

# Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee



<b>Title</b>	<b>Agenda</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Thursday 1 June 2023</b>
<b>Time</b>	<b>5.00 pm</b>
<b>Venue</b>	<b>Conference Chamber West Suffolk House</b> Western Way Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 3YU
<b>Full Members (12)</b>	<p><b>Chair</b> To be appointed at Annual Council</p> <p><b>Vice Chair</b> on 23 May 2023</p> <p>Membership of the Committee to be appointed by Group Leaders following Annual Council.</p> <p><b>Conservative Group (5)</b></p> <p><b>Independents (4)</b></p> <p><b>Progressive Alliance Grouping (3)</b></p>
<b>Substitutes</b>	<p><b>Conservative Group (2)</b></p> <p><b>Independents (2)</b></p> <p><b>Progressive Alliance Grouping (2)</b></p>
<b>By invitation</b>	<b>Portfolio Holder(s) with responsibility for Resources and Performance:</b> (To be appointed at Annual Council on 23 May 2023)
<b>Interests – declaration and restriction on participation</b>	Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest not entered in the Authority's register or other registerable 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.
<b>Quorum</b>	Six Members
<b>Committee administrator</b>	<p><b>Christine Brain</b></p> <p>Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny)</p> <p><b>Telephone</b> 01638 719729</p> <p><b>Email</b> <a href="mailto:democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk">democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a></p>

<b>Venue</b>	<b>Conference Chamber</b> <b>West Suffolk House</b> Western Way, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 3YU
<b>Contact information</b>	Telephone: 01638 719729 Email: <a href="mailto:democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk">democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk">www.westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>
<b>Access to agenda and reports before the meeting</b>	The agenda and reports will be available to view at least five clear days before the meeting on our website.
<b>Attendance at meetings</b>	<p>This meeting is being held in person in order to comply with the Local Government Act 1972.</p> <p>Measures have been applied to ensure the health and safety for all persons present at meetings.</p> <p>We may also be required to restrict the number of members of the public able to attend in accordance with the room capacity.</p> <p>If you consider it necessary for you to attend, please let Democratic Services know in advance of the meeting so they can endeavour to accommodate you and advise you of the necessary health and safety precautions that apply to the meeting. For further information about the venue, please visit <a href="http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/contact-us-cfm">http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/contact-us-cfm</a></p>
<b>Public participation</b>	<p>Members of the public who live or work in the district are welcome to speak and may ask one question or make a statement of not more than three minutes duration relating to items to be discussed in Part 1 of the agenda only.</p> <p>If a question is asked and answered within three minutes, the person who asked the question may ask a supplementary question that arises from the reply.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>In accordance with government guidance, the Council has developed general protocols on operating buildings safety in order to reduce the risk of the spread of coronavirus.</p> <p><b>We would therefore strongly 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.</b></p>

	There is an overall time limit of 15 minutes for public speaking, which may be extended at the Chair's discretion.
<b>Accessibility</b>	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.
<b>Recording of meetings</b>	<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>
<b>Personal Information</b>	<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:</p> <p><a href="https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Data_and_information/howweuseinformation.cfm">https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Data_and_information/howweuseinformation.cfm</a> or call Customer Services: 01284 763233 and ask to speak to the Information Governance Officer.</p>

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# Agenda

## Procedural matters

### 1. Substitutes

Any member who is substituting for another member should so indicate, together with the name of the relevant absent member.

### 2. Apologies for absence

### 3. Minutes

1 - 16

To confirm the minutes of the meetings held on 26 January 2023 and 30 March 2023 (copies attached.)

### 4. Declarations of interest

Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest or other registerable interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, **no later than when that item is reached** and to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on the item.

## Part 1 – public

### 5. Public participation

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

In accordance with government guidance, the Council has developed general protocols on operating buildings safely in order to reduce the risk of the spread of coronavirus and will apply to members of the public registered to speak. **We would therefore strongly 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.**

There is an overall limit of 15 minutes for public speaking, which may be extended at the Chair's discretion.



<b>6.</b>	<b>2022 to 2023 Performance Report (Quarter 4)</b> Report number: <b>PAS/WS/23/007</b>	<b>17 - 108</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Internal Audit Annual Report (2022 to 2023) including results of external assessment of internal audit</b> Report number: <b>PAS/WS/23/008</b>	<b>109 - 156</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Outline Internal Audit Plan (2023 to 2024)</b> Report number: <b>PAS/WS/23/009</b>	<b>157 - 176</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Annual Report from the Health and Safety Sub-Committee</b> Report number: <b>PAS/WS/23/010</b>	<b>177 - 184</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Annual Appointments to the Financial Resilience Sub-Committee and the Health and Safety Sub-Committee (2023 to 2024)</b> Report number: <b>PAS/WS/23/011</b> (Report to follow)	
<b>11.</b>	<b>Work programme update 2023 to 2024</b> Report number: <b>PAS/WS/23/012</b>	<b>185 - 188</b>
<b>12.</b>	<b>Exclusion of the Press and Public</b> To consider whether the press and public should be excluded during the consideration of the following item because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the item, there would be disclosure to them of exempt categories or information as prescribed in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and indicated against each item and, in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	

## **Part 2 – exempt**

<b>13.</b>	<b>2022 to 2023 Performance Report (Quarter 4): Exempt Appendix F</b> <b>Exempt Appendix F</b> to Report number: <b>PAS/WS/23/007</b>  (This exempt appendix is to be considered in private under paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as it contains information relating to an individual and information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual).	<b>189 - 190</b>
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# Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee



**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee** held on **Thursday 26 January 2023** at **5.00 pm** in the **Conference Chamber, West Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU

Present      **Councillors**  
                 **Chair** Ian Houlder

John Augustine  
Nick Clarke  
James Lay  
Victor Lukaniuk

Andy Neal  
Robert Nobbs  
Cliff Waterman  
Phil Wittam

**In attendance**

Sarah Broughton, Cabinet Member for Resources and Property

**158. Substitutes**

No substitutions were declared.

**159. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Karen Richardson.

Councillor Peter Thompson was also unable to attend the meeting.

**160. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**161. Declarations of interest**

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

**162. Public participation**

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

**163. Delivering a Sustainable Medium-Term Budget**

At its meeting on 17 November 2022, report number PAS/WS/22/021 provided an updated position on the process and approach to setting the council's 2023 to 2024 budget and the principles and challenges faced in achieving this.

The Committee on 26 January 2023, received report number PAS/WS/23/001 which provided a further update on assumptions and anticipated savings and initiatives proposed or already delivered to date to deliver a sustainable and balanced budget for 2023 to 2024 and included details of the medium-term budget estimates. This would not only deliver services but also the strategic vision and priorities of the council whilst meeting future challenges. This robust approach would enable the authority to invest in initiatives to meet its goals around areas such as the environment and managing growth whilst helping increase the health and economic wellbeing of West Suffolk.

The proposed key budget assumptions and Table 1 were set out in Section 2 of the report.

The Committee was informed that the West Suffolk pension fund stood at 102% funded as at the end of March 2023. As a result of the triannual review the Council was in a position to reduce its contribution to the pension fund as an employer, with the pension fund still having a significant chance of being fully funded over the next three years.

The medium-term budget plans, beyond April 2024 were being prepared in the context of significant uncertainties around the current economic climate and Government policy. The council would continue to lobby Government over financial support and funding together with partners and other local authorities.

Overall, the budget position showed a balanced budget for the next two years.

The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee considered the report in detail and asked questions to which comprehensive responses were provided.

In particular discussions were held on the process carried out with staff to look at potential savings; the impact of capital investments; replenishing the general reserves fund which had been used for challenges such as Covid and the current cost of living crisis; the council's asset management plan; electric vehicle charging points and whether £80k for investment per year was sufficient; efficiency savings; income generated from Barley Homes and street lighting.

Detailed discussions were also held on the Western Way Development. In response to a question raised in relation to leisure and whether any research had been carried out on what residents wanted, officers advised that research had been done and in response to that the leisure element would have flexible space which could be adapted to trends and demands around leisure activity. In response to a question raised on electric vehicle charging points and whether £80k for investment per year was sufficient, officers stated there was some flexibility and would take advice from car parking colleagues if there was a need to increase funding due to demand.

Some members again raised the issue of street lighting and questioned whether the council was going to renew the street lighting contract. The Cabinet Member for Resources and Property informed the Committee that the Cabinet had already made its decision on street lighting, and the call-in

period had expired, and the decision was now being implemented. The agreed talks with town and parish councils and the County Council were underway where these had been requested, and the issue of which streetlights West Suffolk Council itself owned was going to be included in the wider review of our relationship with town and parish councils in 2023. Councillor Carol Bull had also sent all councillors a detailed briefing just before Christmas. Therefore, most members were very familiar with the details, and there was not much more that could be explained or said at this stage.

The Chair then thanked members for raising the issue of street lighting, which was also raised and discussed in detail at its last meeting on 17 November 2022. As per the minutes attached to the agenda, the Committee voted and recommended that Cabinet notes the concerns of some members of the committee on the matter of street lighting in the former Forest Heath area. This was raised with Cabinet on 6 December 2022 and previously at full Council and was being taken forward by Cabinet and for that reasons he was not keen to take too much time on this at tonight's meeting.

At the conclusion of the discussions, it was then proposed by Councillor John Augustine, seconded by Councillor Nick Clarke, and with the vote being 4 for, 4 against and 1 abstention, the Chair was called upon to make his casting vote.

Accordingly, it was resolved on the Chair's casting vote that it was:

#### **RECOMMENDED**

**That Cabinet include the proposals as detailed in Section 2 and Table 1 at Paragraph 3.4 of report number PAS/WS/23/001, in the 2023 to 2024 budget.**

[Councillor Andy Neal left the meeting at 6.05pm at the conclusion of this item].

#### **164. 2022 to 2023 Performance Report (Quarter 3)**

The Committee received Report number PAS/WS/23/002, which set out income recovery, Quarter 3 performance and the forecast 2022 to 2023 revenue and capital positions.

The performance management framework sought to give councillors, officers, partners, stakeholders and residents greater understanding of progress towards the achievements of the council's strategic priorities set out in the West Suffolk Council Strategic Framework 2020 to 2024. In addition, it also provided an insight into the delivery of the broad range of day-to-day services to the residents and businesses of West Suffolk. Effective use of performance management information supported transformation and enabled choice to be made about the use of resources.

Financial performance information and key performance indicators (KPIs) sat alongside other elements of the council's performance framework which could be viewed on the performance webpage.

The purpose of the evolution and development of the performance management framework was to ensure that performance information supplied to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Leadership Team clearly showed:

- Progress towards strategic goals
- Insight on initiatives which would ensure future progress
- Areas that require decisions and actions to keep on track to their goals
- Items with a significant level of risk associated with them
- Flexibility in approach allowing the escalation of performance successes and challenges
- The relationship between performance indicators and financial delivery.

Attached to the Quarter 3 performance and forecast year-end financial position for 2022 to 2023 were a number of appendices as follows:

- Appendix A: Key Performance Indicator Dashboards
- Appendix B: Income and expenditure report
- Appendix C: Capital programme
- Appendix D: Earmarked reserves
- Appendix E: Strategic risk register (A revised risk register was circulated at the meeting and available on the council's website)
- Exempt Appendix F: Aged debt over 90 days

Appendices G to J provided information on four queries raised at the Committee's meeting on 17 November 2022, which officers committed to providing further details:

- Appendix G: Performance monitoring mechanisms for grass cutting
- Appendix H: Oversight of registered providers of housing
- Appendix I: The role of the council with regard to Houses in Multiple Occupation and issues such as hot-bedding
- Appendix J: Performance monitoring of housing options and homelessness.

The Chief Executive advised that in response to a request from the Committee at its last meeting to review the colours used in the dashboard to increase the contrast, a mocked-up slide was presented at slide 9 for the Committee's feedback. Also, further information on a number of topics at its last meeting were attached as additional appendices. He then drew the Committee's attention to a number of KPI's as follows:

- Fuel and gas use:
  - Reduced fuel usage by grounds maintenance in December 2022 and increased gas usage, both of which were due to the cold weather.
- Car parking:
  - Car parking events were 1.3 per cent higher in December 2022 compared to December 2021, but was still 16 per cent down on December 2019. Officers were keeping this indicator under review.

- Universal Credit claimants:
    - Officers were seeing a steady rise through 2022 to 2023. Claims were not at the same levels as in January 2021 which was due to Covid lockdown.
  - Housing and homelessness:
    - Appendix H provided details on housing and homelessness KPIs, and performance management of Registered Providers.
  - Houses in Multiple Occupation:
    - Appendix I provided details on HMOs.
  - Governance:
    - The annual canvass had been completed at a rate of 98.47 per cent, compared to 98.44 per cent last year.
  - Toggam:
    - Toggam solar farm had generated 9 per cent more energy than was originally forecast.
  - Recycling:
    - The council had seen a reduction in the percentage of household waste being recycled and composted. Of the 3,043 tonnes reduction in recycling and composting:
      - Approximately 600 tonnes was due to a reduction in dry recycling; and
      - The remainder was due to a reduction in garden waste composting.
- The latest reduction was likely due to a combination of a slight reduction in garden waste subscribers, and the spell of extremely hot weather during the summer which slowed organic growth and ensured the waste was drier than normal.
- Grass cutting:
    - Appendix G provided details on grass cutting KPIs.

The Committee considered the report in detail and agreed that the colours in the mocked-up slide 9 were much clearer to read. Members asked a number of questions to which responses were provided. In particular discussions were held on bin collections; fly-tipping incidents compared to 2020 to 2021 and vacant shops.

Detailed discussions also took place on voter ID which was required for the first time at elections being held on 4 May 2023. Members were advised the Council had received funding from the new Burdens Fund to help with promoting voter ID. Information had recently been sent to all Councillors to promote voter ID with their parish councils. An update was due to be included in Members News on the Council's engagement plan; and a leaflet on voter ID was also going to be included with council tax billing. The voter ID would be promoted through the council's telephone number; social media pages; working with local partners and other local authorities and advertising

material was available from the Electoral Commission. In response, members suggested that voter ID could be promoted through the council's bin service and by Registered Providers using their repair/care services. It was also brought to officers' attention that there was an anomaly with the Oyster card as a form of identification which officers were not aware of and agreed to look into further.

In response to a question raised on dentistry, members advised that the Western Area Alliance was starting to focus on some of the key health issues, which included dentistry and would ask for an update on dentistry.

The Committee did not raise any specific issues in relation to the financial section of the report.

At the conclusion of the discussions the Committee **noted** the forecast 2022 to 2023 revenue and capital positions and the Quarter 3 performance update.

#### 165. **Treasury Management Report (December 2022)**

The Committee received report number FRS/WS/23/001, which had been considered by the Financial Resilience Sub-Committee on 16 January 2023. The Service Manager (Finance and Performance) provided a verbal update on the Sub-Committee's consideration of the report, which provided a summary of investment activity for the first nine months of the 2022 to 2023 financial year.

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 per cent target interest rate of return on investments.

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.

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 PWLB £10m 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.

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.

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 £4m.



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 Strategy allows the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Property and the Director of Resources and Property to consult and exercise powers for paying off the loan early. The Council had cash available at the present time to repay the loan and sought the Committee's support in doing this.

The Committee considered the report and in particular discussed the Barclay's loan, which the Committee supported repaying back early.

It was then proposed by Councillor John Auguste, seconded by Councillor Victor Lukaniuk, and with the vote being unanimous, it was:

**RECOMMENDED:**

**That subject to the approval of Council, the Treasury Management Report (December 2022) as contained in report number FRS/WS/23/001, be approved.**

**166. 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 required that, prior to the start of the financial year, the Council formally approved a Treasury Management Policy Statement and Investment Strategy setting out the Council's treasury management policy and strategy for the forthcoming year.

The proposed Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2023 to 2024 was attached as Appendix 1 to Report number: FRS/WS/23/002, along with the Treasury Management Code of Practice at Appendix 2, which was considered by the Financial Resilience Sub-Committee on 16 January 2023.

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.

The report also included additional supporting information on treasury advisors; borrowing strategy; investment strategy counterparty ratings and interest rate projections.

The Sub-Committee had scrutinised the report in detail and asked questions to which comprehensive responses were provided. In particular they discussed 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.

The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee considered the report and did not raise any issues.

It was then proposed by Councillor John Augustine, seconded by Councillor Ian Houlder and with the vote being unanimous, it was

## **RECOMMENDED**

### **That:**

- 1) Subject to the approval of Cabinet and Council, the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2023 to 2024, attached as Appendix 1 to Report number: FRS/WS/23/002, be approved.**
- 2) Subject to the approval of Cabinet and Council, the Treasury Management Code of Practice, attached as Appendix 2 to Report number: FRS/WS/23/002, be approved.**

### **167. Work programme update**

The Committee received report number: PAS/WS/23/003, which updated members on the current status of its rolling work programme of items for scrutiny during 2023 (Appendix 1).

The Committee was informed that its meeting on 8 March 2023 to consider the Statement of Accounts would need to be rescheduled. The Director would liaise with the Chair of Performance and Audit Scrutiny to identify a suitable date in April 2023. Ernst and Young had started some of its audit work on the Accounts but would not be able to complete all the work by the 8 March 2023 meeting.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the work programme update and its meeting on 8 March 2023 to be rescheduled to late March/April 2023.

### **168. Exclusion of press and public**

See Minute 169 below.

### **169. 2022 to 2023 Performance Report (Quarter 3): Exempt Appendix F: Aged Debt Over 90 Days Monitoring (paragraphs 1 and 2)**

The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee made no reference to Exempt Appendix F under report number PAS/WS/23/002, therefore, this item was not held in private session.

The meeting concluded at 6.58pm

**Signed by:**

**Chair**

# Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee** held on **Thursday 30 March 2023** at **5.00 pm** in the **Conference Room, Mildenhall Hub**, Sheldrick Way, Mildenhall, IP28 7JX

Present

**Councillors**

**Chair** Ian Houlder

**Vice Chair** Karen Richardson

Nick Clarke

James Lay

Victor Lukaniuk

Robert Nobbs

Andy Neal

Cliff Waterman

Phil Wittam

**Substitutes attending for a full member**

Marion Rushbrook

**In attendance**

Sarah Broughton, Cabinet Member for Resources and Property

Mark Russell, Ernst and Young (External Auditors)

**170. Substitutes**

The following substitution was declared:

Councillor Marion Rushbrook substituting for Councillor John Augustine.

**171. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Augustine and Peter Thompson.

**172. Declarations of interest**

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

**173. Public participation**

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

**174. Ernst and Young - 2021 to 2022 Annual Results Report to those Charged with Governance**

The Committee received Report number PAS/WS/23/004, which presented the results from Ernst and Young's (EY) audit of the 2021 to 2022 financial statements for West Suffolk Council. The report set out issues they were required to report on to those charged with governance. EY were also required to report on the results of the work undertaken to assess the council's arrangements to secure value for money (VM) in the use of resources.

The council's unaudited 2021 to 2022 Statement of Accounts, signed by the Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) on 28 June 2022, had been updated to reflect any adjustments recommended by EY over this period as a result of their audit work. Members were informed that these adjustments did not affect the council's overall financial position and were in most cases merely presentational changes.

At the time of writing the report, it was not anticipated that there would be any significant issues with the accounts, but there were still a number of audit procedures to be concluded.

A copy of the Audit Results Report dated March 2023 was attached at Appendix A. An updated Addendum to Appendix A dated 28 March 2023 was presented to the Committee by Mark Russell (EY Partner).

Attached at Appendix B to the report was West Suffolk Council's Letter of Representation, on behalf of the Council in accordance with the audit of the financial statements for West Suffolk Council for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Mark Russell presented the report and referred the Committee to the Addendum A (28 March 2023 – pages 1 to 16) and updated members on further progress made in the audit process as follows:

- Page 5:
  - Management Override – Audit procedures substantially completed with no issues found to date.
  - Revenue expenditure – Audit procedures substantially completed.
- Page 6:
  - Valuation of the Mildenhall Hub – It had been determined the valuation of the Hub fell within a reasonable range and no issues raised.
  - Valuation of Solar Farm – Work would be concluded by 31 March 2023. There were no findings from the audit procedure to date.
  - Infrastructure assets – Work had concluded. The Council had followed the CIPFA Code and had not applied the statutory instrument concerning infrastructure assets.

- Other valuations - Audit procures were substantially completed. Currently working through the final responses to EY's audit queries concerning asset valuations.
- Page 7:
  - Group account consolidation – EY had not received a response to date on group instructions issued to the auditor for Barley Homes Ltd
  - Pensions liability valuations – A £2.1m difference had been identified due to the timing of the IAS19 report and the recent triannual valuation which included the pension position as at 31 March 2022. EY were awaiting an updated IAS19 report to assess the impact on the council's pension liability.
- Page 8:
  - Two misstatements had been identified during the course of the audit, which had been corrected. EY advised these had no overall impact on the council's total unusable reserves.
- Page 10:
  - Value for Money – Completed with no matters to report.
- Page 11:
  - Appendix A (status of the audit) - Significant progress had been made with the audit process since the beginning of March 2023

The Committee scrutinised the report and asked questions to which Mark Russell provided comprehensive responses. In particular discussions were held on the pension liability valuation and the £2.1m difference, identifying fraud, the valuation of the solar farm; the number of man hours taken to carry out an audit compared to previous years.

The Committee was deeply frustrated and disappointed in the delay in the audit process, considering the Chief Finance Officer had signed the unaudited accounts on 28 June 2022 and EY were now auditing those accounts. Members needed assurances about delegating to the Chief Finance Officer and the Chair of the Committee in signing off the accounts once the audit was fully completed.

Some members of the Committee also felt the EY audit process was rushed in only taking two months on the audit and was expected to approve the accounts and delegated authority when the audit was only 70 percent completed.

In response Mark Russell explained that work on the auditing the accounts started in early February 2023, with 70 per cent of the audit work now completed. He explained that the position of audit in the public was not in a good position. All audit firms were struggling. The number of man hours had increased by 60 per cent. He further explained that EY did not sacrifice its audits and did not rush to complete them. West Suffolk was in a better position than other councils with their audits.

In response to a question raised on what the consequences were if the Committee deferred the report until the audit was completed, the Chief Finance Officer advised that there were no consequences from the government's perspective. If the report was deferred, it would have to come back to a future meeting of the Committee to be signed off.

The Chief Finance Officer explained that in previous years the Committee would typically meet in September with the audit being substantially completed. What the Committee was being asked to approve this evening was therefore not out of sync from previous years. She reassured the Committee that the report would not have been brought to the Committee if she was not confident in what had been completed and being presented this evening. If the delegation was approved, the Chief Finance Officer reassured the Committee that she would not sign the accounts unless she and the Chair were comfortable with the final outcome of the audit.

EY had reviewed the accounts prior to February 2023. EY reassured members of the committee that the quality of the audit was not compromised. Therefore, the integrity of the audit should not be an issue for the Committee. However, the Chief Finance officer did share in the Committees views in its frustration around the timing of the audit.

After hearing from EY Councillor Nick Clarke stated he felt the audit was reassuring and he had no problem in delegating final sign off to the Chief Financial Officer and Chair of Performance and Audit Committee. However, he wanted an assurance from EY about their output and timing of the audit and that EY needed to be held formally to account and suggested an additional recommendation highlighting the Committee's frustration to the Public Sector Audits Appointments (PSAA) on the lateness of the EY Audit.

At the conclusion of the debate, the Committee:

- 1) **Noted** that the work in respect of the audit opinion on the financial statements of West Suffolk Council for 2021 to 2022 were ongoing.
- 2) **Noted** that the external auditors had no matters to report on the council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources issued by the Auditor (Appendix A and Addendum).

