1,384.13	1,614.82	1,845.51	2,076.20	2,537.58	2,998.96	3,460.33	4,152.40
Kentford	1,328.43	1,549.83	1,771.24	1,992.64	2,435.45	2,878.26	3,321.07	3,985.28
Lackford	1,337.31	1,560.19	1,783.08	2,005.96	2,451.73	2,897.50	3,343.27	4,011.92
Lakenheath	1,382.29	1,612.68	1,843.06	2,073.44	2,534.20	2,994.97	3,455.73	4,146.88
Lidgate	1,360.00	1,586.67	1,813.33	2,040.00	2,493.33	2,946.67	3,400.00	4,080.00
Little Bradley	1,300.74	1,517.53	1,734.32	1,951.11	2,384.69	2,818.27	3,251.85	3,902.22
Little Thurlow	1,368.25	1,596.30	1,824.34	2,052.38	2,508.46	2,964.55	3,420.63	4,104.76
Little Wrating	1,300.74	1,517.53	1,734.32	1,951.11	2,384.69	2,818.27	3,251.85	3,902.22
Market Weston	1,356.23	1,582.27	1,808.31	2,034.35	2,486.43	2,938.51	3,390.58	4,068.70
Mildenhall High Town	1,400.75	1,634.21	1,867.67	2,101.13	2,568.05	3,034.97	3,501.88	4,202.26
Moulton	1,355.18	1,581.04	1,806.91	2,032.77	2,484.50	2,936.22	3,387.95	4,065.54
Newmarket	1,397.76	1,630.72	1,863.68	2,096.64	2,562.56	3,028.48	3,494.40	4,193.28
Nowton	1,337.91	1,560.89	1,783.88	2,006.86	2,452.83	2,898.80	3,344.77	4,013.72

Parish/Town Area	Valuation Bands							
	A £ p	B £ p	C £ p	D £ p	E £ p	F £ p	G £ p	H £ p
Ousden	1,350.18	1,575.21	1,800.24	2,025.27	2,475.33	2,925.39	3,375.45	4,050.54
Pakenham	1,323.84	1,544.48	1,765.12	1,985.76	2,427.04	2,868.32	3,309.60	3,971.52
Poslingford	1,330.25	1,551.95	1,773.66	1,995.37	2,438.79	2,882.20	3,325.62	3,990.74
Red Lodge	1,374.60	1,603.70	1,832.80	2,061.90	2,520.10	2,978.30	3,436.50	4,123.80
Rede	1,318.34	1,538.06	1,757.79	1,977.51	2,416.96	2,856.40	3,295.85	3,955.02
Risby	1,336.02	1,558.69	1,781.36	2,004.03	2,449.37	2,894.71	3,340.05	4,008.06
Rushbrooke with Rougham	1,345.92	1,570.24	1,794.56	2,018.88	2,467.52	2,916.16	3,364.80	4,037.76
Santon Downham	1,356.81	1,582.95	1,809.08	2,035.22	2,487.49	2,939.76	3,392.03	4,070.44
Stansfield	1,359.24	1,585.78	1,812.32	2,038.86	2,491.94	2,945.02	3,398.10	4,077.72
Stanton	1,351.40	1,576.63	1,801.87	2,027.10	2,477.57	2,928.03	3,378.50	4,054.20
Stoke by Clare	1,356.87	1,583.02	1,809.16	2,035.31	2,487.60	2,939.89	3,392.18	4,070.62
Stradishall	1,337.46	1,560.37	1,783.28	2,006.19	2,452.01	2,897.83	3,343.65	4,012.38
The Saxhams	1,335.87	1,558.51	1,781.16	2,003.80	2,449.09	2,894.38	3,339.67	4,007.60
Thelnetham	1,312.63	1,531.40	1,750.17	1,968.94	2,406.48	2,844.02	3,281.57	3,937.88
Troston	1,335.00	1,557.50	1,780.00	2,002.50	2,447.50	2,892.50	3,337.50	4,005.00
Tuddenham St Mary	1,357.13	1,583.31	1,809.50	2,035.69	2,488.07	2,940.44	3,392.82	4,071.38
West Row	1,372.23	1,600.94	1,829.64	2,058.35	2,515.76	2,973.17	3,430.58	4,116.70
Westley	1,316.44	1,535.85	1,755.25	1,974.66	2,413.47	2,852.29	3,291.10	3,949.32
Whepstead	1,329.83	1,551.46	1,773.10	1,994.74	2,438.02	2,881.29	3,324.57	3,989.48
Wickhambrook	1,354.67	1,580.44	1,806.22	2,032.00	2,483.56	2,935.11	3,386.67	4,064.00
Withersfield	1,319.95	1,539.94	1,759.93	1,979.92	2,419.90	2,859.88	3,299.87	3,959.84
Wixoe	1,309.19	1,527.39	1,745.59	1,963.79	2,400.19	2,836.59	3,272.98	3,927.58
Worlington	1,353.77	1,579.39	1,805.02	2,030.65	2,481.91	2,933.16	3,384.42	4,061.30