The Committee then voted on the recommendations in turn, as follows:

Councillor Marion Rushbrook moved the recommendation, this was duly seconded by Councillor Robert Nobbs, and with the vote being 5 for, 4 against and 1 abstention, it was:

**RESOLVED:**

That the Letter of Representation on behalf of West Suffolk Council (Appendix B) attached to Report number PAS/WS/23/004, be **approved**, before the Ernst and Young Partner issues his opinion and conclusion.

Councillor Marion Rushbrook moved the recommendation, this was duly seconded by Councillor Nick Clarke, and with the vote being 6 for, 4 against, it was:

**RESOLVED:**

That the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee be given **delegated authority** to conclude the signing of the 2021 to 2022 accounts.

Councillor Nick Clarke moved the recommendation, this was duly seconded by Councillor James Lay, and with the vote being unanimous, it was:

**RECOMMENDED:**

That Council be instructed to highlight to the Public Sector Audits Appointments (PSAA) the frustration and disappointment of the lateness of the Ernst and Young (EY) Audit for 2021 to 2022, and to seek assurance from EY on the timing of future audits.

**175. West Suffolk Annual Governance Statement 2021 to 2022**

The Committee received Report number PAS/WS/23/005, which sought members approval of the draft West Suffolk Annual Governance Statement for 2021 to 2022, attached at Appendix A.

The Annual Governance Statement provided stakeholders with assurance that the council had operated within the law and that they had met the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. The Annual Governance Statement accompanied the Statement of Accounts.

The draft Annual Governance Statement had been prepared by the Officer Governance Group.

The Director (Resources and Property) drew members attention to section 6 of Appendix A and advised that there were no other significant governance issues to disclose.

The Committee considered the draft West Suffolk Annual Governance Statement for 2020 to 2021 and did not raise any governance issues.

Councillor Cliff Waterman then moved the recommendation, this was duly seconded by Councillor Robert Nobbs, and with the vote being unanimous, it was:

**RESOLVED**

That the draft West Suffolk Annual Governance Statement 2021 to 2022, attached as Appendix A to Report number PAS/WS/23/005 be approved for signing by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive.

## 176. **2021 to 2022 Statement of Accounts**

The Committee received Report number PAS/WS/23/006, which sought members approval of the 2021 to 2022 Statement of Accounts for West Suffolk Council (Appendix A), in accordance with powers delegated to it under the Council's constitution.

It was reported that the statutory requirements for the report and approval of the Council's annual financial statements were set out in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. The regulations require the council to submit draft accounts to its external auditors, currently Ernst and Young (EY) by 31 May each year, with member scrutiny and approval of the accounts required once the audit had been concluded by 31 July each year. Due to Covid-19 and in response to a consultation exercise carried out by it, the government had issued regulations – the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2021, to amend these deadlines in relation to the 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022 accounts. The revised dates were 1 August for the draft accounts and 30 November for final approval and publication.

Due to the planned phased approach to delivering the 2021 to 2022 audits across Suffolk, the external audit of the draft accounts for West Suffolk did not begin until mid-February 2023 and it was therefore not possible to complete the audit and publish the accounts by the end of November 2022 in line with the regulations. This situation was allowed for by Regulation 10, paragraph (2a) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

The outcome of EY's review of the accounts was provided in the Annual Results Report, which were included on the Committee's agenda (PAS/WS/23/004 – Appendix A and the Updated Addendum), along with a verbal update by EY giving their current position as of this evening (30 March 2023).

The attached Statement of Accounts (Appendix A) had been amended, as appropriate, to take on board issues raised by the audit process up to the date of distribution.

The covering report summarised financial highlights in 2021 to 2022; revenue expenditure; capital expenditure; usable reserves; pension fund; annual governance statement and payments to councillors.

The Director (Resources and Property) wished to thank the council's finance team for its work in pulling the 2021 to 2022 accounts together, as it had been a challenging time in completing this audit alongside finalising the council's budget for 2023 to 2024 and closing down the 2022 to 2023 statement of accounts at the same time.

The Director (Resources and Property) then drew the Committee's attention to the balance sheet and explained that overall, the long-term assets of West Suffolk.

The Committee scrutinised the draft accounts and asked questions to which responses were provided.



In response to a question raised asking Brandon Country Park was not included in the list of venues on page 132 of the Statement of Accounts, officers advised that Brandon Country Park was owned by West Suffolk Council and was therefore not classed as an external/outside body.

In response to a question raised on how Brandon Country Park was performing financially, officers agreed to provide a written response.

At the conclusion of the discussions, the Committee voted on the recommendations in turn, as follows:

Councillor Nick Clarke moved the first recommendation, this was duly seconded by Councillor Marion Rushbrook, and with the vote being unanimous, it was:

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee approves the 2021 to 2022 Statement of Accounts for West Suffolk Council (Appendix A) attached to Report number PAS/WS/23/006, in accordance with powers delegated to it under the council's constitution.

Councillor Karen Richardson moved the second recommendation, this was duly seconded by Councillor Marion Rushbrook, and with the vote being unanimous, it was:

**RESOLVED:**

That the Chair of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee signs the certification of the 2021 to 2022 Statement of Accounts on behalf of the Committee.

Councillor Nick Clarke moved the third recommendation, this was duly seconded by Councillor James Lay, and with the vote being 6 for and 4 against, it was:

**RESOLVED:**

That the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources and Property, be given delegated authority to make any changes that may be required up to the date of publication.

The meeting concluded at 6.40pm

**Signed by:**

**Chair**

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# 2022 to 2023 Performance report Quarter 4

<b>Report number:</b>	<b>PAS/WS/23/007</b>	
<b>Report to and date(s):</b>	<b>Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee</b>	1 June 2023
<b>Cabinet member:</b>	To be confirmed at Annual Council on 23 May 2023	
<b>Lead officer:</b>	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) Tel: 01638 719245 Email: <a href="mailto:rachael.mann@westsuffolk.gov.uk">rachael.mann@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	

**Decisions Plan:** This item is not required to be included in the Decisions Plan

**Wards impacted:** All wards

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee:

- 1. Notes the year end 2022 to 2023 revenue and capital positions as detailed in the report and appendices, and forward any relevant issues or comments to Cabinet for consideration.**

## 1. Context to this report

- 1.1 The Council's performance management framework seeks to give councillors, officers, partners, stakeholders and residents greater understanding of progress towards achieving the council's strategic priorities set out in the [West Suffolk Council Strategic Framework 2020-2024](#). In addition, it also gives an insight into the delivery of the broad range of day-to-day services to the residents and businesses of West Suffolk. Effective use of performance management information can support transformation and enable choices to be made about the use of resources.
- 1.2 This paper is part of that process. Financial performance information (monitoring against the approved budget with appropriate comment on any change) and key performance indicators sit alongside other elements of the council's performance framework that can be viewed on the [performance webpage](#).
- 1.3 The purpose of the performance management framework is to ensure that performance information supplied to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Leadership Team clearly shows:
- progress towards strategic goals
  - insight on initiatives that will ensure future progress
  - areas that require decisions and actions to keep on track to their goals
  - items with a significant level of risk associated with them
  - flexibility in approach allowing the escalation of performance successes and challenges
  - the relationship between performance indicators and financial delivery.

The performance management framework naturally develops and evolves over time to reflect the challenges and aims the council is facing and metrics can be changed or added to reflect this.

- 1.4 This report includes the full year end (1 April to 31 March) financial position for West Suffolk Council, prior to review by external audit. The budget against which the actual variances are measured against was set in February 2022. The majority of these variances have existed for a number of months and have therefore been reported previously to this Committee. Previous reports that can be found here:  
[Q1 Performance Report - 2022 to 2023](#)  
[Q2 Performance Report - 2022 to 2023](#)  
[Q3 Performance Report - 2022 to 2023](#)
- 1.5 Where significant and ongoing variances have arisen and been reported during this financial year, where possible, these have been reflected in the budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2023 onwards, including in the current year 2023 to 2024 budget that this committee will monitor during the course of the year. [Medium Term Financial Plan](#)

### **Income recovery**

1.6 Government requires councils to raise income to deliver services. Over 70 per cent of West Suffolks Council budget is funded locally. Like other authorities and public services across the country the COVID-19 outbreak had a significant impact on the council's financial position during the financial years 2020 to 2022 and this impact has continued in some but not all areas in the year 2022 to 2023. The 2022 to 2023 budget approved in February 2022 was set assuming all income streams would recover to pre-COVID levels but, recognising that recovery may not be immediately in some services, allowed for an overall £0.475 million income loss provision centrally (in reserve) to manage this.

1.7 Whilst West Suffolk continues to recover its services and income streams since the pandemic and the national and local lockdowns, the effects in some areas are likely to be felt for years to come. In addition, the cost-of-living crisis, which the Ukraine War has exacerbated, as well as increased inflation is not only impacting our communities and businesses but also adversely putting pressure on the council's budgets too.

1.8 All these elements, as well as national public behavioural changes in travel, shopping and working created by these issues, have had an adverse impact on businesses, retail and public services nationally.

1.9 Consequently, income generation for public services across the UK have been severely impacted by a combination of all these challenges. West Suffolk Council is not alone in continuing to face these issues, although there are good signs of recovery by services and areas – some stronger than others.

1.10 This includes income from leisure and cultural events, trade waste and our garden waste service which have recovered well during the year 2022 to 2023. In addition, other services are recovering such as car parks and markets however as shown in the 2022 to 2023 income and expenditure outturn at Appendix B recovery of these two areas in particular where not back to pre-COVID levels (as the budgets assumed). The data collected during the year 2022 to 2023 helped informed a revised income budget level for these two areas in the 2023 to 2024 budget.

1.11 Performance of the council's income streams will form part of in-year monitoring and will help inform our ongoing budget setting processes as we continue to understand if these behavioural changes are likely to become more permanent. The council is also looking at other similar services and authorities across the United Kingdom.

### **Impact of inflation and wider economic conditions**

1.12 As described, in addition to the ongoing effects of income recovery, other global economic pressures are having a major impact on the council's finances. The significant increases in energy and fuel prices, coupled with

the inflationary impact on commodities from the war in Ukraine, are all contributing towards the council's budgetary pressures, both in the current year 2022 to 2023 and across the medium term. A number of these have been taken into account for the 2023 to 2024 budget.

- 1.13 These wider economic pressures can be seen in the year end outturn position for 2022 to 2023, particularly in the overspends on vehicle fuel, utilities, materials and supplies and services. These pressures are not expected to improve in the short term and will be continually reviewed as part of the 2023 to 2024 budget monitoring as the year progresses and reported to this committee.
- 1.14 However, the global economic pressures, have had some positive impacts on the budget. The additional income set out in the appendices, has been helped by financial decisions previously made by the council in terms of investment. This includes increased interest rates on investments and improved dividend payment expected from Barley Homes, the council's wholly owned Housing Company. There are also improved recycling credits as a result of higher commodity prices with materials being better collected by our modern Operational Hub facilities.
- 1.15 In addition, higher utility costs mean renewable measures that the council has invested in, such as Toggam Solar Farm, solar panels on buildings and battery charges either brings a higher income or reduced costs. In addition, schemes such as solar for business, that the council runs not only has brought an income for the authority but has helped businesses keep bills down and impact on the environment when they are also facing higher utility costs.
- 1.16 The appendices for this report include the effects of the local government pay award which was agreed on 1 November 2022. A pay rise of £1,925 per annum on all pay scales was agreed, effective from 1 April 2022. The financial impact of this on this financial year is a cost increase of around £1.3 million over which assumed in the approved budget set in February 2022. This impact has been managed significantly within the overall employment costs for the council through in year vacancy management.

## 2. Quarter 4 Performance

- 2.1 This report shows the quarter 4 performance and year-end financial position for West Suffolk for 2022 to 2023.
- 2.2 The attached appendices detail the performance as follows:

**Appendix A: Key performance indicators (KPI) dashboards.** These dashboards are also available in an interactive online format which can be viewed at the link below. They give performance information about a wide range of the council's business areas, grouped by Portfolio Holder.

[Appendix A: KPI Dashboards](#)

### **Appendix B: Income and expenditure report**

This appendix shows the forecast revenue outturn position across West Suffolk, analysed across the various categories of income and expenditure.

### **Appendices C to D: Other Financial performance**

These appendices contain the forecast financial outturn positions for the council in respect of capital and earmarked reserves.

### **Appendix E: Strategic Risk Register**

This appendix contains the revised West Suffolk Strategic Risk Register, further details are set out in section 7 of this report.

### **Exempt Appendix F: Aged debt over 90 days**

This appendix contains summary information regarding the current levels and types of outstanding debt over 90 days owed to the council. **This appendix is exempt as it contains details of some individual debtor balances in order to facilitate review by this committee.**

## **3. Performance summary**

- 3.1 Each of the dashboards at **Appendix A** contains commentary on the council's performance in quarter 4 of 2022 to 2023. These dashboards are also available in an interactive, online format at [Appendix A: KPI Dashboards](#)
- 3.2 At the meeting of this committee there will be further opportunity for discussion and questions around the trends and patterns that this quarter's data is showing.
- 3.3 These dashboards are designed to be interactive, which provides further insight and detail into the data and commentary. Therefore, members may find it more useful to use the interactive online dashboards instead of the PDF version supplied. In particular, the full commentary can be viewed on the online versions, whereas this is not possible through the PDFs.

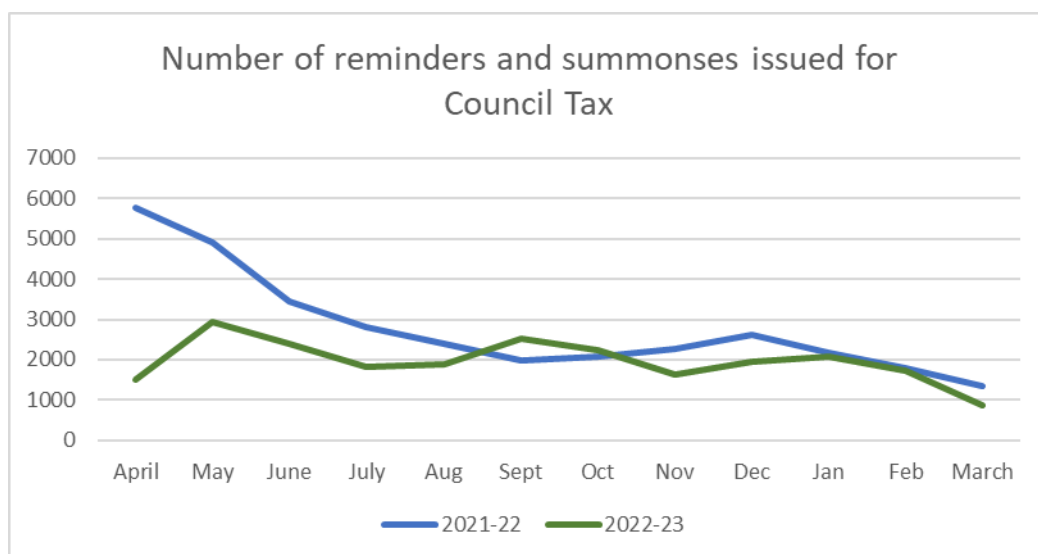
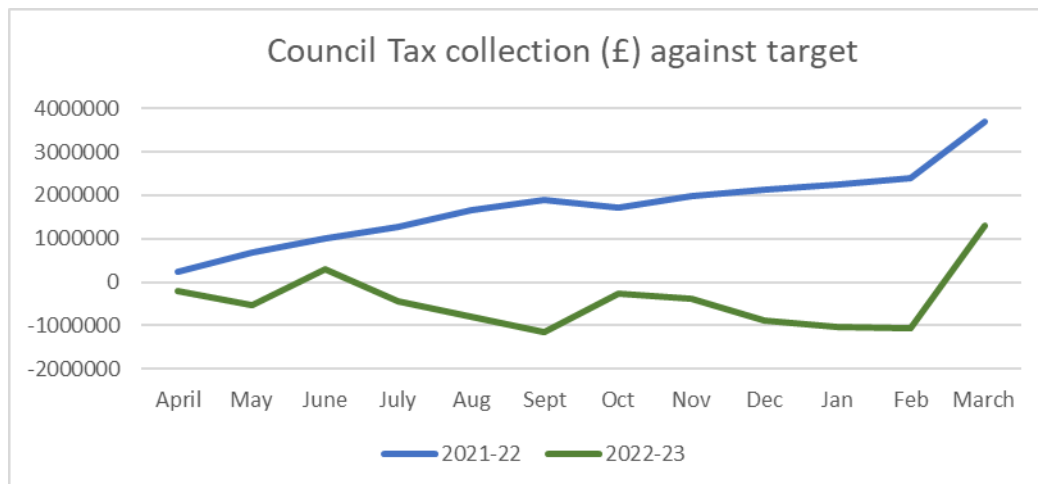
### **Monitoring the impact of the cost of living on West Suffolk residents.**

- 3.4 To monitor the impact of the cost of living on West Suffolk residents, we have collected data on key revenues and benefits indicators to compare the position in 2021 to 2022 and 2022 to 2023. The following data can be used to monitor the impact of the increased cost of living on residents' behaviours around payment of Council Tax and applications for benefits. The

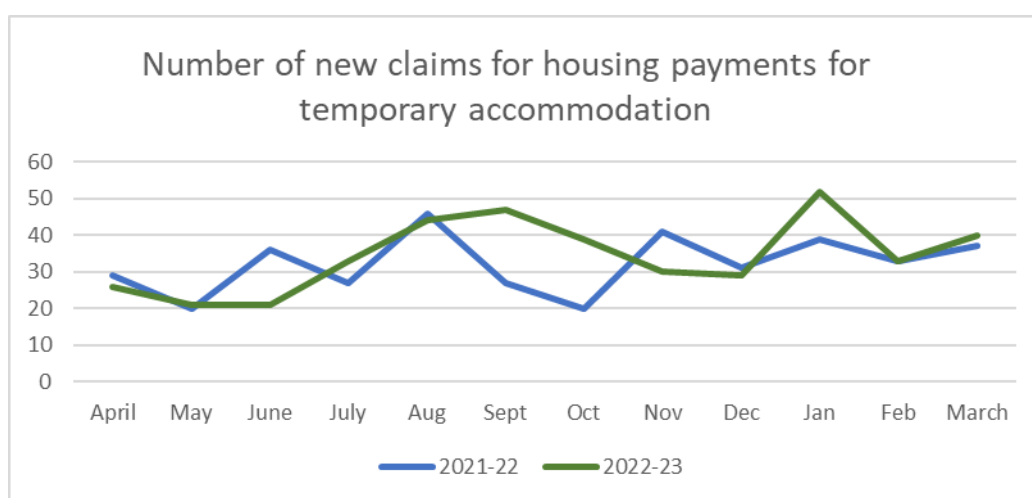
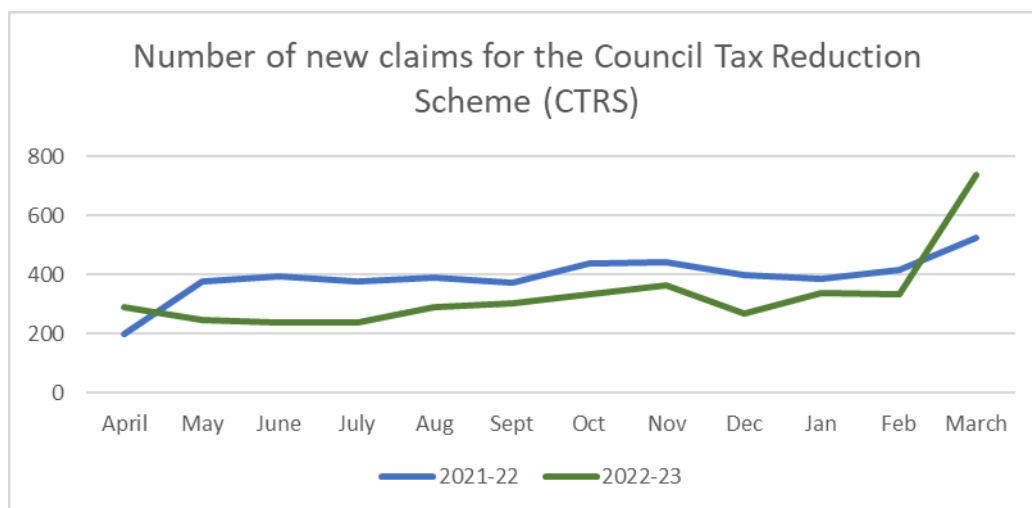
graphs below compare the position in 2021 to 2022 and 2022 to 2023. In due course, these indicators will be added to the main KPI dashboards.

3.5 It is important to note that Energy Rebate payments (where allocated to a resident's council tax account) probably had an impact of the Council Tax collection graph (first chart below), limiting its usefulness as a cost-of-living comparison at this stage. For example:

- Payments commenced in June (main scheme) and then there was a further impact later in the year (October time) for discretionary payments.
- People possibly didn't pay in April or May as they were expecting a rebate to their account, and this has carried on throughout the year.
- ARP believe that the cost-of-living crisis probably had an impact in December or January.
- Pre-pays increase collection in March.
- Also, recovery was reduced due to energy rebates and phased in again with reminders delayed until August and summonses until October.







### **Waste performance – follow up to Quarter 3 PASC discussion**

- 3.6 At the meeting of Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on 26 January 2023, a member of the committee asked officers to investigate the reason behind performance dips and peaks regarding the percentage of household bins successfully collected KPI. Please find the Quarter 3 PASC/Cabinet Planning dashboards [here](#). Although it was acknowledged by councillors that the performance dips in discussion are small, it sparked interest in the reasons behind these variations, and the following paragraphs explain the reason for the trends.
- 3.7 Every month, West Suffolk Council empties approximately 420,000 bins, organised around 95 weekly bin collection rounds (approximately 380 collection rounds per month).
- 3.8 Looking at the bins not emptied from April 2022 to March 2023, evidenced in the Q4 Performance dashboards, this averages less than one bin not emptied per collection round (based on 1,100 households) over the month.

Clearly, any dip in performance can look significant on the graph if the performance outturn in the month on either side is good.

### Reasons behind performance dips and peaks

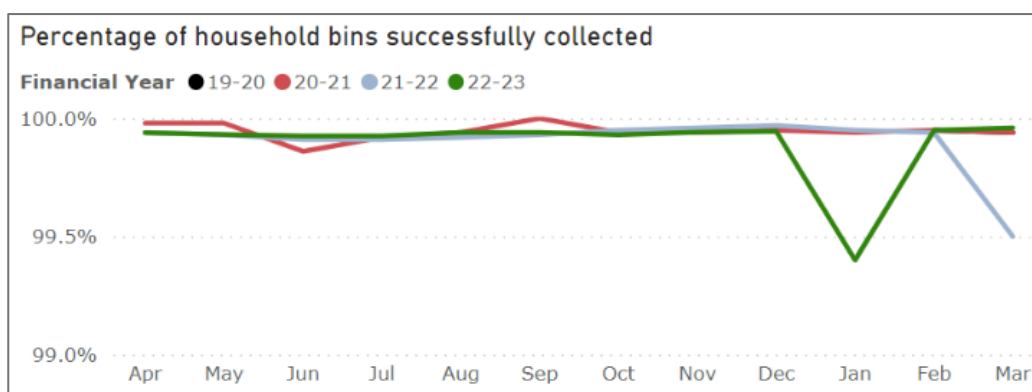
3.9 As the number of missed bins is not evenly spread across all rounds, some rounds may experience more missed bins than others. This can be caused by several reasons; for example, during various time periods last year, we were prone to staff shortages, particularly HGV drivers, and our contingency included the use of agency staff and staff redeployed from other services, for example, street cleansing. For crew working on unfamiliar rounds or temporary roles, they may miss bins during the collection.

3.10 It is important to consider the impact of external factors such as persistent access problems for the vehicles and the crew.

### 3.11 Error in the data

Although it appears we have performance dips in May and July 2022 in the percentage of household bins successfully collections in the December Quarter 3 Performance dashboards, these figures have been readjusted to match the updated and correct figures.

3.12 There was an issue with the formula used in the calculation when calculating the figures in the Excel spreadsheet used to generate this data. The visual on the Performance dashboard is now rectified to reflect the trend evidenced in the graph with the only performance dip of 0.55 per cent from 99.95 per cent in December 2022 to 99.40 per cent in January 2023. With the reasons explained above, we can assume that this dip is attributed to the bank holidays and staff leave during the Christmas period.



### Consideration and next steps

3.13 Given the context behind the small performance dips on this KPI, it is clear that we are dealing with very fine margins which demonstrates the insignificance of the variation in the performance graph.

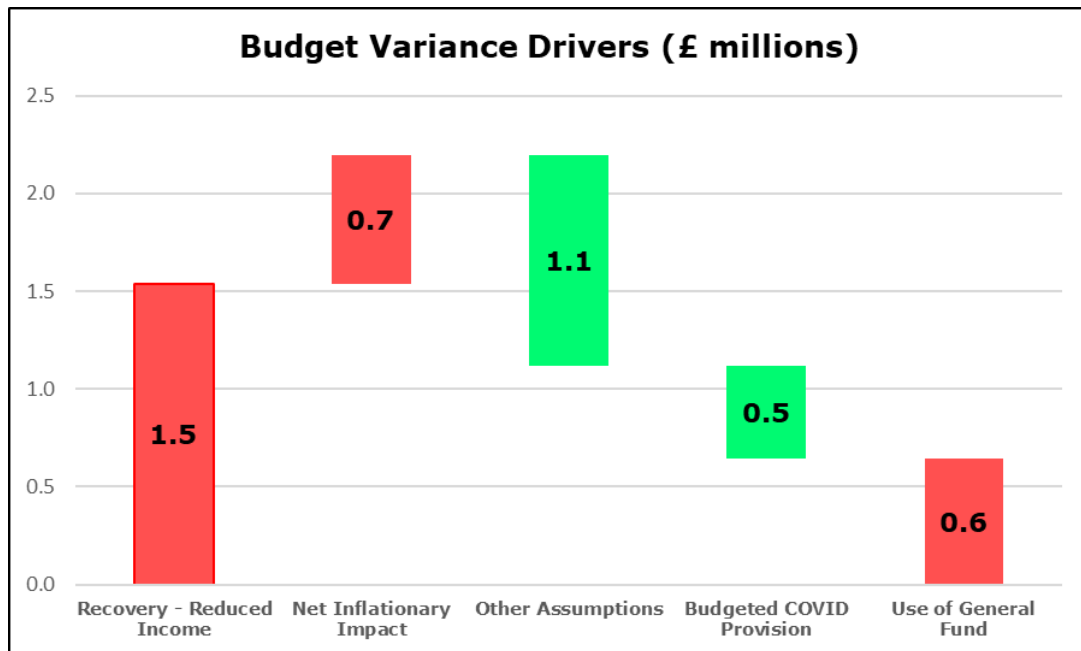
- 3.14 Regarding the data error, mechanisms have been put in place by the Performance and Waste Team to ensure that we input the correct formulas and alert officers to any errors in historical data as soon as possible.

#### **Access to dentists**

- 3.15 At the last meeting of Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee, an update was requested on access to dentistry services for West Suffolk residents. Officers are working with health colleagues to understand what data are available and these will be presented to a future meeting of the committee.

### **4. Financial outturn summary**

- 4.1 For the national and global impacts and challenges set out earlier in this report the year end outturn position as at quarter 4 shows a **deficit of £0.6 million (which is just over 1% of total income (excluding benefits))**, made up of a number of variances to budget. The council has been forecasting a deficit all year, with this year-end position being a significant improvement on the quarter 3 estimated outturn of a £1.4 million deficit.
- 4.2 At 1 April 2022 the council's General Fund (its contingency reserve which represents around 25 per cent of the net budget) balance stood at £6.045 million. This is money put aside by the council as part of its prudent financial planning to help manage unforeseen or unprecedented issues that impact on the authority. Assuming the current forecast year end position (including the £0.475 million COVID-19 provision which is also to be met from the General Fund), this would be reduced to a balance of £5 million. This is at the agreed £5 million policy level, and as such will need to be closely monitored in the council's 2023 to 2024 budget plans going forward.
- 4.3 To mitigate any further unexpected use of the General Fund, officers continue to work on income recovery plans, as well as looking at potential cost saving opportunities and efficiencies while continuing to deliver high quality services and the strategic priorities of the authority.
- 4.4 As laid out in section one the key variances to budget that drive the £0.6 million shortfall, funded by the council's General Fund, are driven by the slower recovery of income streams post COVID-19 and affected by the national and international challenges largely beyond the authority's control such as inflation pressures. This also includes the impact on the cost base as a result of higher energy prices and general inflation. The relative impacts leading to the most adverse end of the range of forecast results are shown in the graph below – red representing pressures and green representing positive impacts.



- 4.5 The slower income recovery includes those services, as described earlier which are recovering and generating income but understandably, due to the complex range of challenges and changes in behaviour did not reach budgeted levels.
- 4.6 The inflationary pressures are causing significant rises in utility costs (£0.4 million) for the council's properties and fuel costs (£0.3 million) for the vehicle fleet.
- 4.7 These adverse impacts are partially offset by 'other assumptions' being favourable income from higher interest receivable on investments and salary savings from current vacant posts.

### Capital programme

- 4.8 The council is spending £13.4 million of its capital budget of £59.5 million for 2022 to 2023, with proposed carry forwards of £45.8 million as a result of project timings, mainly the timing of investment of the 'Investing in our Growth' fund projects such as the Innovation units at Suffolk Business Park, use of the Barley Homes loan facility and the Western Way Development project in Bury St Edmunds. This in turn provides cash balances that are being reinvested for interest returns. Further detail by individual capital project can be found in **appendix C**.

### Earmarked reserves

- 4.9 The council's balance on earmarked revenue reserves at the end of the financial year is **£42.0 million**, against a budgeted closing balance of **£35.9 million**. £5.3million of this variance relates to timing of expenditure into the next financial year related to capital programme timings as detailed

below. This net under-utilisation is primarily due to additional contributions to the capital project financing reserve, resulting from reduced borrowing and minimum revenue provision due to project timings (£1.6 million), additional contributions to the Invest to Save reserve in respect of the one off pension scheme contribution adjustment (£0.6 million) and timing of replacements in both the vehicle, plant and equipment reserve (£0.8 million) and the building repairs reserve (£1.3 million), linked again to the capital programme, plus a number of smaller variances.

- 4.10 Earmarked reserves are just that – they are earmarked for specific purposes, including for investment in the renewals of our waste fleet vehicles programme and investment in our operational and commercial properties. Details of the individual reserve balances and movements during the year can be found in **appendix D**. It should be noted that these are the reserve balances as they stand at the end of 2022 to 2023, however these reserves are earmarked for specific purposes across the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and should be viewed in the longer term context.

[COU.WS.23.003 Attachment D Appendix 3 - Earmarked Revenue Reserves.pdf \(westsuffolk.gov.uk\)](#)

## 5. **Alternative options**

- 5.1 In order for the council to be able to meet its strategic priorities it is essential that sufficient and appropriate financial resources are available. The use of the council's general fund balance is being utilised to manage the residual in-year net financial pressures being experienced, after in-year savings and initiatives such as vacancy management have taken place. The 2023 to 2024 budget was prepared on the basis of no further calls from the general fund balance, alongside its return to the agreed £5 million policy level.

## 6. **Consultation and engagement**

- 6.1 This report and the figures and commentary therein have been compiled by the Finance team in consultation with the relevant budget holders, services and Leadership Team.
- 6.2 The key performance indicator reporting arrangements have been developed through extensive consultation with service areas, Leadership Team and previous Portfolio Holders and will be continually further refined through the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee.

## 7. **Risks**

- 7.1 The West Suffolk Risk Register is a document that records all known strategic risks that may impact the ability to deliver services and performance of West Suffolk Council. Each risk is described and the relative

inherent impact and probability of the risk coming to pass is estimated. The actions and controls that are undertaken to mitigate this risk are then laid out resulting in a revised residual impact and probability estimate.

- 7.2 The increasing risk presented by inflation, the rising cost of living and energy has been reflected in the two risk areas relating to business (WS20) and individuals (WS22). The actions and controls detailed in those risk areas show the undertakings that West Suffolk Council can take to monitor and mitigate against these pressures.
- 7.3 The West Suffolk Strategic Risk Register is updated regularly by the Risk Management Group. This group is comprised of service representatives, including Health and Safety, supported by a director and the portfolio holder for Resources and Property. Directors and/or service managers may be required to provide further information as requested by the group.
- 7.4 The aim of this process is to provide assurance that all strategic risk has been identified and that there are mitigating actions and controls in place to reduce these risks to an acceptable level.
- 7.5 At its most recent assessment on 13 January 2023, the group reviewed the Target Risk, the risk level where the council aims to be, and agreed a Current Risk assessment. The next meeting is planning for 30 May 2023. These assessments form the revised West Suffolk Strategic Risk Register at **Appendix E**.
- 7.6 Part of this assessment included the consideration of the controls and actions in place to address the individual risks. Where target risk levels are lower than the current risk assessment, further action is either being taken or planned in order to treat the risk and meet the target.
- 7.7 Some individual controls or actions have been updated and those that were not ongoing and had been completed by March 2023 have been removed from the register.

## **8. Implications arising from this proposal**

- 8.1 All implications arising from the proposals are covered within the report and its associated appendices.

## **9. Appendices**

- 9.1 Appendix A – Performance indicators (also available in an online, interactive format at [Appendix A: KPI Dashboards](#))  
Appendix B – Income and expenditure report  
Appendix C – Capital Programme  
Appendix D – Earmarked reserves  
Appendix E – Strategic Risk Register

**Exempt Appendix F – Aged debt over 90 days summary**

If you experience any problems with accessing this document or any of the appendices please email [performance@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:performance@westsuffolk.gov.uk).

**10. Background documents**

- 10.1 [Q1 Performance Report - 2022 to 2023](#)  
[Q2 Performance Report - 2022 to 2023](#)  
[Q3 Performance Report - 2022 to 2023](#)

[Council Agenda including 2023 to 2024 Budget and Council Tax Setting Report](#)

[Council Agenda including 2022 to 2023 Budget and Council Tax Setting Report](#)

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# 1. Index

## Understanding the dashboards

The majority of charts no longer include targets. This is part of the updated approach to performance management, where comparisons are made between years, or with national averages. Where targets are included, they are shown as yellow dotted lines. Further targets can be added if these are considered helpful.

Some of the charts have a combination of dots and lines. This is where an indicator was previously collected quarterly and is now collected monthly. It wouldn't be appropriate to join the dots between quarterly data, so they remain as separate dots.

Text is included alongside the graphs where service areas have provided additional commentary to explain or expand on the data.

Some charts are shown as 'YTD'. This means 'Year to date' and so the measures are cumulative from 1 April of the current reporting year.

Most charts compare the last three years, so the different colours represent different years. In some cases, for example, vacant shops, comparisons are made between places instead of years on the chart, but years can be compared instead using the 'slicers' at the side of the charts. Where only one year of data is available, the slicer will only show one year.

If you have any problems accessing this document, please email [performance@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:performance@westsuffolk.gov.uk)

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## 2. Cross-cutting: environmental performance

Latest Data Period:  
March 2023



### Commentary or Summary

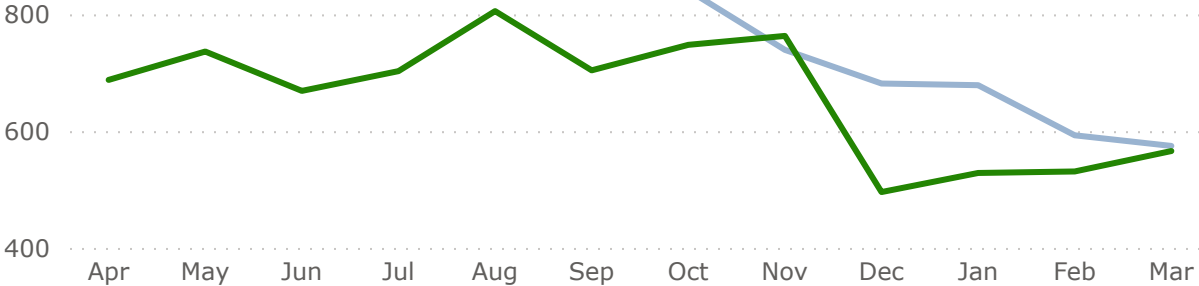
**Petrol:** used in strimmers and parking enforcement vehicles.

**AdBlue:** an additive used in newer vehicles to reduce exhaust tailpipe emissions (the low July figure was due to a system error).

**Diesel:** other fleet vehicles for example mowers, vans, lorries, refuse trucks etc. excludes red diesel.

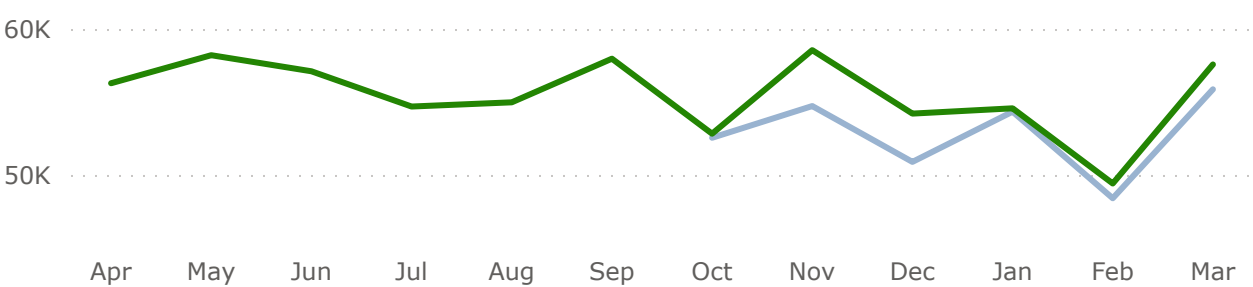
Amount of petrol used by fleet vehicles (litres)

Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23



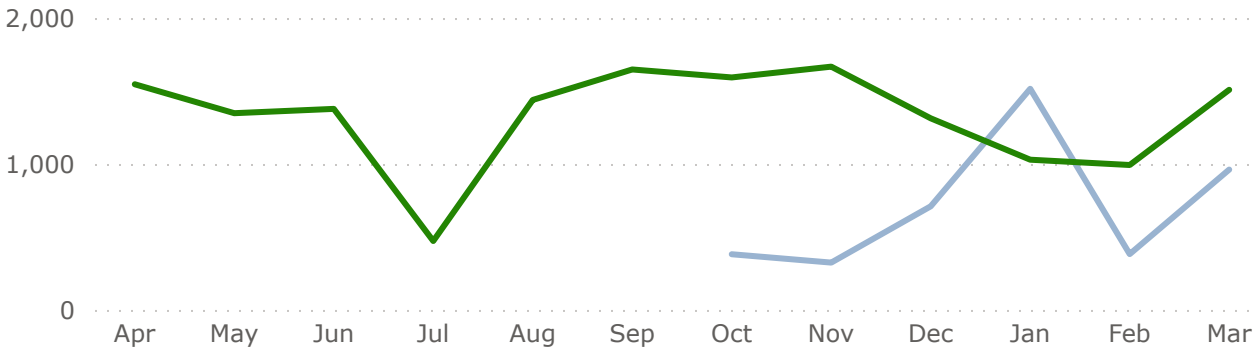
Amount of diesel used by fleet vehicles (litres)

Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23



Amount of Ad blue used by fleet vehicles (litres)

Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23



### 3. Cross-cutting: environmental performance

Latest Data Period:

March 2023

West Suffolk  
Council

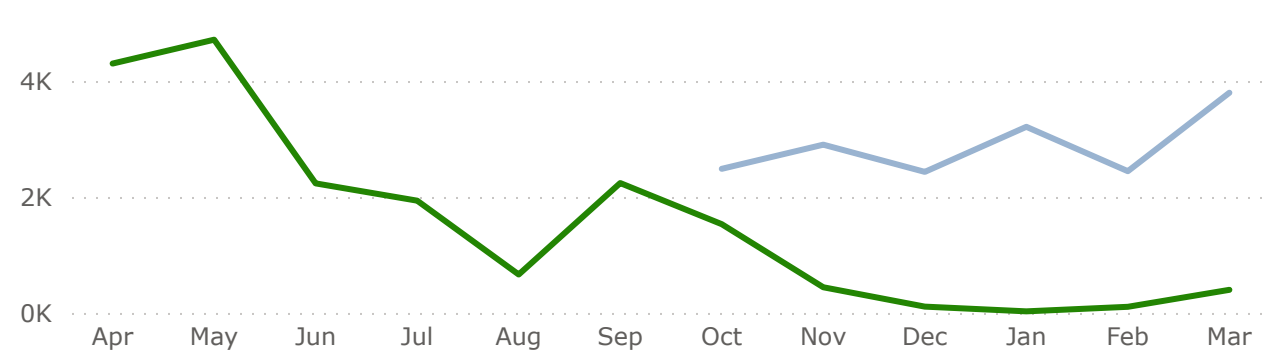
#### Commentary or Summary

**Amount of red diesel used by grounds maintenance vehicles (litres):** It is important to note that red diesel usage has changed because of the rules around the eligibility to use it. In December 2021, we were allowed to use red diesel in all our agricultural and depot vehicles (JCB's), however, now our use is very limited. Only some mowers and highway roadside verge/hedge clearing equipment is permitted to use red diesel now.

**Gas and electricity consumption for the five highest consuming sites, where half hourly metering exists:** figures for Mildenhall Hub gas are excluded from this data as we are awaiting accurate details from the supplier.

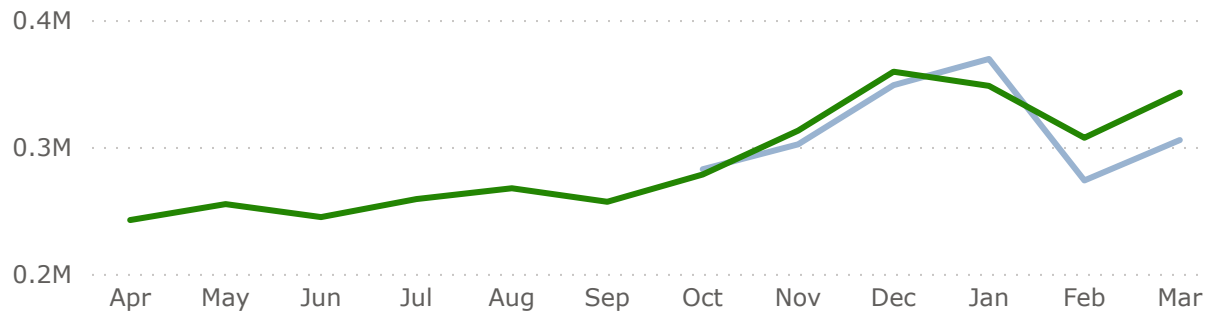
Amount of red diesel used by grounds maintenance vehicles (litres)

Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23



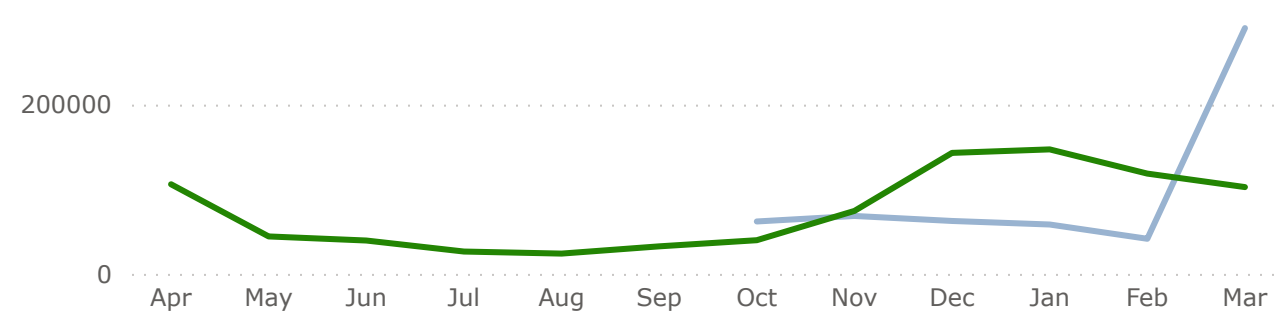
Amount of electricity consumed by five highest consuming council sites, where half hourly metering exists (kWh)

Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23



Amount of gas consumed by five highest consuming council sites, where half hourly metering exists (kWh)

Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23



## 4. Cross-cutting: wider economic context

Latest Data Period:

March 2023

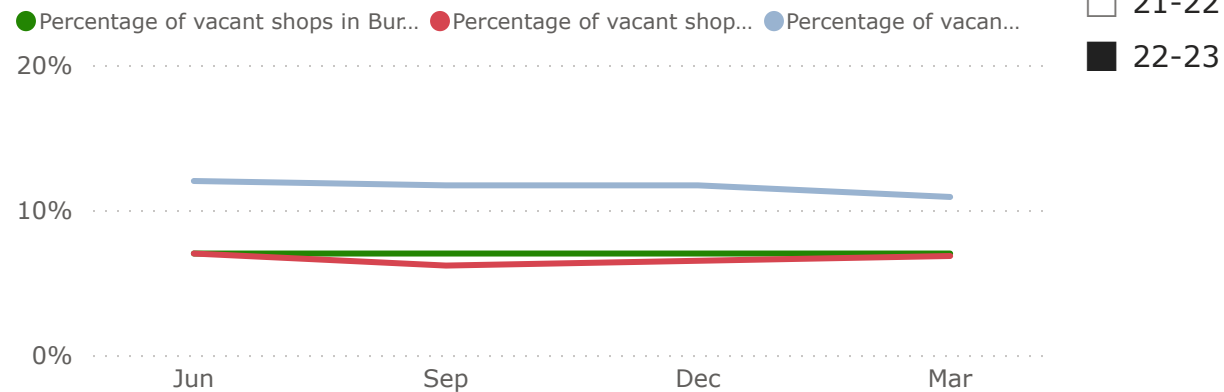
### Commentary or Summary

**Please note** this information relates to the vacant units within the town centres of these settlements only and does not relate to shopping parades or others smaller retail provision.

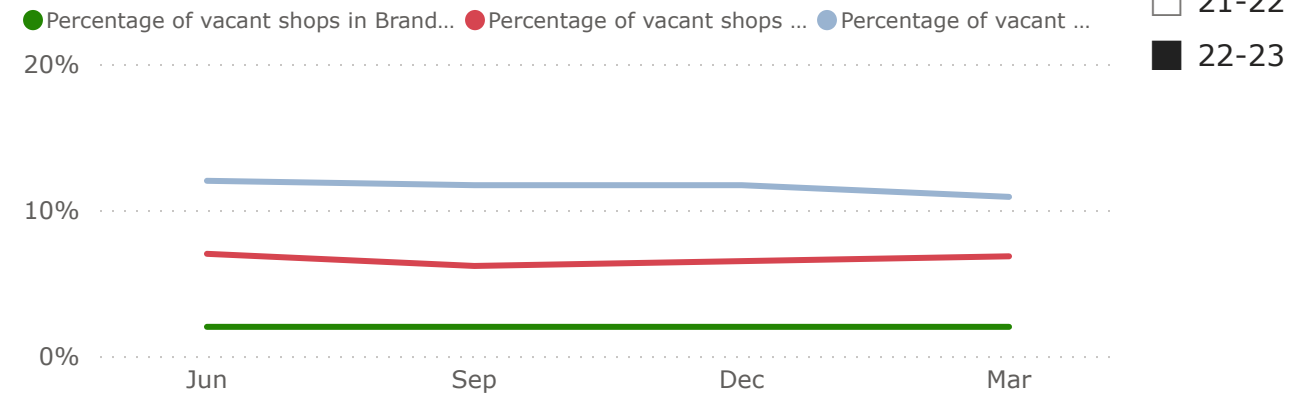
Both Bury St Edmunds and Brandon have a consistent level of vacant shop units.