Council tax resolution

Explanation

The council tax resolution has to be very precise legally and so has to quote the sections of the appropriate Acts of Parliament. The following is a simplified explanation of each of the significant parts of the resolution:

1. The number of band D equivalent properties to be used in the calculation of the council tax.
2. The council tax requirement of West Suffolk Council, excluding parish precepts.
3. West Suffolk Council's:
 - a. budgeted gross expenditure including parish precepts and special expenses
 - b. budgeted income
 - c. budget requirement including parish precepts and special expenses
 - d. budgeted income from business rates, revenue support grant, other non-service specific grants and collection fund surpluses/deficits
 - e. council tax requirement including parish precepts and special expenses
 - f. average band D council tax being levied in the district, for the council and all the parishes
 - g. total amount of parish precepts and special expenses
 - h. headline council tax amount excluding parish precepts and special expenses – this is the amount required to fund this council's general expense services that cover the whole district.

For those areas that raise a town or parish precept, the figure in Schedule B of Attachment H shows the council's band D equivalent council tax figure inclusive of the relevant parish precept.

The figures in Schedule C of Attachment H shows the amount of the council tax for each of the valuation bands by County, Police, District and Parish.

Schedule D of Attachment H shows the total aggregate council tax for each of the valuation bands inclusive of County, Police, District and Parish precepts.

The council is recommended to resolve as follows:

1. It be noted that the council calculated the council tax base for 2023 to 2024:
 - a. for the whole council area as **£57,987.01** - item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended (the Act)
 - b. for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one of more special items relate as shown in the attached Schedule A of Attachment H.
2. That the council tax requirement for the council's own purposes for 2023 to 2024 (excluding town and parish precepts) is **£11,136,985**
3. The following amounts be now calculated by the council for the year 2023 to 2024 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
 - a. **£100,604,056**, being the aggregate of the amounts which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by town and parish councils.
 - b. **£70,064,376**, being the aggregate of the amounts which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
 - c. **£30,539,680**, being the amount by which the aggregate at 3a above exceeds the aggregate at 3b above, calculated by the council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its budget requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
 - d. **£14,161,010**, being the aggregate of the sums which the council estimates will be payable for the year into its general fund in respect of business rates, revenue support grant or additional grant, increased or reduced by the amount of the sums which the council estimates will be transferred in the year from its collection fund to its general fund, in accordance with Section 97(3) and 98(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. (Item P in the formula in Section 31B of the Act.)
 - e. **£16,378,670** being the amount at 3c above less the amount at 3d above.
 - f. The amount at 3e above, divided by item T (1a above), calculated by the council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year (including town and parish precepts) being **£282.45**
 - g. **£5,241,685** being the aggregate amount of all special items (town and parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per the attached Schedule A of Attachment H).
 - h. The amount at 3f above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3g above by item T (1a above), calculated by the council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year

Attachment I

for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no town or parish precept relates being **£192.06**

- i. The figures in Schedule B of Attachment H, being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 3h above the amounts of the special item relating to dwellings in those parts of the council's area mentioned above divided, in each case, by the amount at 1a above, calculated by the council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.
 - j. The figures in Schedule C of Attachment H, being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 3h and 3i above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which, in that proportion, is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.
4. The council's average basic amount of council tax across the district for 2023 to 2024, of **£192.06**, is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 54(2) of the Act.