In Q4, Clare has seen an increase in shop vacancy rates however the number of shops in Clare is relatively small which means that the closure of just one premises can make the indicator appear much more dramatic.

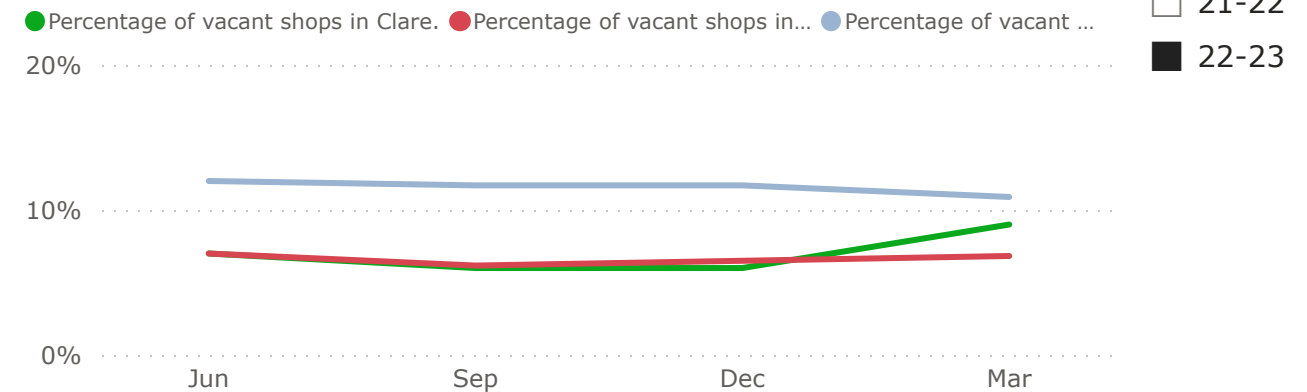
### Percentage of vacant shops in Bury St Edmunds



### Percentage of vacant shops in Brandon



### Percentage of vacant shops in Clare



# 5. Cross-cutting: wider economic context

Latest Data Period:

March 2023

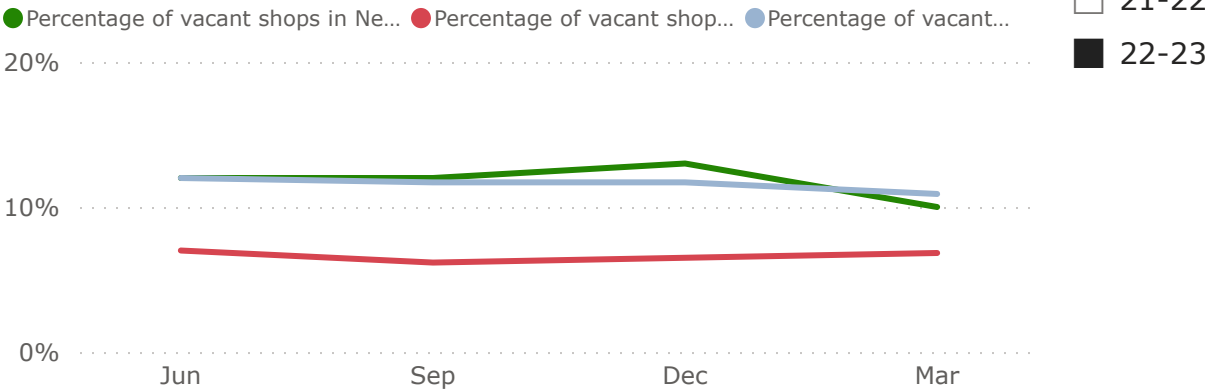
West Suffolk  
Council

## Commentary or Summary

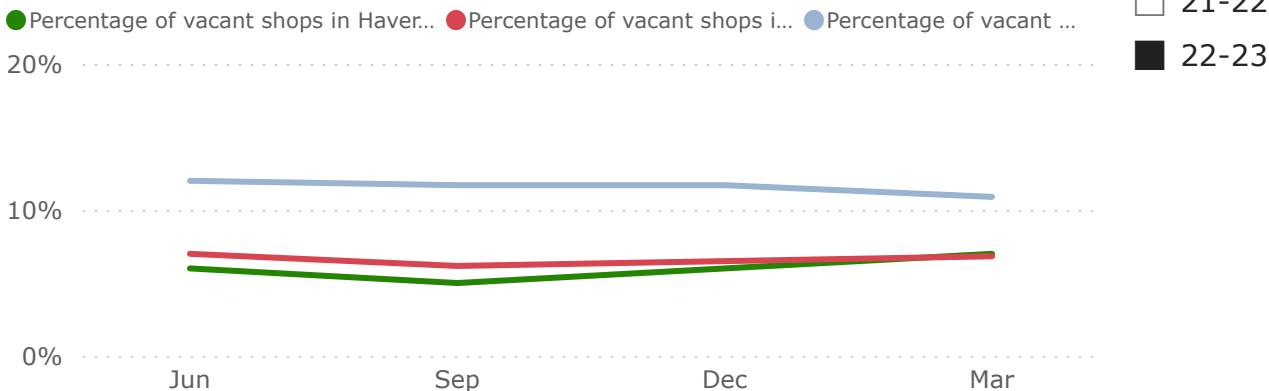
**Please note** this information relates to the vacant units within the town centres of these settlements only and does not relate to shopping parades or others smaller retail provision.

Newmarket has seen a decline in the number of vacant units from December 2022 to March 2023 and this has brought the number of vacancies below the reported national average for the first time for a while. The number of vacant units in Newmarket are still higher than desired and the Council is working with Love Newmarket and other partners to help drive footfall into the town centre – making these units more desirable for new tenants. One example of this work is the fact that a business that we have nurtured on our markets has taken space in

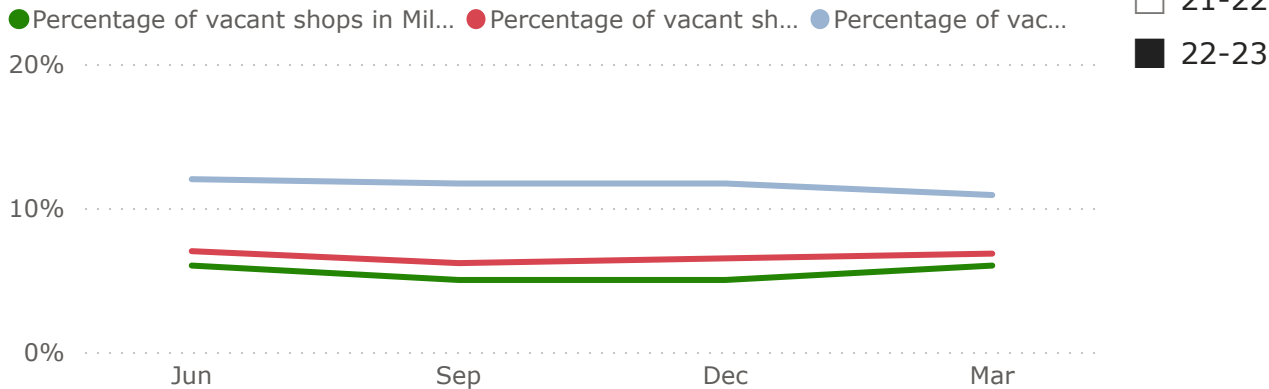
## Percentage of vacant shops in Newmarket



## Percentage of vacant shops in Haverhill



## Percentage of vacant shops in Mildenhall



## 6. Cross-cutting: wider economic context

Latest Data Period:  
March 2023



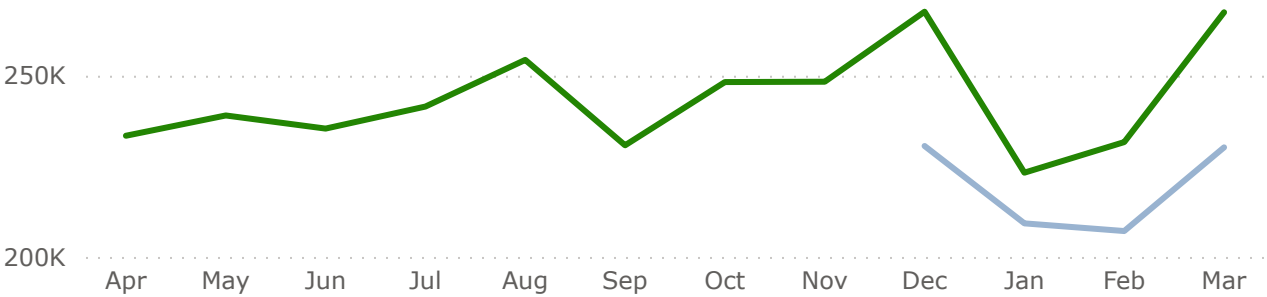
### Commentary or Summary

**Please note:** The footfall counter in Bury St Edmunds captures those walking past it and could therefore capture the same people multiple times, while the footfall counter in Newmarket identifies mobile phones and therefore only counts people once (this will not capture those without a mobile phone).

Page 36

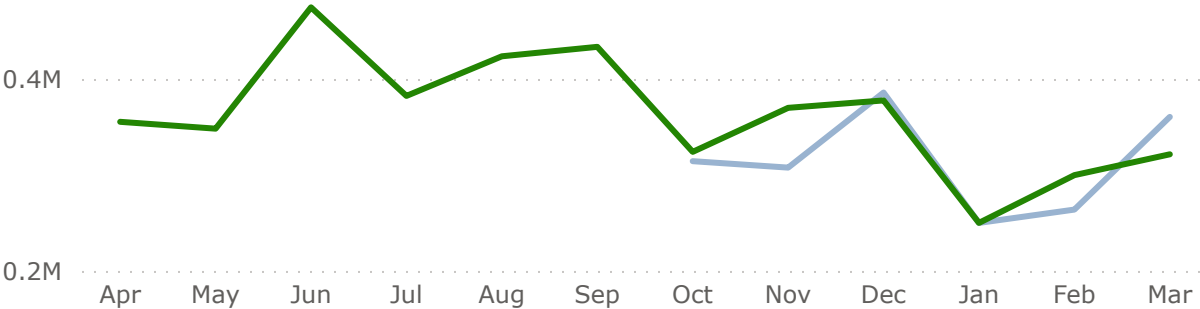
Number of car parking events in West Suffolk Council off-street car parks

Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23



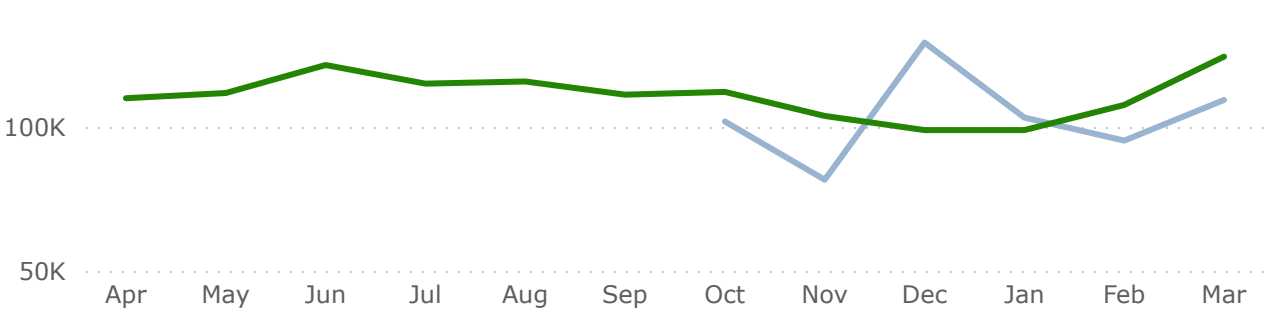
Footfall in Bury St Edmunds town centre

Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23



Footfall in Newmarket town centre

Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23



# 7. Cross-cutting: wider economic

Latest Data Period:

March 2023



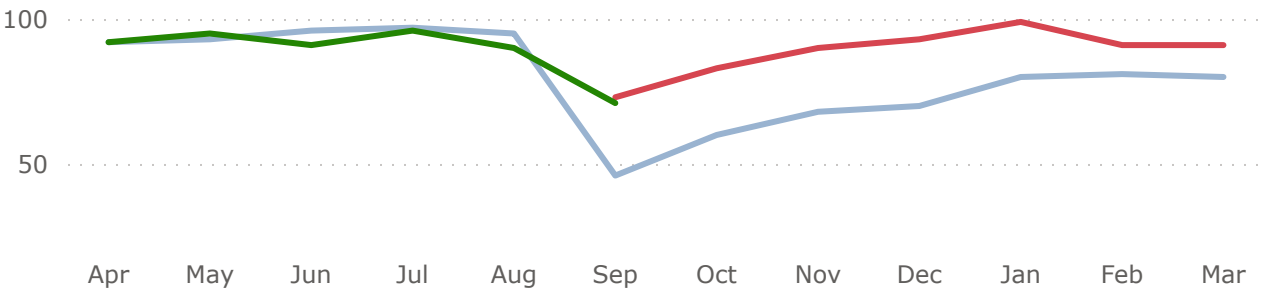
## Commentary or Summary

**Number of NEETs:** This figure is reported annually in Q2.

Page 37

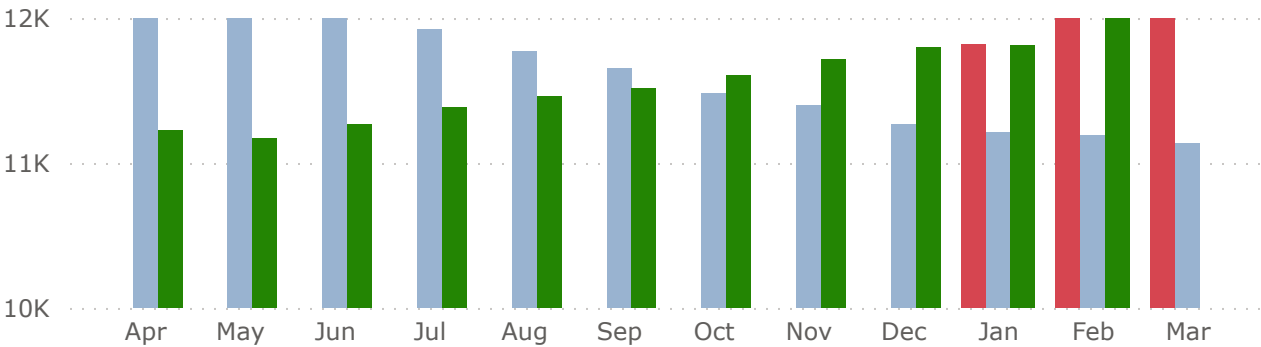
Number of NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training)

Financial Year ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



Number of Universal Credit claimants (one month lag)

Financial Year ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



## 8. Customer contact: website

Latest Data Period:

March 2023



### Commentary or Summary

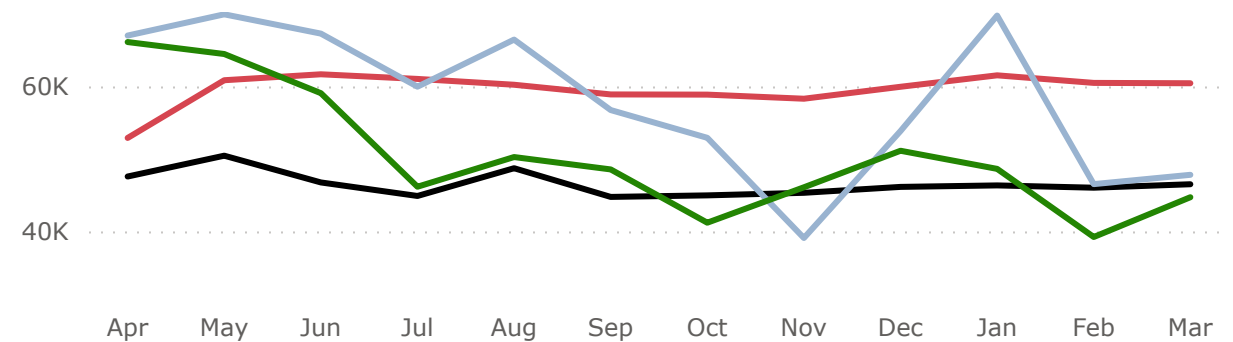
**West Suffolk website unique users March 2023:** 44,724 (up 13.98% from February 2023, down 6.47% from March 2022).

**West Suffolk website unique page views March 2023:** 135,983 (up 15.08% from February 2023, down 1.33% from March 2022).

In line with previous years, figures for March 2023 are slightly higher than for February 2023.

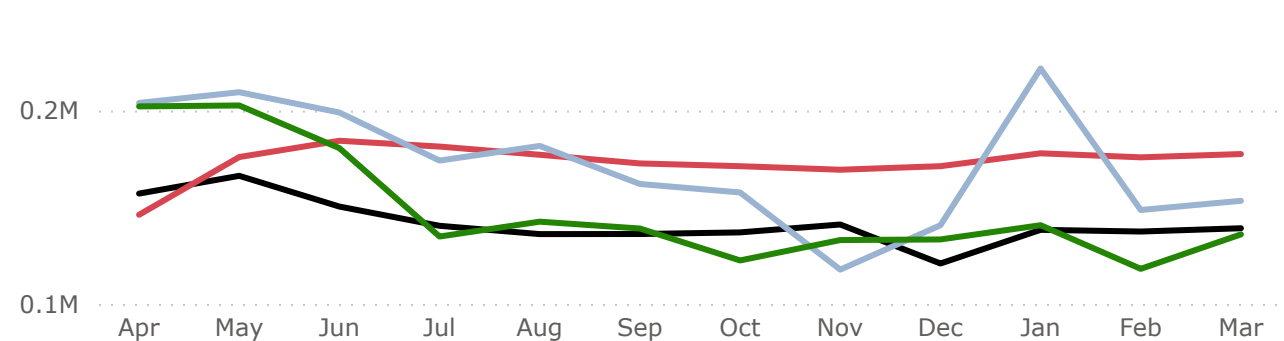
Number of unique users of the West Suffolk Council website

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



Number of unique page views to the West Suffolk Council website

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23





# 9. Housing and Strategic Health

Latest Data Period:  
March 2023

## Commentary or Summary

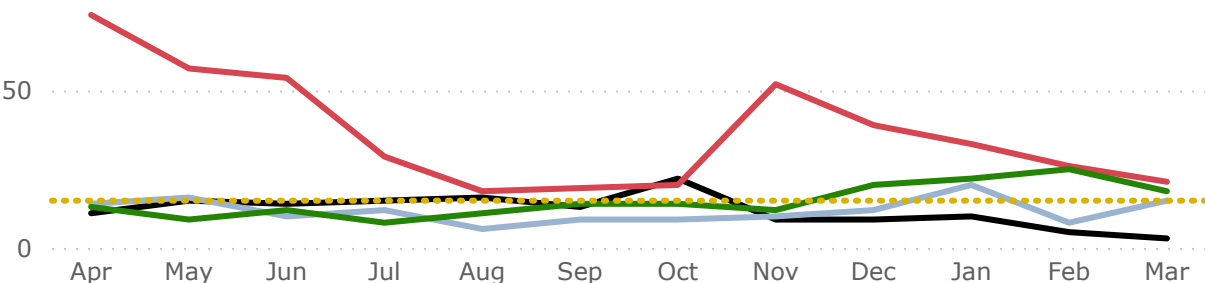
**Households owed the Main Homelessness Duty:** The February 2023 figure appears to be an increase, however, it is to do with the date that the system is updated with the decision being made. The team caught up with a number of cases in February.

**Household in Bed and Breakfast accommodation as at last day of the month:** As expected there was a slight rise early in Q4 with cold weather placements.

Number of households in Bed and Breakfast accommodation as at last day of the month

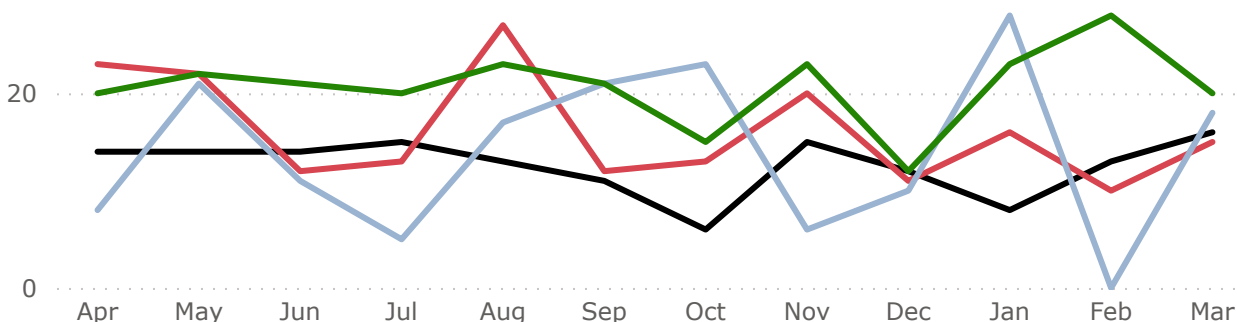
Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23

Target - 15



Number of households owed the Main Homelessness Duty

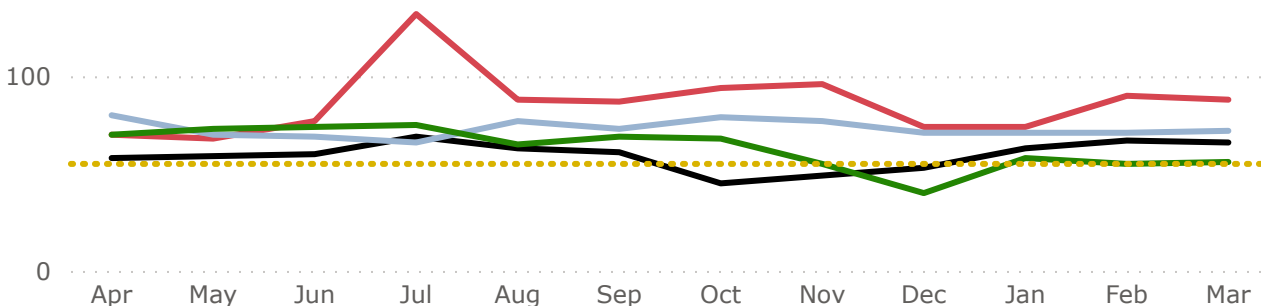
Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



Number of households in temporary accommodation as at last day of the month

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23

Target - 55



## 10. Housing and Strategic

Latest Data Period:

March 2023

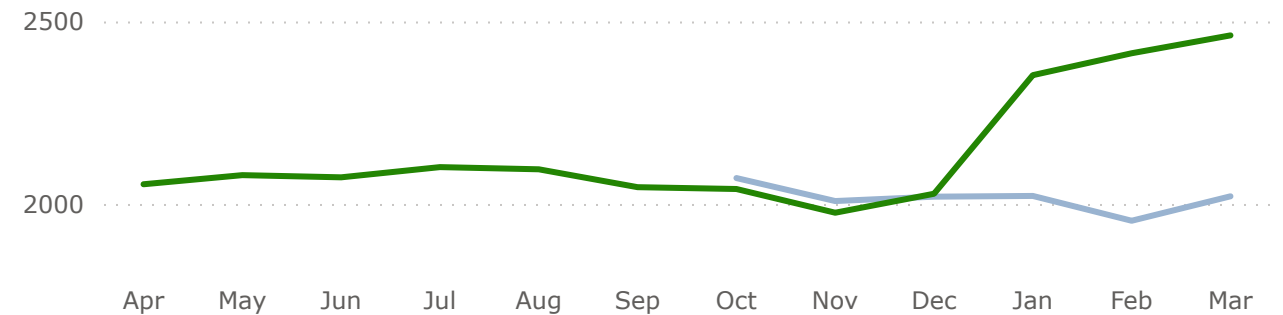
### Commentary or Summary

**Number of households in all bands:** There was a large increase in the number of applications on the housing register in Q4 as we have recently undertaken extensive work to reduce the outstanding backlog of applications.

**Number of households prevented from becoming homeless:** The team continue to work hard to prevent homelessness using a range of tools including negotiation and DHP to assist in resolving issues experienced with landlords.

Number of households on the housing register in all bands

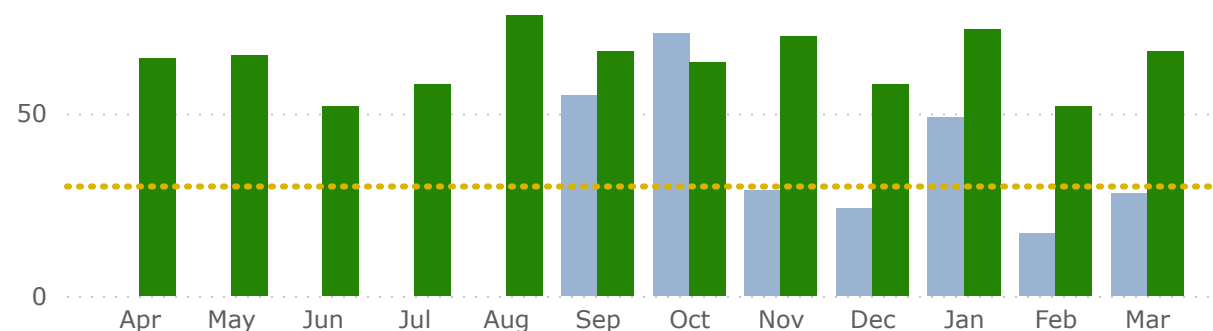
Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23



Number of Personalised Housing Plans created

Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23

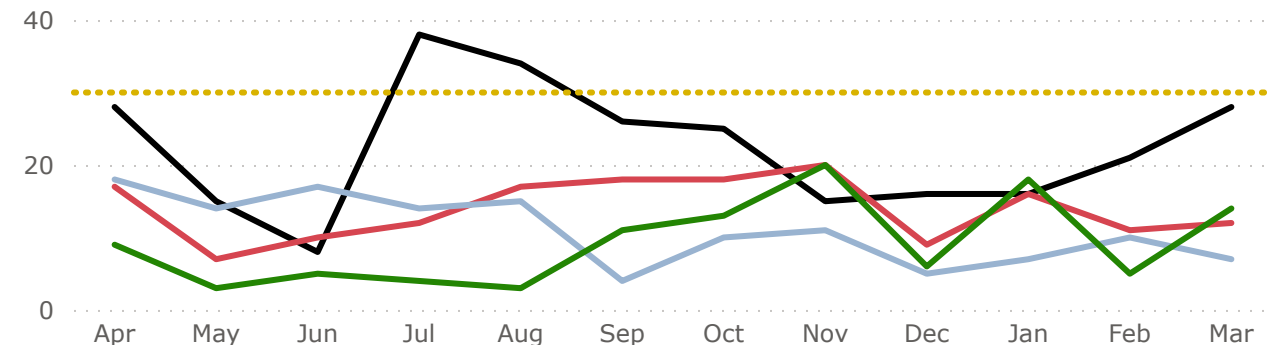
Target - 30



Number of households prevented from becoming homeless

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23

Target - 30



## 11. Housing and Strategic Health

Latest Data Period:

March 2023

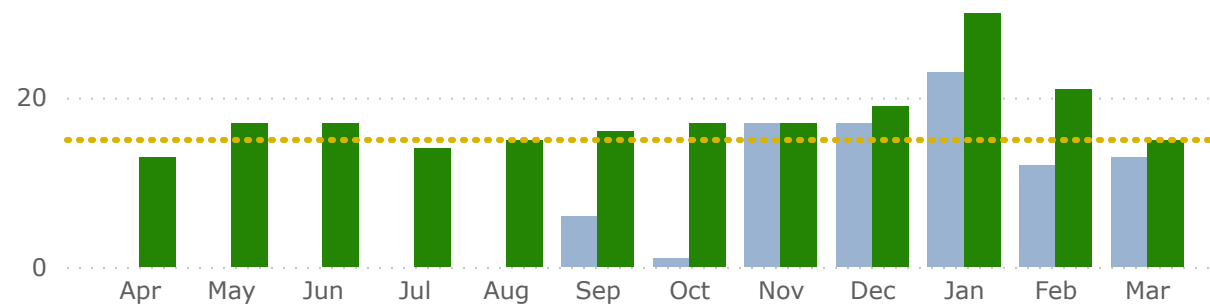
Commentary or Summary

Page 41

Number of households relieved from homelessness by securing accommodation for six months or more

Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23

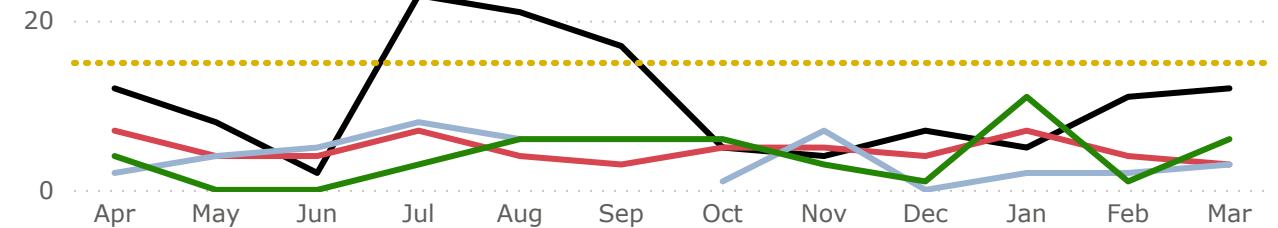
Target - 15



Number of households prevented from becoming homeless by maintaining their current home

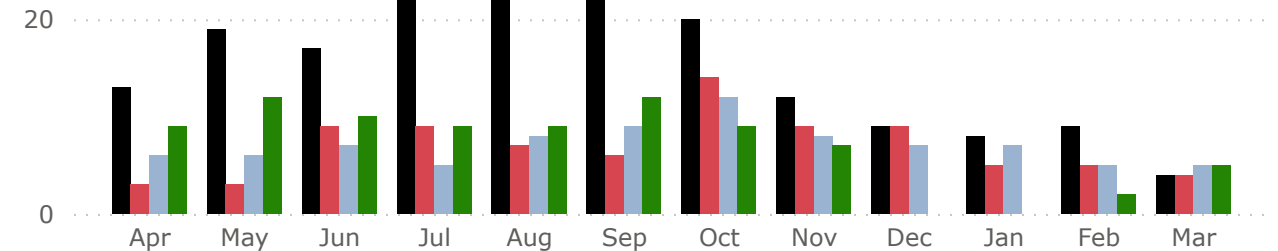
Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23

Target - 15



Number of rough sleepers

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



# 12. Housing and Strategic Health

Latest Data Period:

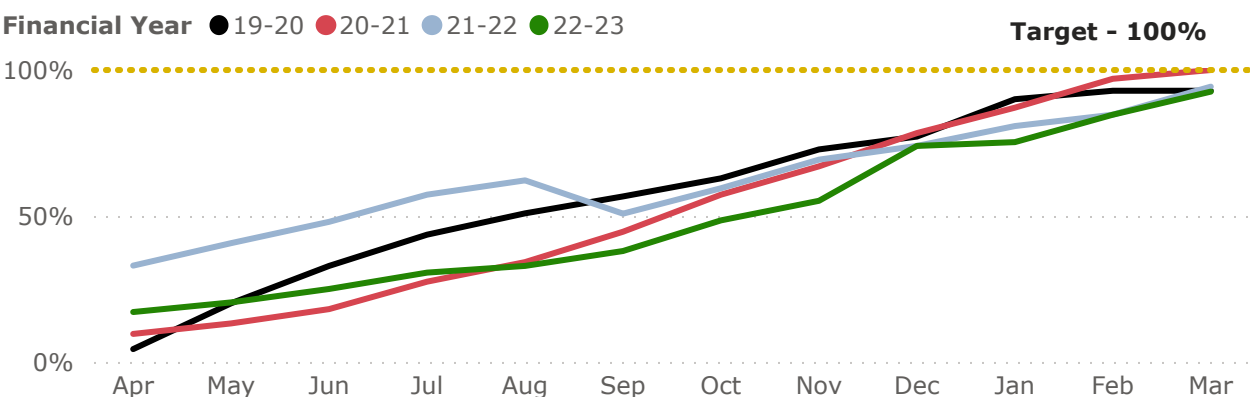
March 2023

## Commentary or Summary

**Percentage of Discretionary Housing Payment used (YTD):** We worked across the year to ensure we maximised all available budgets to assist customers, including in year budgets released by central government such as the Household Support Fund. There were some guidance changes this year that affected those who could claim DHP and this did impact on our ability to use this fund for those people who had previously had housing costs but had not spent the money on the rent.

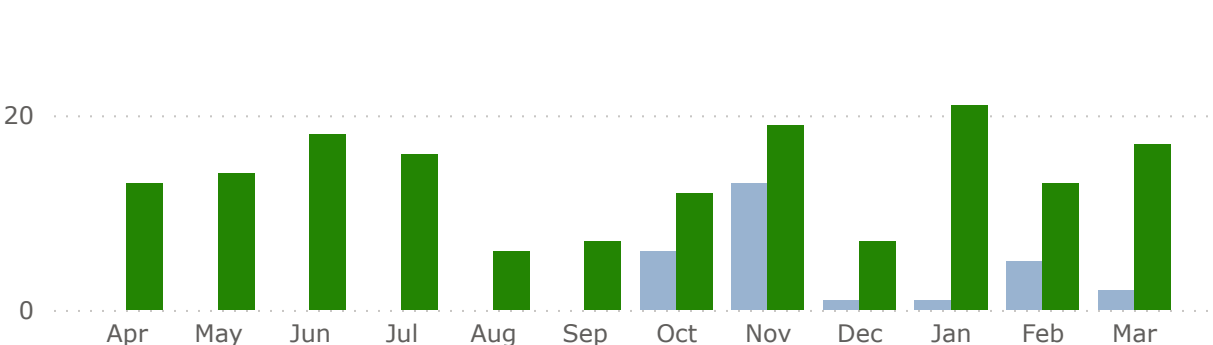
Page 42

## Percentage of Discretionary Housing Payment used (YTD)



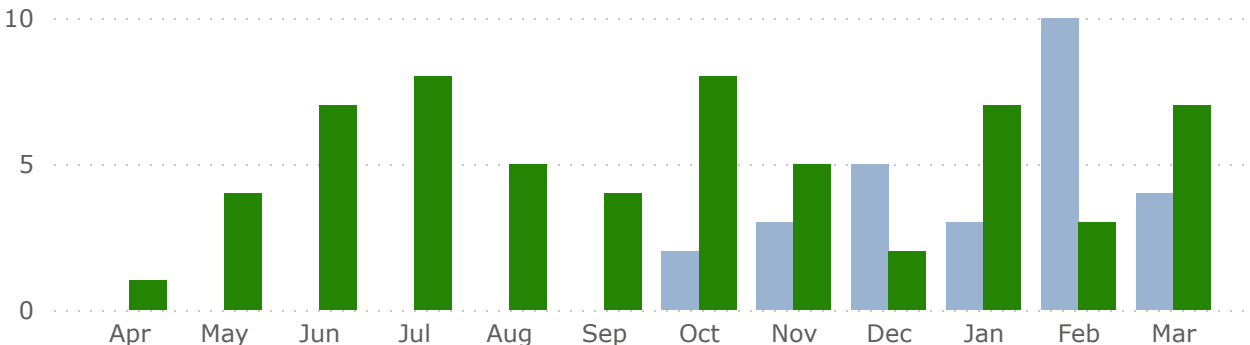
## Number of homelessness duties discharged into the private rented sector

Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23



## Number of rent deposit bonds provided

Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23



# 13. Housing and Strategic Health

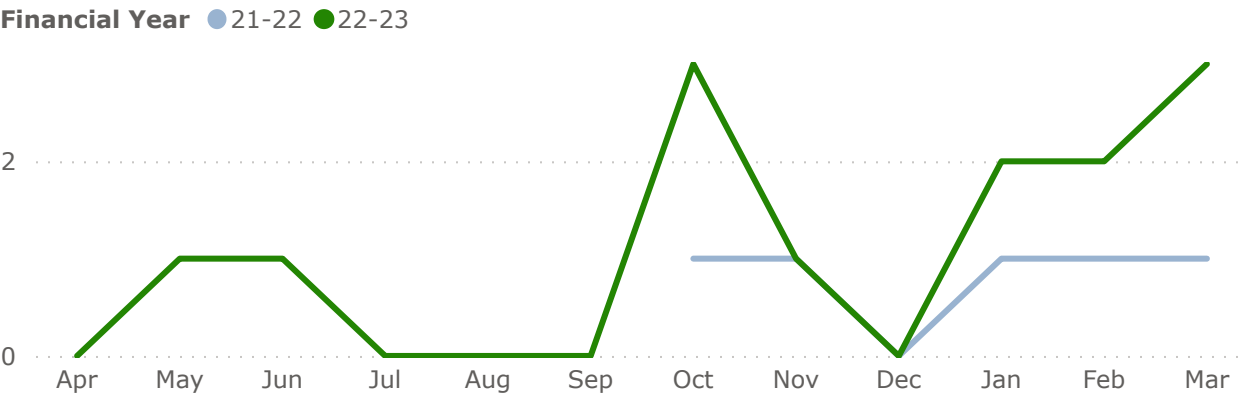
Latest Data Period:  
March 2023



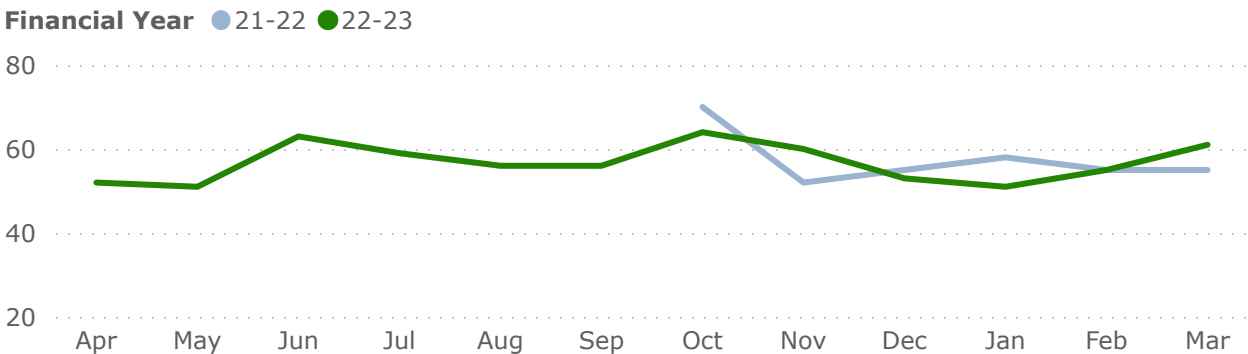
Commentary or Summary

Page 43

Number of landlord incentives paid



Number of young people (aged between 16 and 25, both singles and in families) identified as experiencing homelessness



## 14. Housing and Strategic Health

Latest Data Period:

March 2023

West Suffolk  
Council

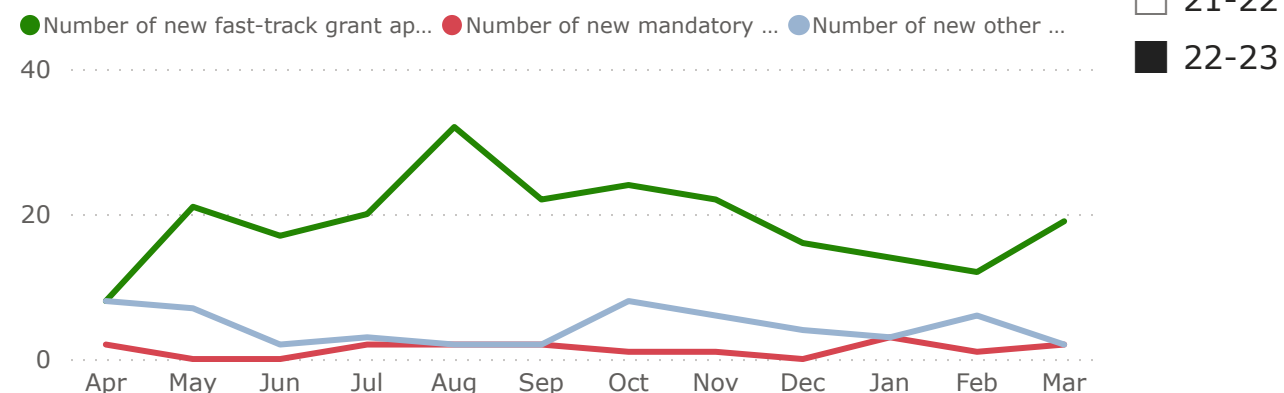
### Commentary or Summary

During March 2023, we received 22 referrals for adaptations 8 from ILS, 5 from Home First/Adult Care Services, 3 from GP Surgeries, 1 from Children's & Young Persons Services, 1 from West Suffolk Hospital and 4 from the Community Occupational Therapists team. We also dealt with 1 application for Financial assistance, 1 application for Homes assistance and 26 enquiries, 2 of which were referred to Suffolk County Council for a full OT assessment.

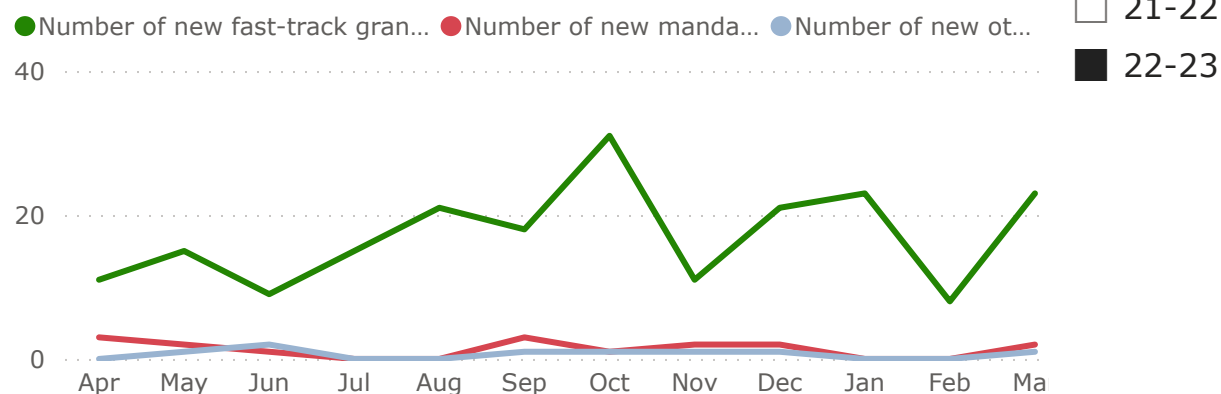
A further 31 grants were completed, 30 Fast Track and 1 Mandatory DFG paid during March 2023.

We have substantially increased our performance and delivery of DFG throughout

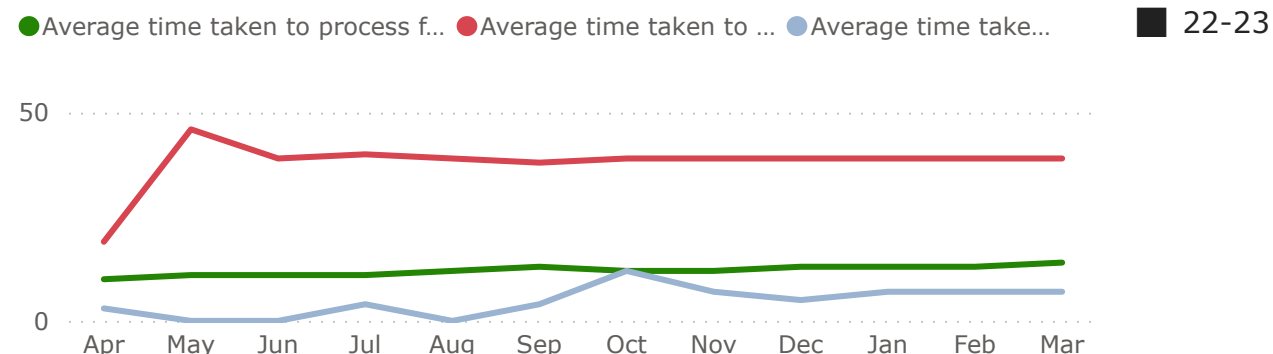
### Number of Disabled Facilities Grant applications received



### Number of new Disabled Facilities Grant applications approved



### Average time taken to process Disabled Facilities Grants from received to works completed (weeks)



## 15. Housing and Strategic Health

Latest Data Period:

March 2023

West Suffolk  
Council

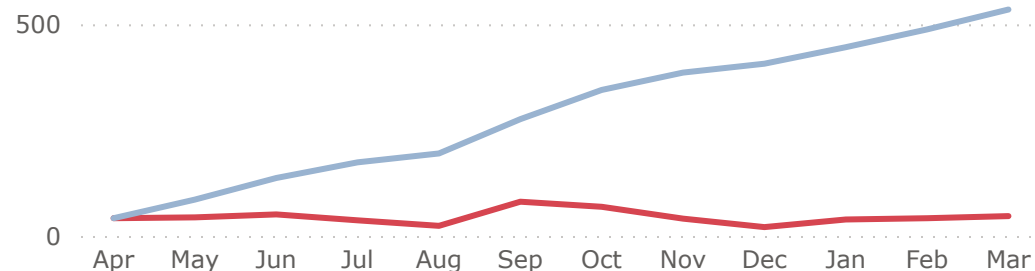
### Commentary or Summary

**Number of new noise complaints received:** This number is expected to rise as we move through spring and into the summer months when noise complaints traditionally increase as people tend to have their windows open so are more impacted by external noise, at the same time more people are spending more time outdoors in the nicer weather.

**Number of noise complaints resolved:** 85% of cases resolved within 55 days. In no case was a statutory nuisance identified. Complaints were closed as there was a confirmed improvement by the complainant or we could not establish the problem met the threshold for a statutory nuisance. In two cases complainants did not come back to progress the investigation and enable noise monitoring to take place. The

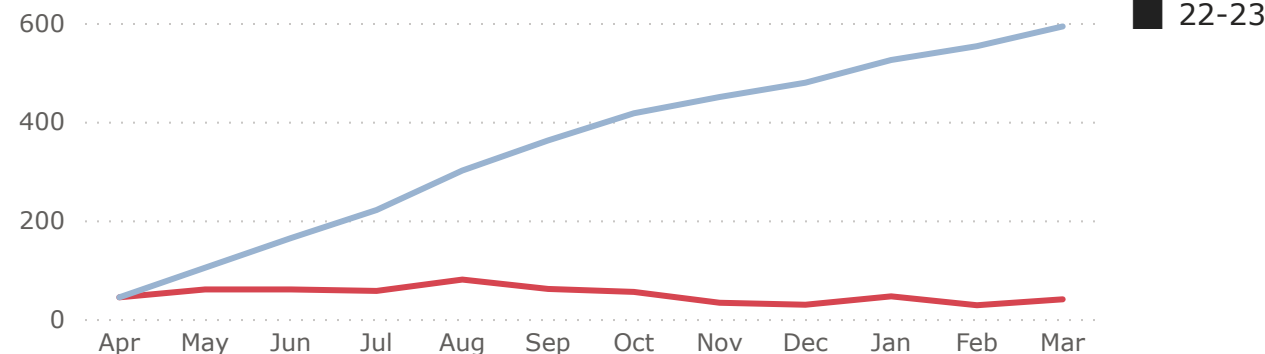
### Number of noise complaints that were resolved within the allocated timescales

Number of noise complaints resolved. Number of noise complaints resolved (YTD).