This page is intentionally left blank

Calendar of Meetings: 2023 to 2024

Report number:	COU/WS/23/004	
Report to and date:	Council	21 February 2023
Cabinet member:	Councillor Carol Bull Portfolio Holder for Governance Tel: 01953 681513 Email: carol.bull@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Jen Eves Director (HR, Governance and Regulatory) Tel: 01284 757015 Email: jennifer.eves@westsuffolk.gov.uk	

Decisions Plan: **Not applicable as this is not an Executive matter**

Wards impacted: **Not applicable**

Recommendation: **It is recommended that the Calendar of Meetings 2023 to 2024, as attached at Appendix A to Report number: COU/WS/23/004, be approved.**

1. Context to this report

- 1.1 Each year, the Council adopts a calendar of meetings for the forthcoming municipal year (May 2023 to May 2024).

2. Proposals within this report

- 2.1 The proposed calendar is attached at Appendix A. Where possible, the calendar takes into account known events which have a widespread impact such as school holidays.
- 2.2 No venues are stipulated on the calendar. Under current legislation some meetings are able to be operated entirely virtually (for example, Staff Consultative Panel, Financial Resilience Sub-Committee etc) and it is envisaged that will continue and will be at the discretion of the Chair of the meeting.
- 2.3 It is also important to note that a corporate hybrid meetings/audio visual equipment project is currently still ongoing (at the time of writing this report) and the outcome of this may influence future meeting operation.
- 2.4 Members will recall that as part of the production of the current year's calendar Democratic Services compiled data in respect of West Suffolk Council meeting figures and carried out a comparison exercise with other neighbouring authorities.
- 2.5 As a result of which the calendar for 2022 to 2023 was proposed and contained some changes to the previous operation of meetings; for example, scheduling reserve dates of full Council and Cabinet.
- 2.6 These changes worked well and are again proposed as part of the 2023 to 2024 calendar.
- 2.7 Those meetings that are scheduled on an "as required" basis will continue to be scheduled and publicised as normal and members will continue to receive notification of these in accordance with current processes.
- 2.8 The District Elections are to be held on 4 May 2023 and the Annual Meeting of Council following the elections will be on 23 May 2023. It is therefore suggested that the first post-election Cabinet meeting be held on 13 June 2023 instead of 30 May 2023, as previously approved as part of the 2022 to 2023 calendar of meetings.

3. Alternative options that have been considered

- 3.1 None.

4. Consultation and engagement undertaken

- 4.1 Leadership Team and the Cabinet considered the draft calendar during December 2022 and January 2023.
- 4.2 All town councils in West Suffolk and Suffolk County Council were contacted to source dates of their full Council meetings. The majority of town councils are yet to have set their meetings beyond May 2023, and these will be added to the calendar once known.

5. Risks associated with the proposals

- 5.1 Publication of the calendar of meetings ensures that members and the public are aware of forthcoming meeting dates, minimising the risk that they cannot attend and participate in the work of the Council.

6. Implications arising from the proposals

- 6.1 None.