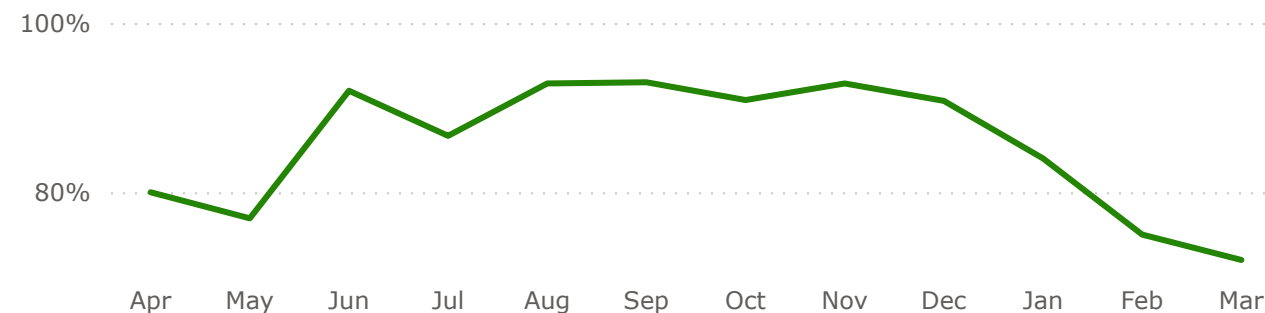
### Number of new noise complaints received

Number of new noise complaints received. Number of new noise complaints received (YTD).



### Percentage of housing complaints received that were resolved within the allocated timescales

Financial Year 22-23



# 16. Housing and Strategic Health

Latest Data Period:

March 2023



## Commentary or Summary

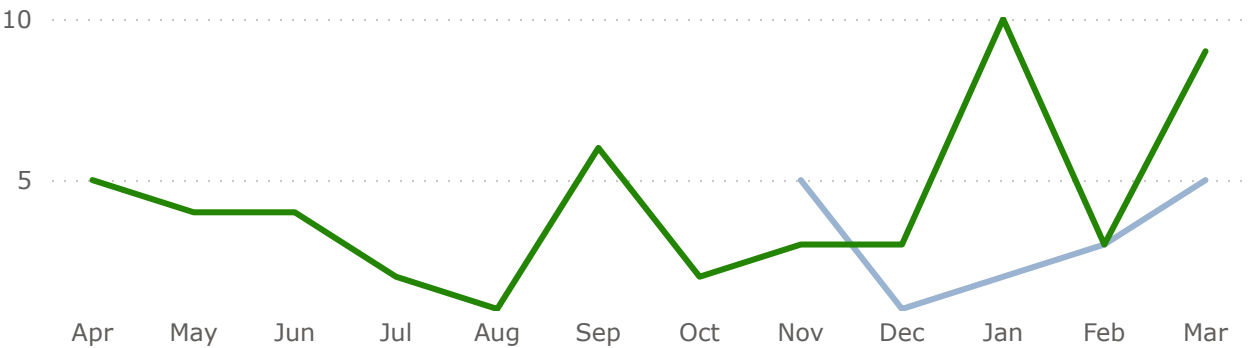
**Number of Housing Health and Safety Rating System hazards are removed or reduced:** The team have removed 9 hazards in March 2023; 8 of these involved increasing the energy performance of properties to an E standard or higher. None relate to damp and mould. The additional case involved improving fire safety and domestic hygiene issues in an HMO.

**Number of HMOs in West Suffolk:** Two HMOs have been removed from our database in March 2023, these were both non-licensable that have been returned to single family occupancy.

**Number of HMO licence and renewal applications currently being**

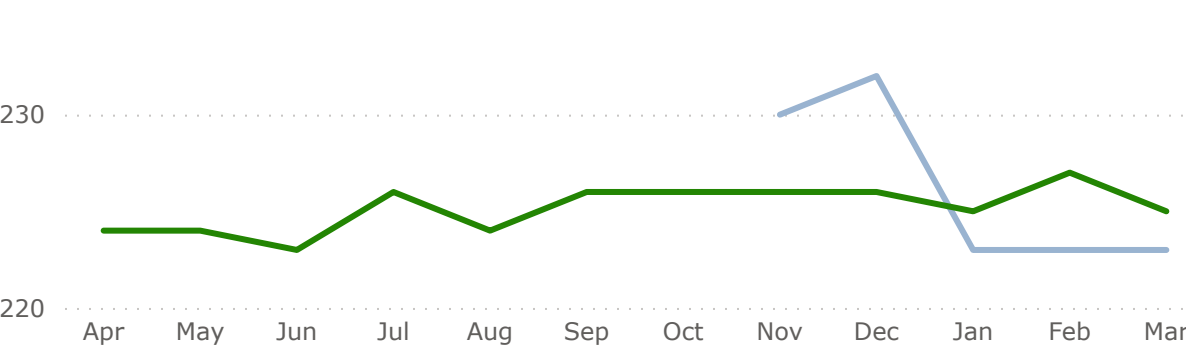
## Number of Housing Health and Safety Rating System hazards removed or reduced

Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23



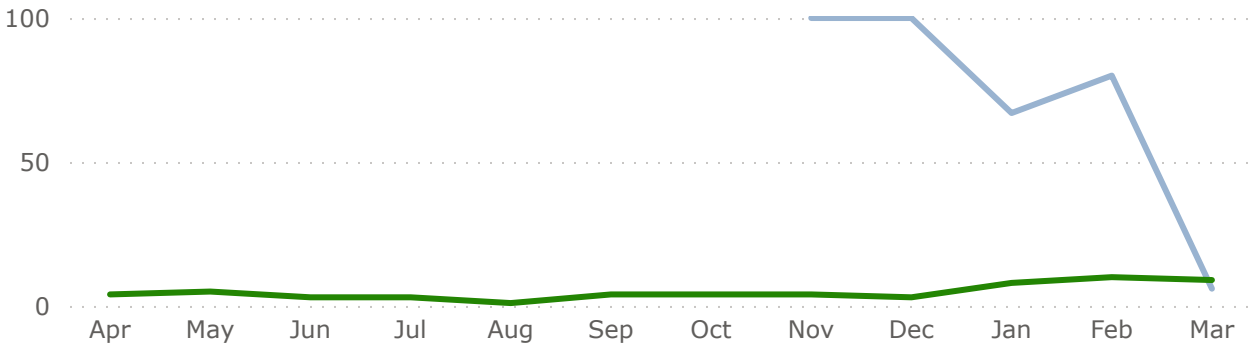
## Number of HMOs in West Suffolk

Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23



## Number of HMO licence and renewal applications currently being processed

Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23





# 17. Housing and Strategic Health

Latest Data Period:  
March 2023

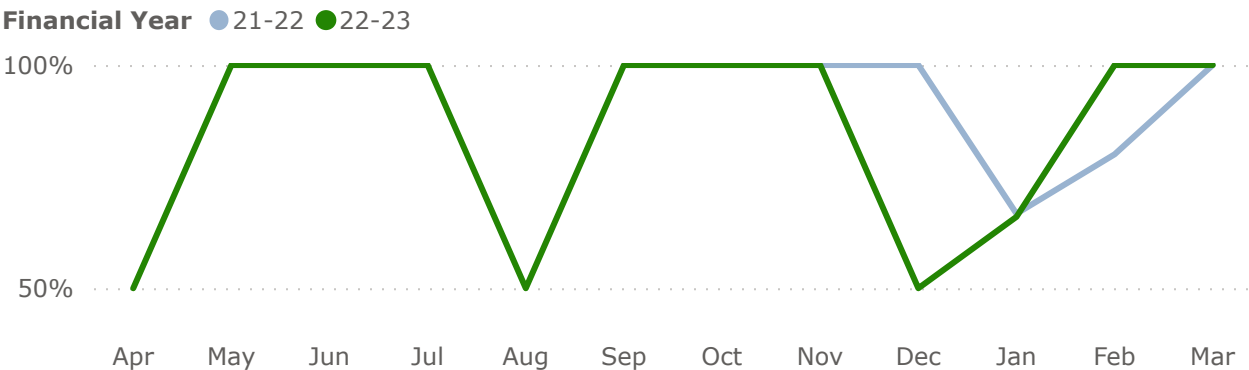


## Commentary or Summary

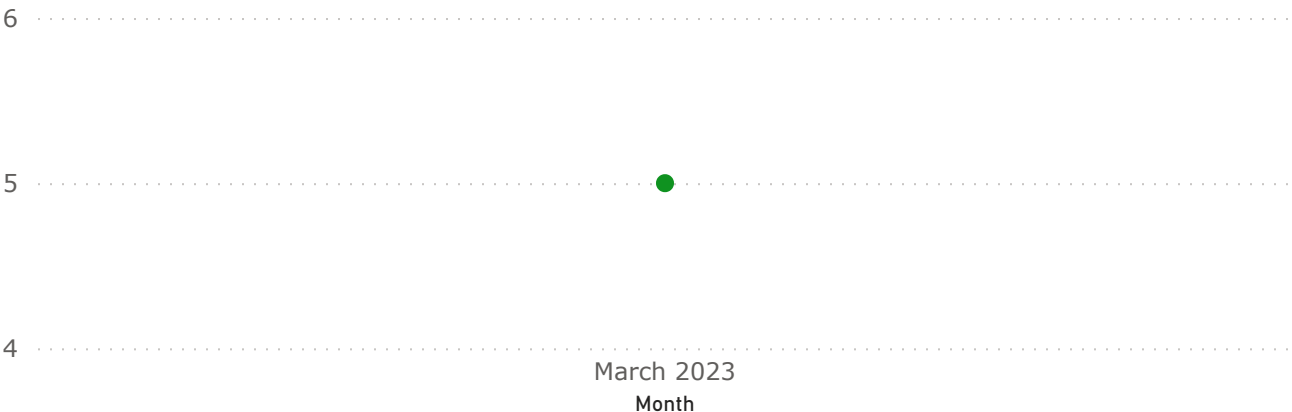
**Percentage of HMO complaints received that were resolved within the allocated timescales:** In March 2023, we responded to 5 complaints all within the required timescales. One of the complaints involved a report from a tenant regarding issues with his live in landlord - this was resolved informally, a further complaint involved a report from a neighbour about the behaviour of a tenant in an HMO, this was resolved informally. The remaining three complaints were related to self-contained flats, these were all resolved informally and were not properties confirmed as HMOs in the end.

**Number of damp and mould hazards identified through HHSRS:** Number of damp and mould hazards identified are 5, all were low Category 2 hazards that

Percentage of HMO complaints received that were resolved within the allocated timescales



Number of damp and mould hazards identified through HHSRS



# 18. Housing and Strategic Health

Latest Data Period:  
March 2023

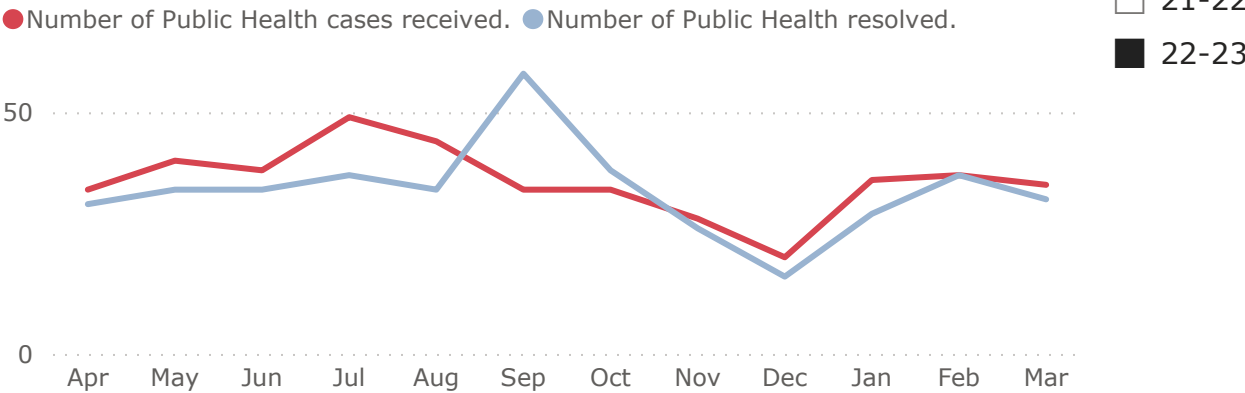


## Commentary or Summary

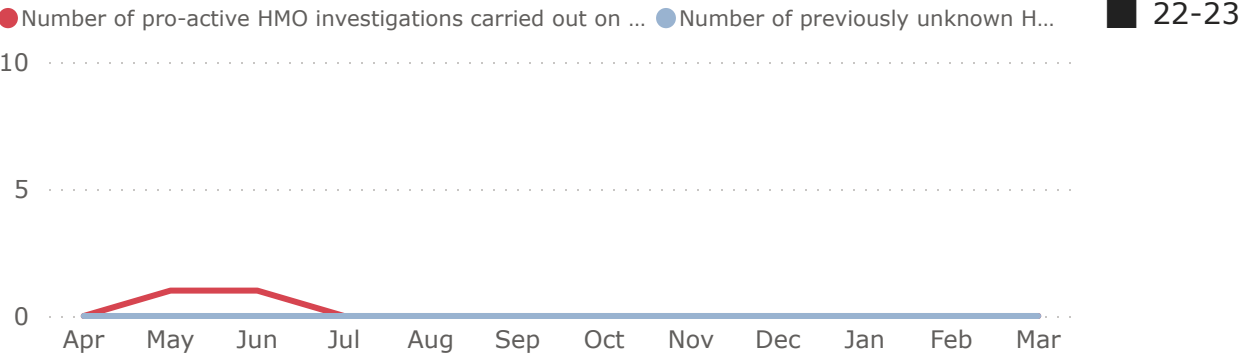
**Number of Public Health cases received and resolved:** 35 Public Health cases received in March 2023, 11 completed, 24 outstanding. 32 Public Health cases resolved in February 2023, 28 (87.5%) achieved in target, 4 (12.5%) out of target

**Number of proactive HMO investigations carried out on previously unknown HMOs and then brought up to standard:** We have not received any intelligence from partners or undertaken any targeted any properties for pro-active investigation. Stakeholders have this month (March 2023) been reminded to contact us if they have concerns as part of update communication on our HMO review. We continue to work closely with our partner organisation such as the Police, Modern Day Slavery Team and the Fire Service to investigate suspected HMOs.

## Number of Public Health cases received and resolved



## Number of pro-active HMO investigations carried out on previously unknown HMOs and brought up to standard



# 19. Housing and Strategic Health

Latest Data Period:  
March 2023



## Commentary or Summary

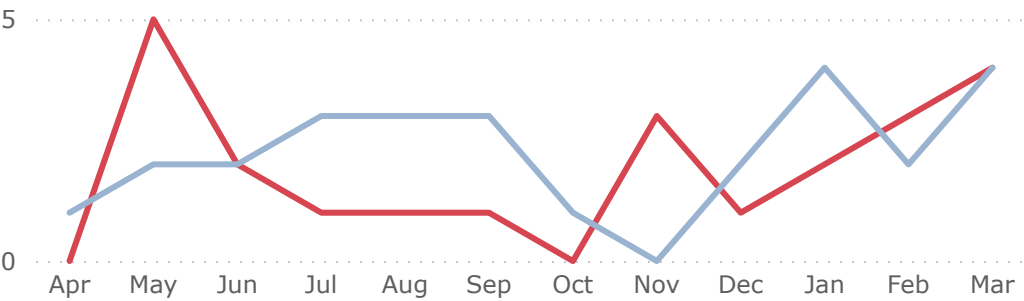
**Number of licensed and non-licensed HMO inspections allocated:** These figures vary from month to month depending on how many properties arise per month through our risk rated inspection programme.

**Percentage of affordable housing units delivered on sites of 10 or more units:** There were two Section 106 sites that provided 100% affordable housing (Parcel F, Marham Park and Boyton Meadows, Haverhill). However, one site; Tayfen Road, Bury St Edmunds secured 18% due to viability.

Number of licensed HMO inspections carried out and allocated

Number of licensable HMO inspections carried out. Number of licensed HMO inspections ...

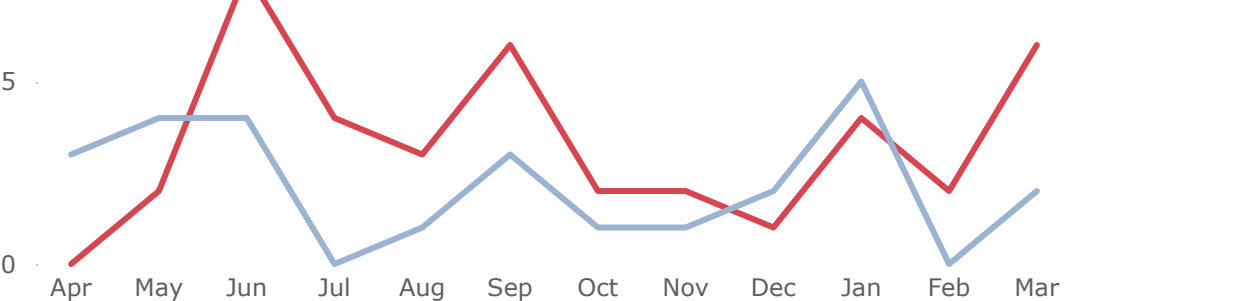
21-22 22-23



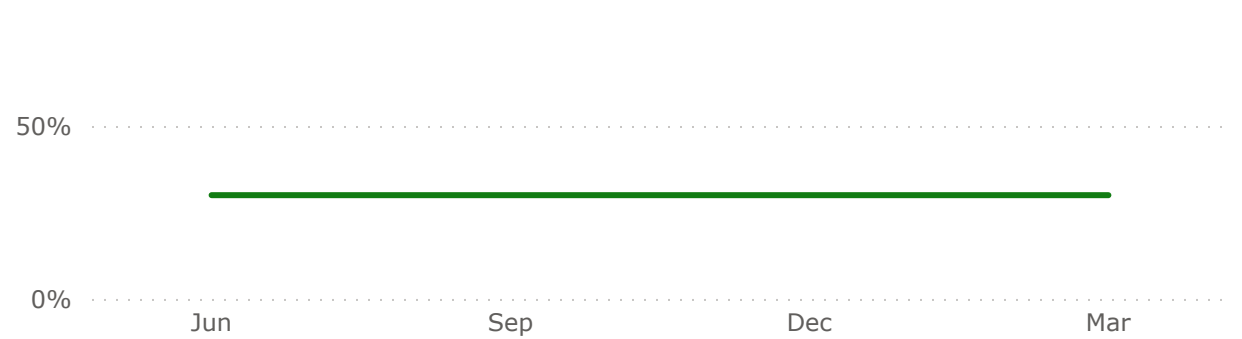
Number of non-licensed HMO inspections carried out and allocated

Number of non-licensed HMO inspections carried out. Number of non-licensed HMO inspections allocated

21-22 22-23



Percentage of affordable housing units delivered on sites of 10 or more units



## 20. Resources and Property

Latest Data Period:

March 2023

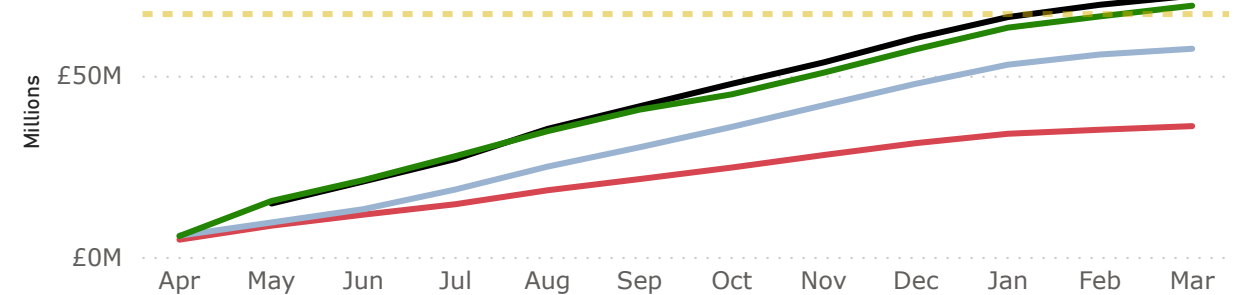
### Commentary or Summary

**Amount of business rates collected:** Business Rate collection exceeded the target for 2022 to 2023, with £69,327,939 collected which is £2,308,788 above target. The graph line for 2022 to 2023 is below that of 2019 to 2020 as there is less debit to collect due to there being more relief on accounts post Covid.

Page 50

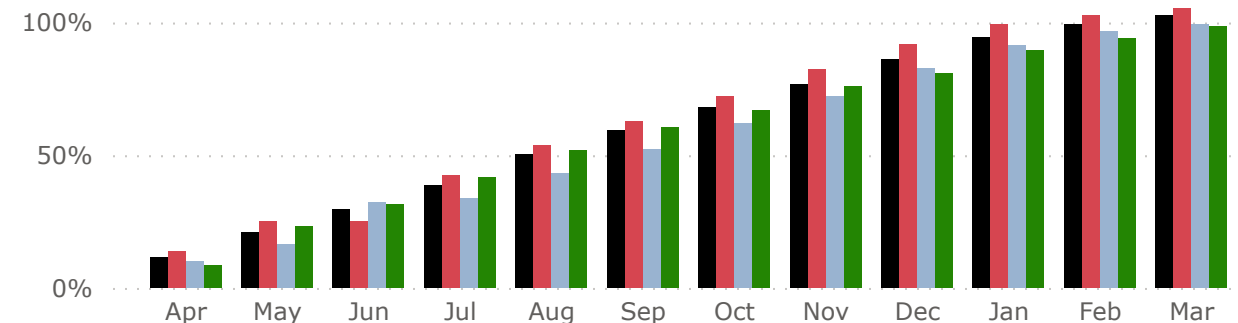
### Amount of business rates collected (YTD)

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



### Percentage collection of business rates

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



## 21. Resources and Property

Latest Data Period:

March 2023

### Commentary or Summary

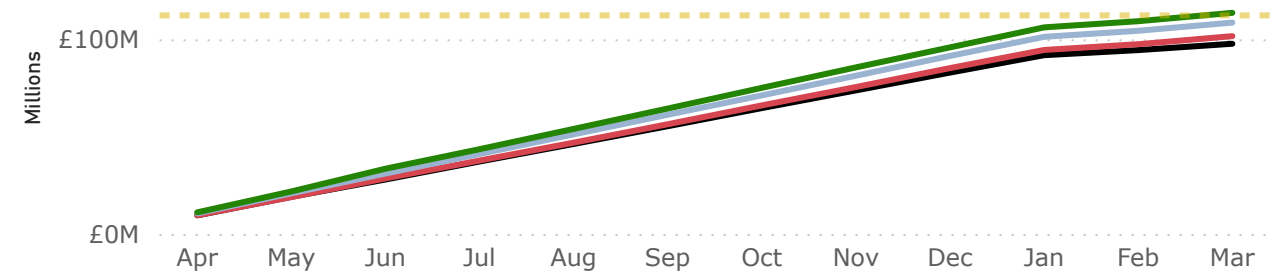
**Value of fraud identified by the ARP team:** Fraud identified continues to exceed target with £813,415 fraud identified in March 2023.

**Amount of Council Tax collected:** Council Tax collection exceeded the target for 2022-23 with £113,610,278 collected which is £1,312,726 above target.

Page 51

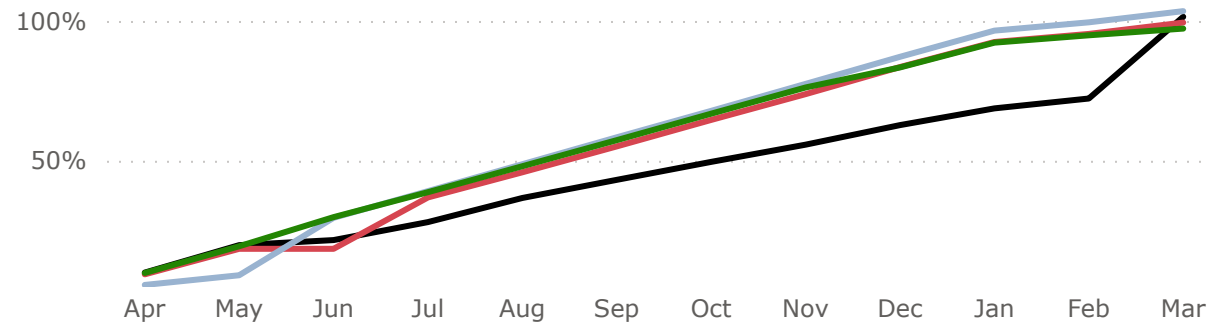
### Amount of Council Tax collected (YTD)

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



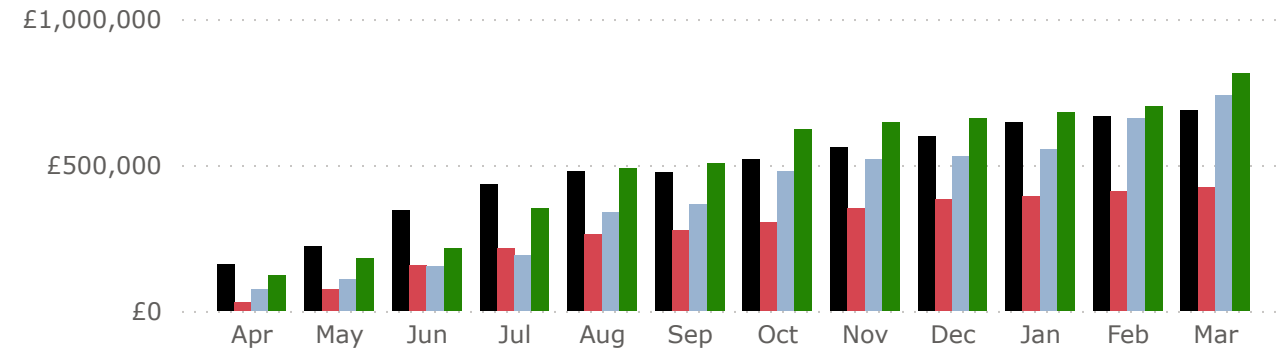
### Percentage collection of Council Tax (collection rate)

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



### Value of fraud identified by the ARP team

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



## 22. Resources and Property

Latest Data Period:

March 2023

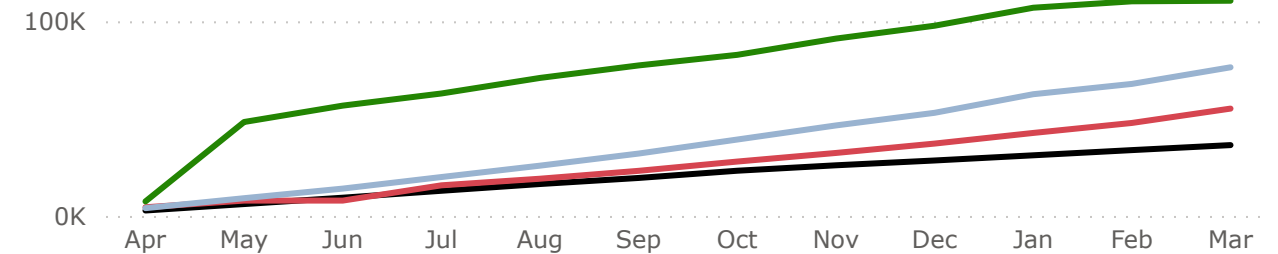
### Commentary or Summary

This number of e-forms received relates to both Benefits and Council Tax. This figure reflects the total number of e-claims received for all partners combined within the Anglia Revenues Partnership and includes 37,488 Energy Rebate Applications. The breakdown by partner council is not yet available. In addition to this, there is also a large amount of electronic data being received from DWP.

The time taken to process claims for the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Housing Benefit remains within the acceptable range of around 6 days for LCTRS claims and 6 days for HB claims.

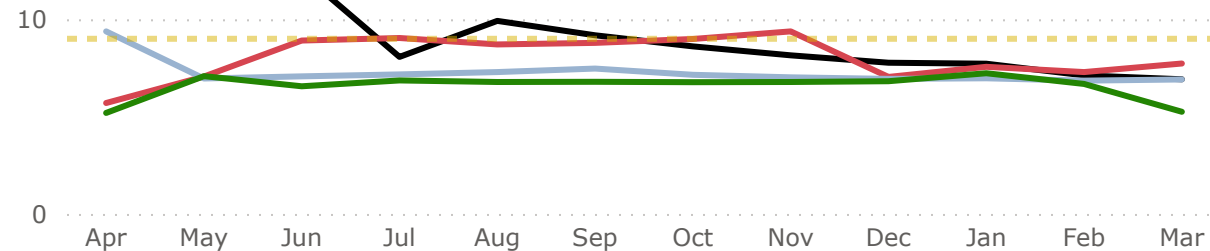
### Number of e-forms received (YTD)

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



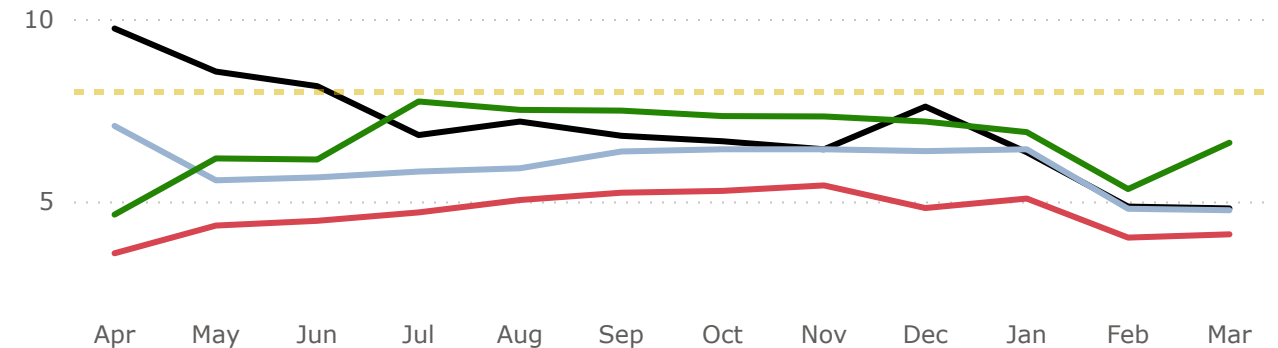
### Days taken to process Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme claims

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



### Days taken to process Housing Benefit claims

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



## 23. Resources and Property

Latest Data Period:

March 2023

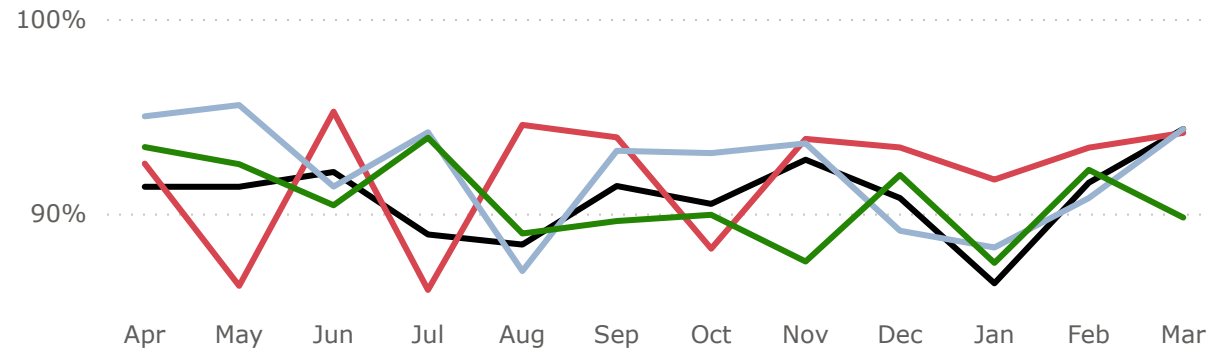
### Commentary or Summary

**Amount of debt over 90 days old:** Increase in Q4 in debt over 90 days driven by one debtor in Commercial Property falling into the >90 day bracket.

**Percentage of void properties across entire commercial estate:** Void rates are comfortably below the market average for a commercial portfolio (10 per cent) and have been below five per cent for over six months, reflecting our robust and proactive management approach. We are still reviewing this as there is a lot of data cleansing required and some clarification required, corporately, on what is counted as 'commercial'. Therefore this data has been calculated as previous months, but will likely be reset, most likely for April and the start of 23/24.

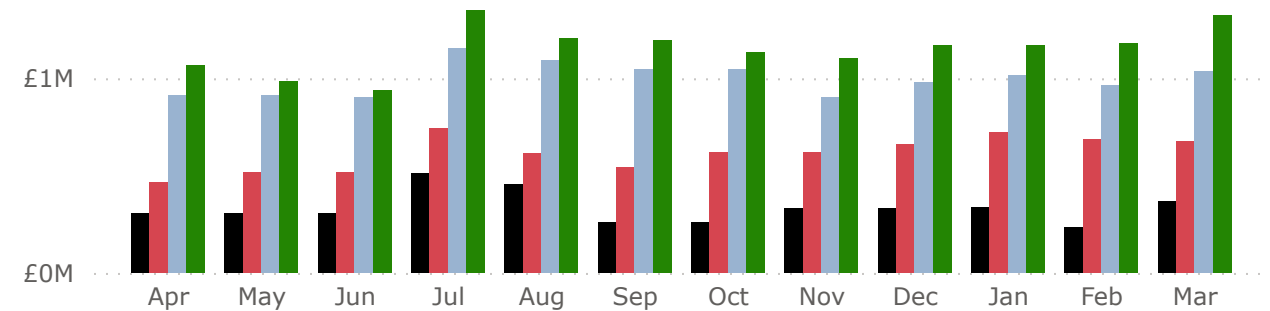
### Percentage of undisputed invoices paid within 30 days

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



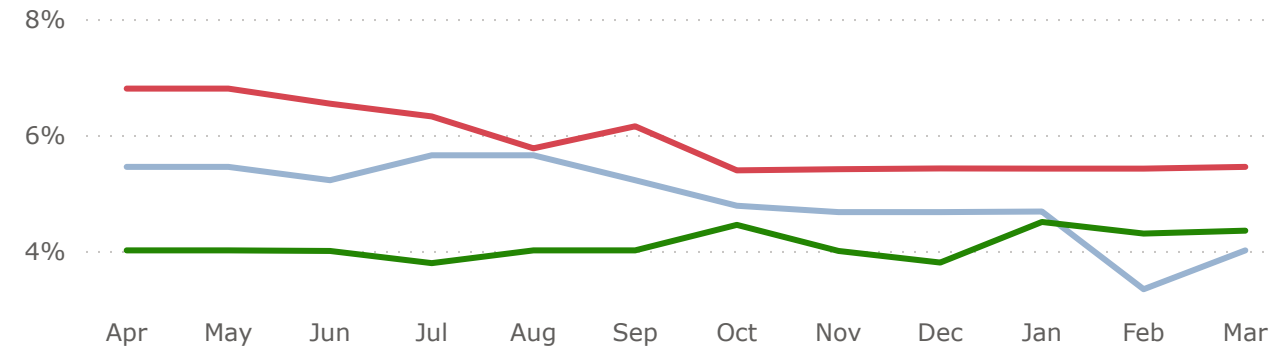
### Amount of debt over 90 days old

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



### Percentage of void properties across entire commercial estate

Financial Year ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



# 24. Governance

Latest Data Period:  
March 2023



## Commentary or Summary

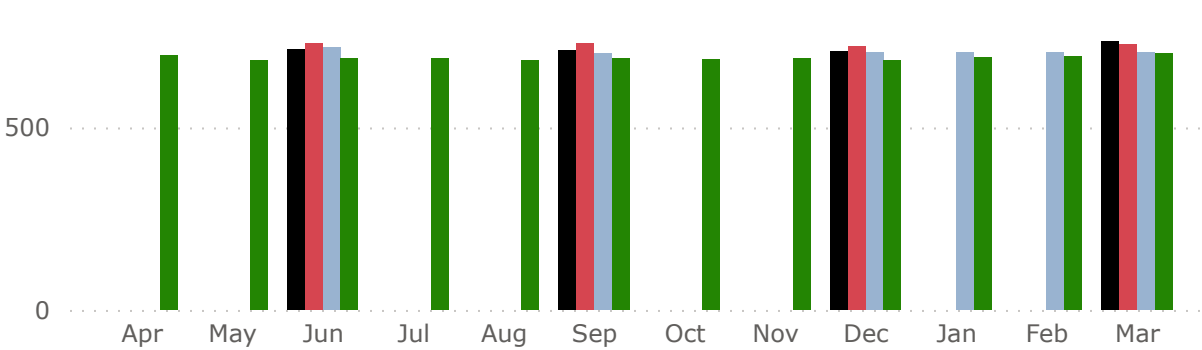
**Average number sick days lost per FTE:** This continues to decrease each month, primarily due to the significant reduction in coronavirus related absences in recent months.

**Head count:** Increase of 8 compared to February.

**Number of new starters:** There were 9 new starters in March.

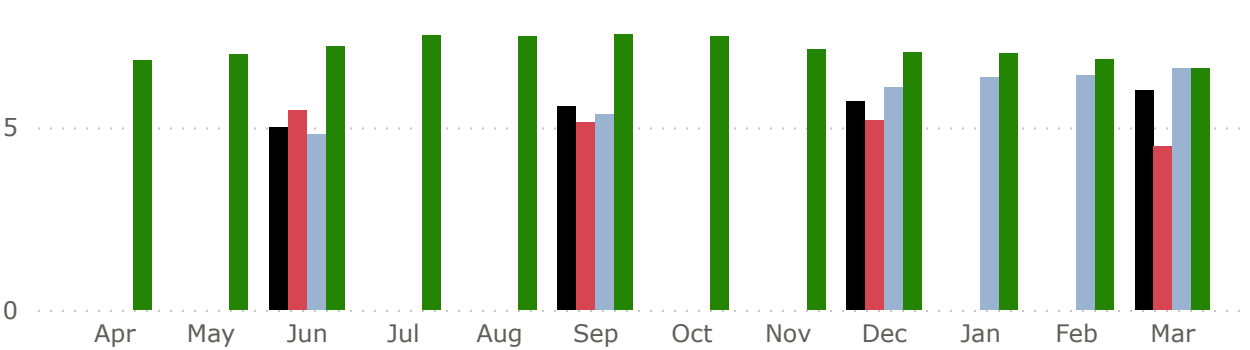
## Number of current employees (head count)

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



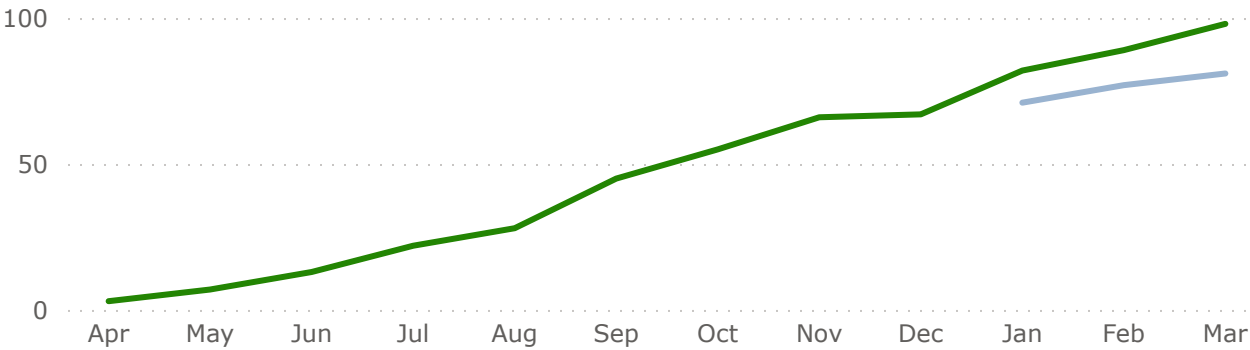
## Average number of sick days lost per FTE per year

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



## Number of new starters in 12 months to date (YTD)

Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23





# 25. Governance

Latest Data Period:  
March 2023



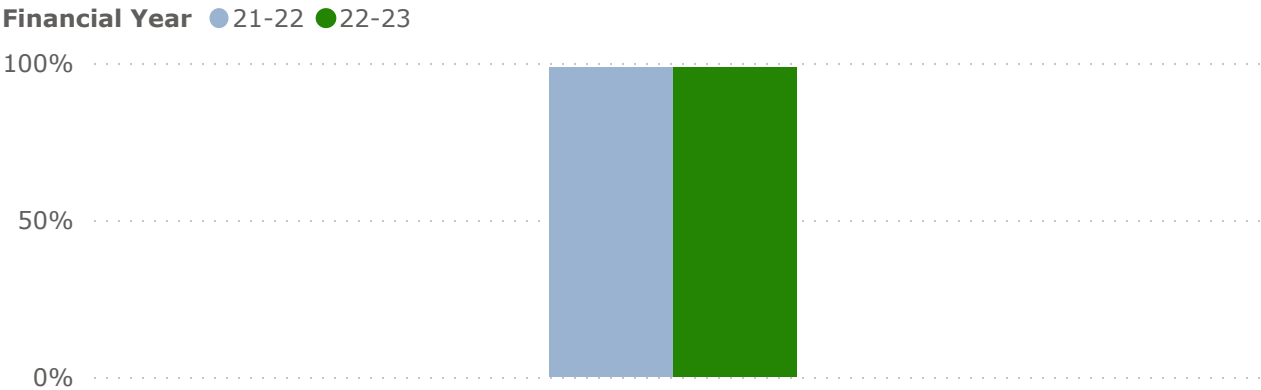
## Commentary or Summary

**Canvass:** A revised electoral register is published on 1 December each year following the annual canvass. In 2020 the canvass approach was reformed nationally and now involves national and local data matching, e-comms via text and email, postal forms, telephone canvassing and door knocking by canvassers.

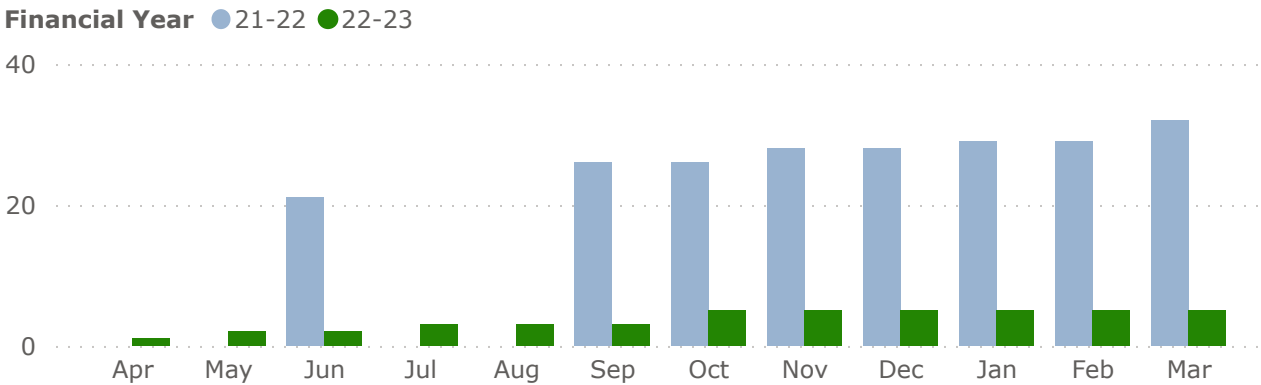
2021-22 elections were impacted by the COVID pandemic, as elections and referendums could not be held prior to May 2021.

Page 55

Percentage overall canvass completion



Number of unscheduled elections and referendums held (YTD)



## 26. Regulatory and Environment

Latest Data Period:

March 2023

**West Suffolk**  
Council

### Commentary or Summary

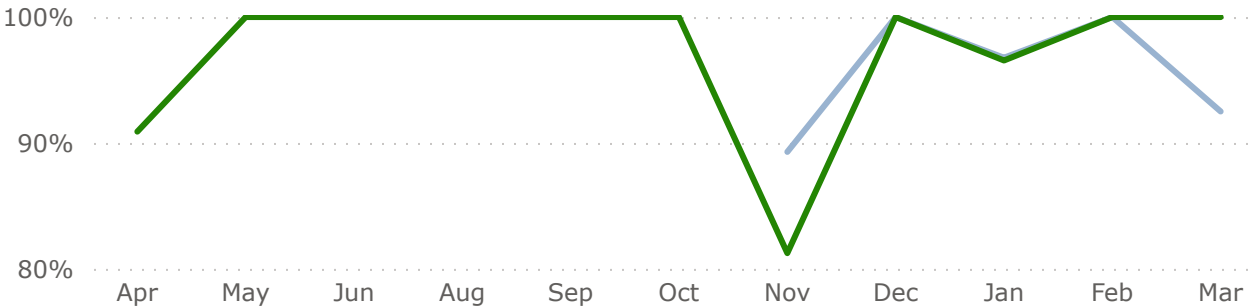
**Percentage of poor rated food businesses brought to compliance:** 50% of poor-rated businesses inspected during December 2022 were compliant during March 2023. Two businesses owned by same proprietor have had issues due to the nature of the business and access is very restrictive and these are due to be checked in April 2023.

**Number of new food premises applying for a new registration licence:** 17 new food registrations received in March 2023.

**Percentage of complaints and incidents regarding West Suffolk food businesses resolved within three months:** We received a total of 18

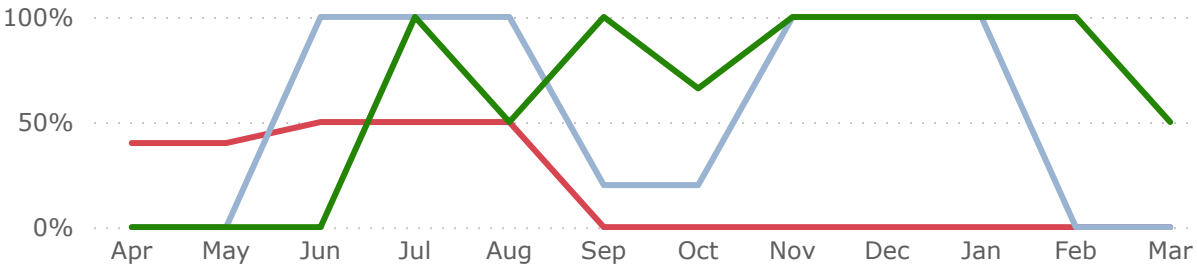
Percentage of complaints and incidents regarding West Suffolk food businesses resolved within three months

Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23



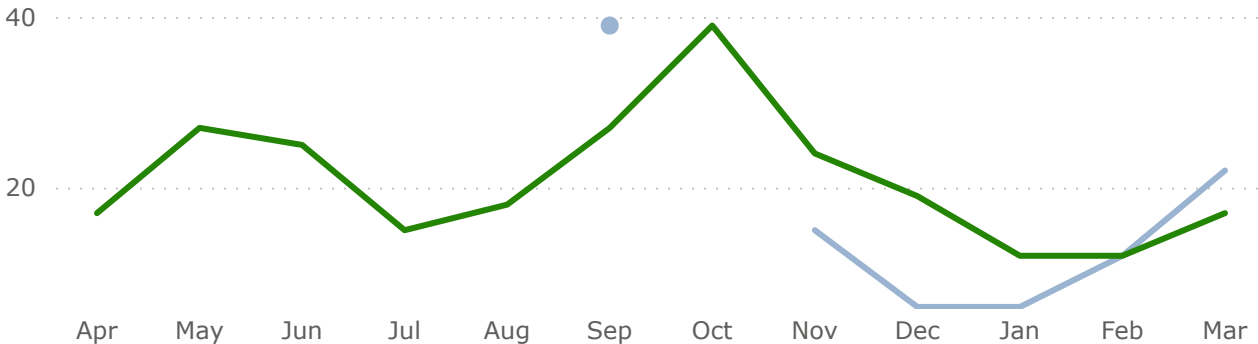
Percentage of poor rated food businesses (given rating between 0 and 2) brought to compliance (equivalent to 3 to 5 rating) with council interventions within three months

Financial Year ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



Number of new food premises applying for a new registration licence

Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23



## 27. Regulatory and Environment

Latest Data Period:

March 2023

**West Suffolk**  
Council

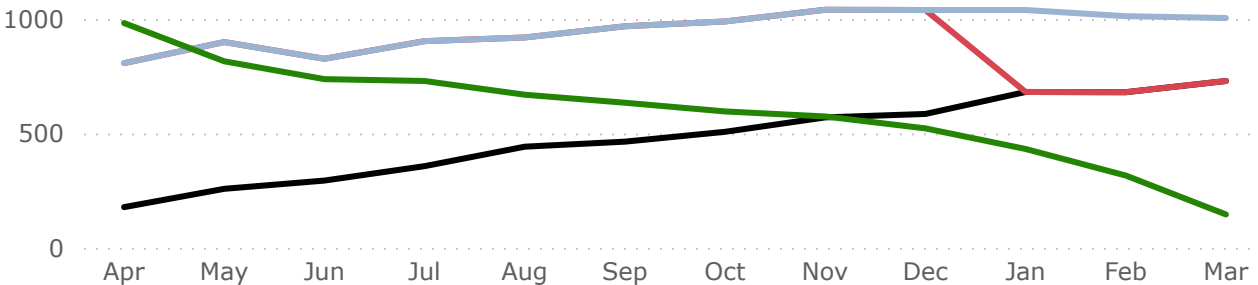
### Commentary or Summary

**Percentage of broadly compliant food businesses:** This continues to compare favourably with both Regional (97.7%) and National (96.9%) figures.