7. Appendices referenced in this report

- 7.1 Appendix A: Calendar of Meetings 2023-2024

8. Background documents associated with this report

- 8.1 None

This page is intentionally left blank

Meeting Timetable May 2023 to May 2024

APPENDIX A



	Normal Day	Time	2023								2024					
			May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	
Council, Cabinet & Committees																
Cabinet	Tues	6.00pm		13	18			19	17**	14	5	9**	6	12	9**	21
Council	Tues	7.00pm	23(i)	20	25**			26		21**	19		20(ii)	26		14(i)
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Thur	5.00pm		15	20			21		9		18		14		
Performance & Audit Scrutiny Committee	Thur	5.00pm		1	27			28		23		25				30
Development Control Committee (iii)	Wed	10.00am		7	5	2	6	4	1	6	3	7	6	3, 24		
DC Committee Site Inspections	Mon	Various (am)		5	3, 31		4	2, 30		4	2*	5	4	2*, 22		
Planning & Regulatory Committee - Default as all informal virtual sessions	Mon	5.30pm			10			9			29			15		
Standards Committee	Mon	5.00pm		26						27						
Officer Appointments Committee (iv)	Various	Various														
Officer Appeals Committee (iv)	Various	Various														

Notes

- (i) Annual Meeting of Council
- (ii) Budget setting meeting
- (iii) No meetings in May 2023 or May 2024 due to elections, two in each of the Aprils instead
- (iv) Meetings arranged as & when required

*On a Tuesday rather than the usual Monday to avoid the Bank Holiday

**Reserve date which will only be used if necessary

Cont/d

Meeting Timetable May 2023 to May 2024

APPENDIX A

	Normal Day	Time	2023								2024				
			May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Sub-Committee of Licensing & Regulatory Committee															
Licensing & Regulatory Sub-Cttee (v)	Various	Various													
Sub-Committee of Performance & Audit Committee															
Financial Resilience Sub-Committee	Mon	10.30am			17				13		15				
Health & Safety Sub-Committee	Mon	4.00pm		19				16			26				
Formal Panels & Groups															
Staff Consultative Panel	Mon	3.00pm			3				20			12			
Grant Working Party	Various	1.00pm						5		14	4, 8		20		
Constitution Review Group	Wed	4.00pm			12		13		8		31		13		
Markets Review Group	Various	Various													
Local Plan Working Group	Various	5.00pm													
Independent Remuneration Panel	Various	Various													
Joint Committee between West Suffolk Council, East Suffolk Council, Breckland Council, East Cambs DC & Fenland DC															
Anglia Rev & Ben Partnership Joint Cttee (hosted & administered by Breckland Council)	Tues	11.00am													

Notes

(v) Meetings arranged as & when required

Cont/d

Meeting Timetable May 2023 to May 2024

APPENDIX A

	Normal Day	Time	2023								2024				
			May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Other Notable Meetings - Internal															
Majority Group	Various	6.00pm	16	6	13		12	25	30		11	13	11		
Majority Group pre-Council Briefing	Tues	5.30pm	23	20	25**		26		21**	19		20	26		14
Other Group Meetings	TBC	TBC													
Member Development Sessions	Various	Various	(vi)	(vi)											
Other Notable Meetings - External															
Brandon Town Council (full Council)	Mon	7.00pm	8												
Bury St Eds Town Council (full Council)	Wed	7.00pm	11												
Haverhill Town Council (full Council)	Mon	7.00pm	15	26	17		25	31 (Tue)	28 (Tue)	18					
Widenhall High Town Council (full Council)	Thurs	7.00pm	18												
Newmarket Town Council (full Council)	Mon	6.00pm													
Gare Town Council (full Council)	Thurs	7.00pm													
Suffolk County Council (full Council)	Thurs	2.00pm	25		6			19		7		15	21		21

Notes

(vi) Member induction sessions will be scheduled, following the District elections on 4 May 2023

Cont/d

Additional Notes

District & Parish Elections Thursday 4 May 2023
Parliamentary Elections Thursday 2 May 2024

Bank/Public Holidays:

Monday 1 May 2023	Early May Bank Holiday
Monday 8 May 2023	Bank Holiday for the Coronation of King Charles III
Monday 29 May 2023	Spring Bank Holiday
Monday 28 August 2023	August Bank Holiday
Monday 25 December 2023	Christmas Day
Tuesday 26 December 2023	Boxing Day
Monday 1 January 2024	New Year's Day
Friday 29 March 2024	Good Friday
Monday 1 April 2024	Easter Monday
Monday 6 May 2024	Early May Bank Holiday
Monday 27 May 2024	Spring Bank Holiday