**Number of outstanding routine food hygiene inspections due:** There were 146 outstanding inspections at 31 March 2023. Food hygiene inspection activity by the CEH team is being carried out in accordance with the Food Standards Agency's post-COVID-19 Recovery Plan and associated guidance. We have been able to achieve the requirement to ensure all A to C Category inspections are completed, the team have worked really hard on this. We have also made a significant inroad into the Category D and E inspections. With the plans we have in place for this next year, the current backlog number above will be completed.

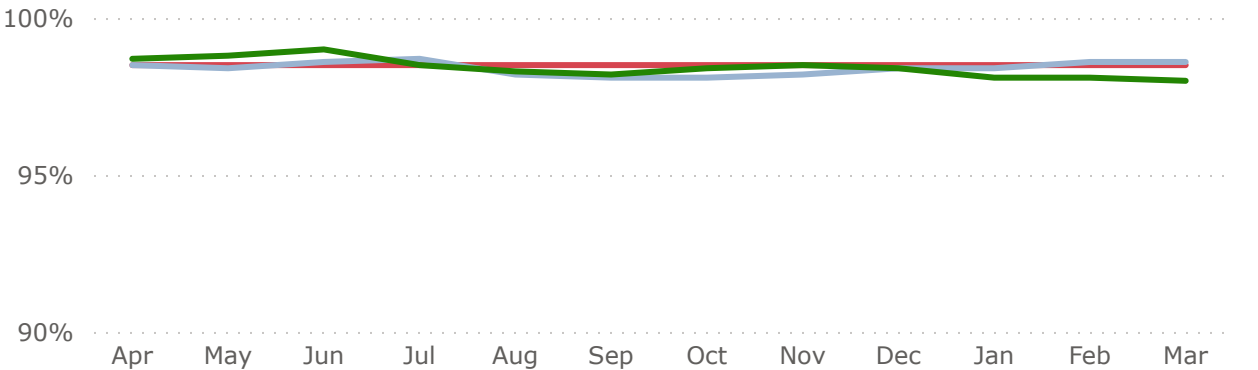
Number of outstanding routine food hygiene inspections due (Food Safety Service Plan)

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



Percentage of broadly compliant food businesses (given rating between 3 and 5)

Financial Year ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



## 28. Regulatory and Environment

Latest Data Period:

March 2023

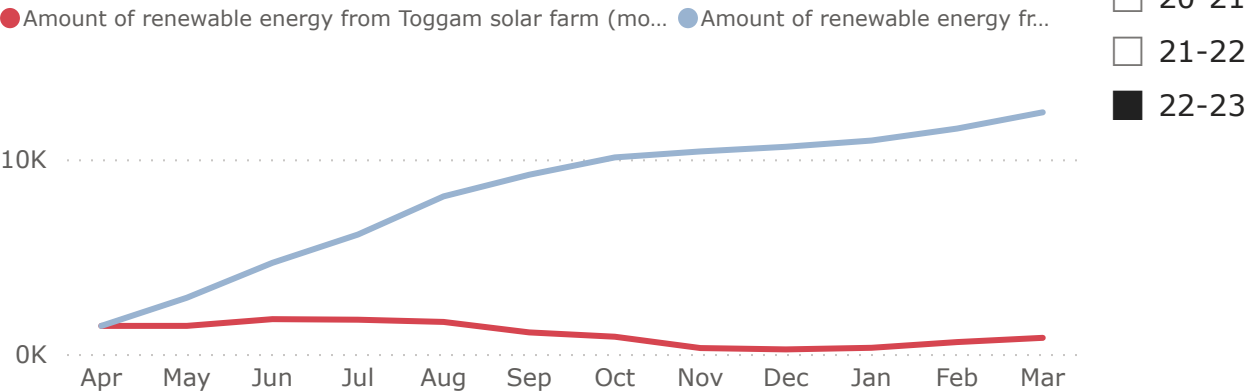
West Suffolk  
Council

### Commentary or Summary

**Capacity of solar installations completed by the council (YTD):** Completed a 509KW of solar for business installations at the STEM Building for West Suffolk College and 4kW system on a West Suffolk Council owned HMO in Newmarket in March 2023.

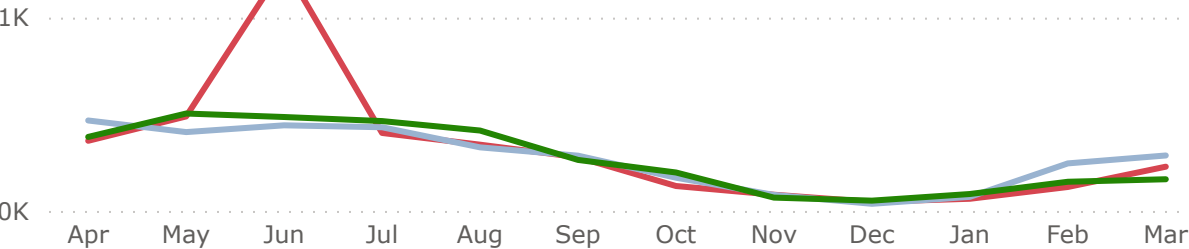
**Amount of renewable energy from Toggam solar farm (YTD):** Annual generation reached 12,415 against a target of 11,385MWh. It was the second highest year for MWh of generation, with 2018 to 2019 the highest with 13,194MWh. We achieved £2 million in income this year.

### Amount of renewable energy from Toggam solar farm (MWh)



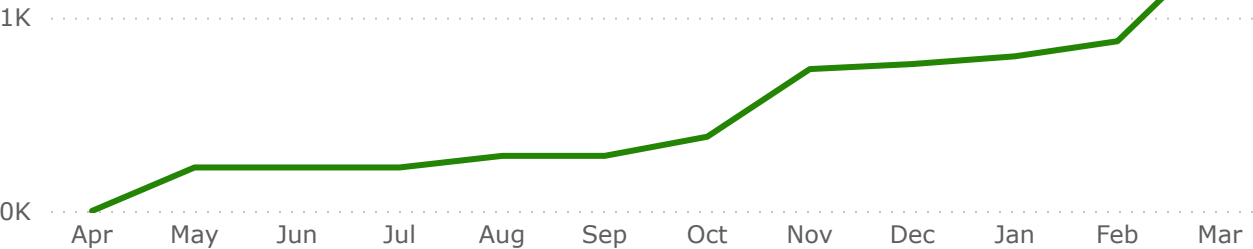
### Amount of renewable energy from other West Suffolk investments (MWh)

Financial Year 20-21 21-22 22-23



### Capacity of solar installations completed by the council (YTD) (kW)

Financial Year 22-23



# 29. Families and Communities

Latest Data Period:

March 2023

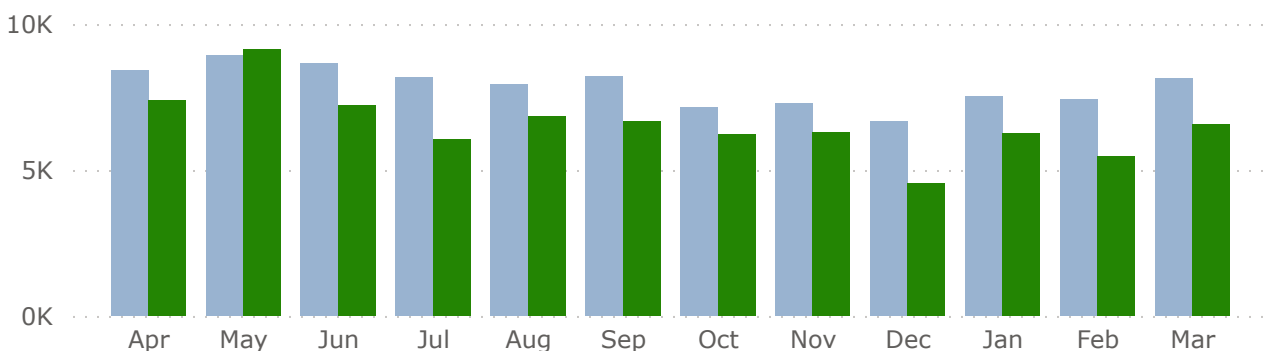
## Commentary or Summary

**Number of contacts received - phone:** 18,290 calls were answered in Q4 2022/23. Housing, Waste & Planning were the three busiest services this quarter accounting for 54% of all calls. Calls remain lower than the first two quarters but a rise on Q3.

**Number of contacts received - face to face:** Over Q4, we assisted with a total of 994 people of which 727 were customers or professionals attending specifically for West Suffolk Council (WSC). The increase in face to face contact in Q4 reflects a significant number of visitors for SCC Conferences and a number of Elections appointments. 58% of WSC visitors had an appointment. The WSC customers attending the office without an appointment were mainly Council Tax or Housing

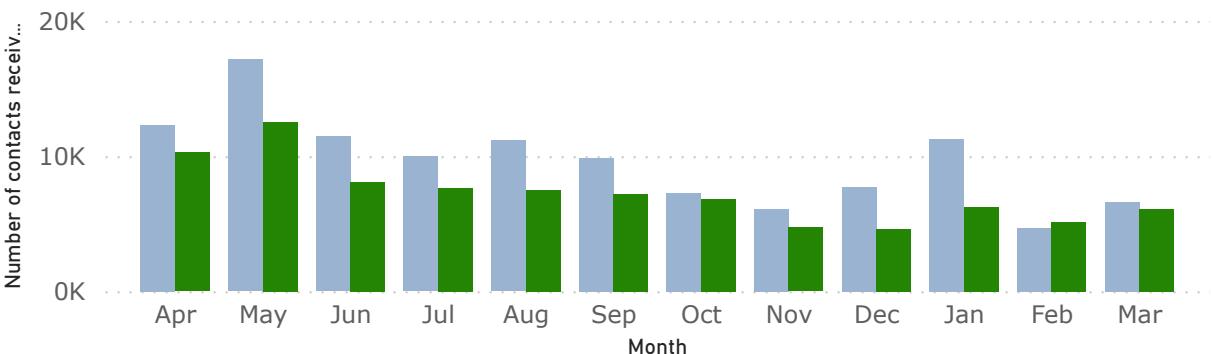
## Number of contacts received - phone

Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23



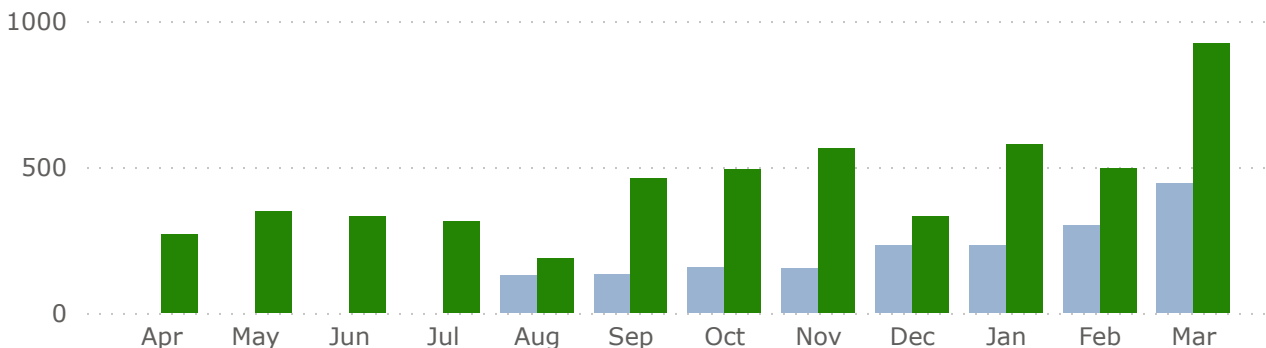
## Number of contacts received - online or email

Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23



## Number of contacts received - face-to-face

Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23



# 30. Families and Communities

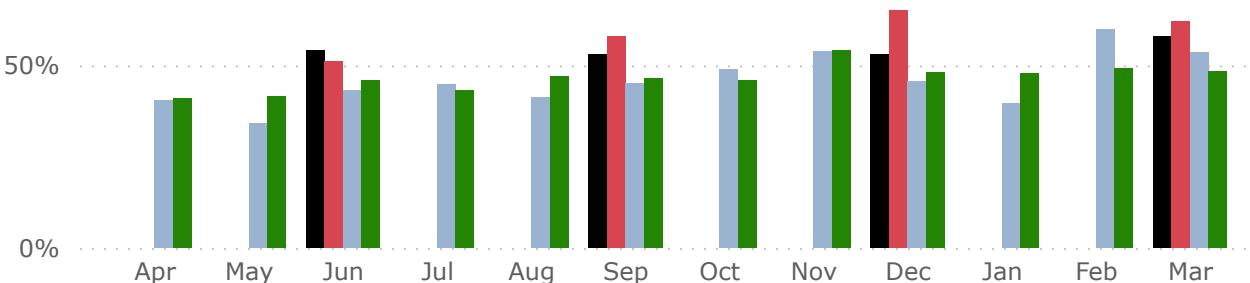
Latest Data Period:  
March 2023

## Commentary or Summary

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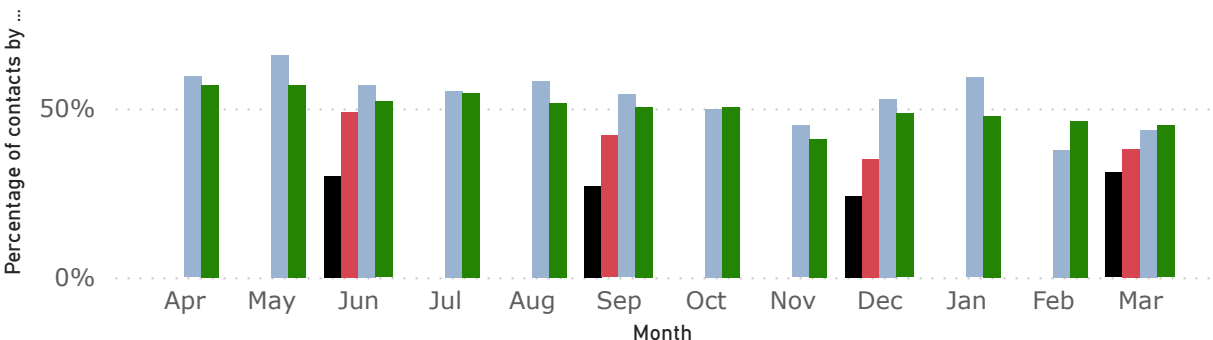
## Percentage of contacts received- phone

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



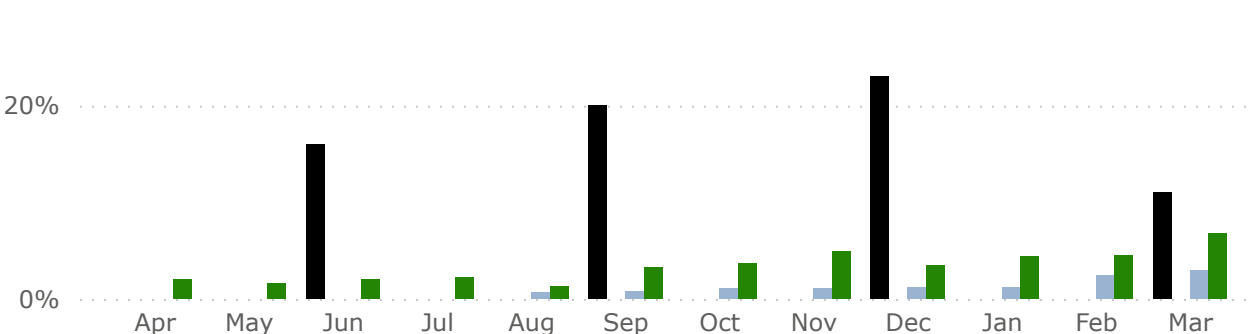
## Percentage of contacts received - online or email

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



## Percentage of contacts received - face-to-face

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



# 31. Families and Communities

Latest Data Period:  
March 2023



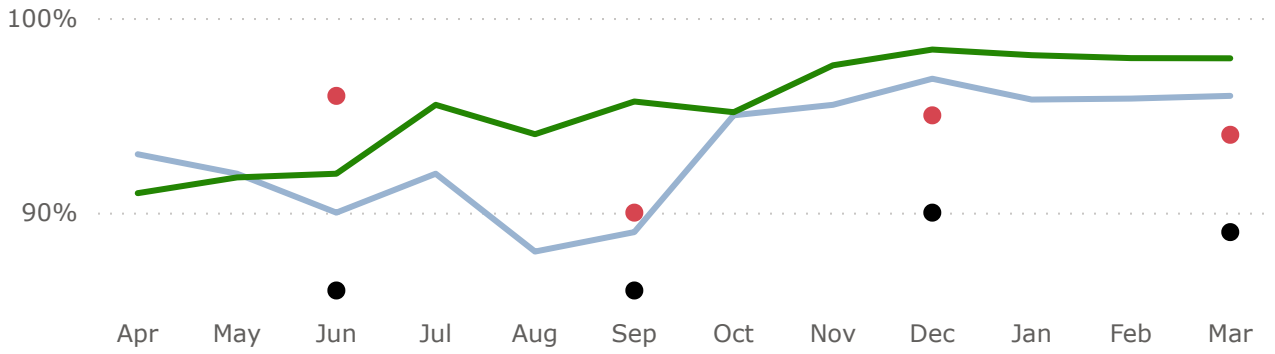
## Commentary or Summary

**Percentage of customers satisfied with service received:** We received feedback from 204 customers in Q4; 91 were satisfied, 38 neutral and 75 dissatisfied.

Page 61

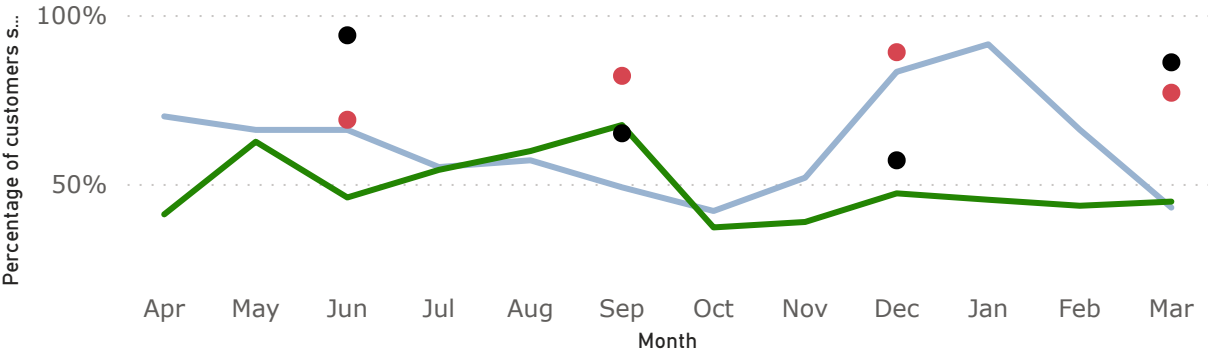
## Percentage of phone calls answered

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



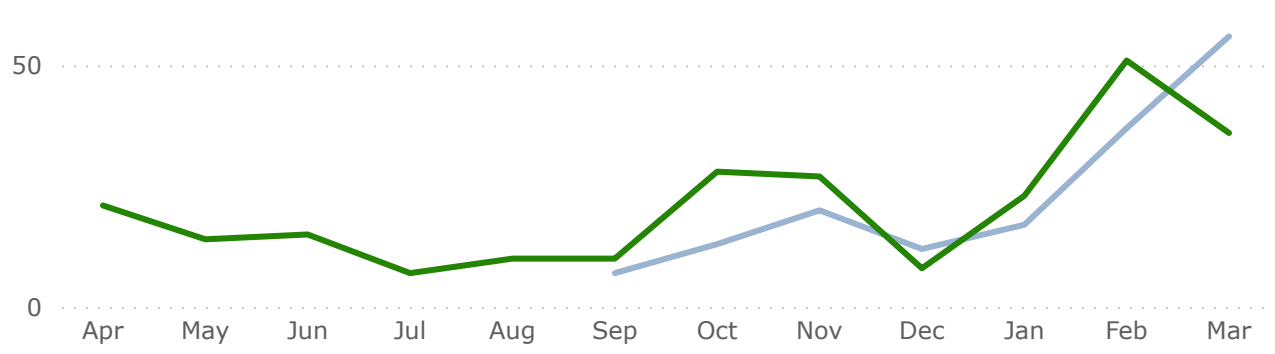
## Percentage of customers satisfied with service received

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



## Number of locality budget applications processed by the team

Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23



# 32. Growth

Latest Data Period:  
March 2023



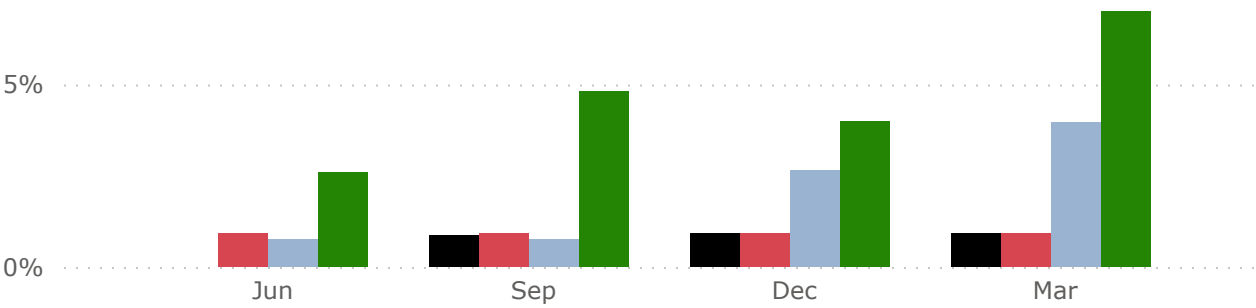
## Commentary or Summary

We saw a very small decline in the number of start-up businesses during Q3 as 2022 came to an end. However, these numbers are picking up again with an extra 374 businesses setting up in March 2023 bringing the total number of new businesses started in Q4 to 993.

Page 62

Percentage of businesses that are new start-ups in West Suffolk

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23





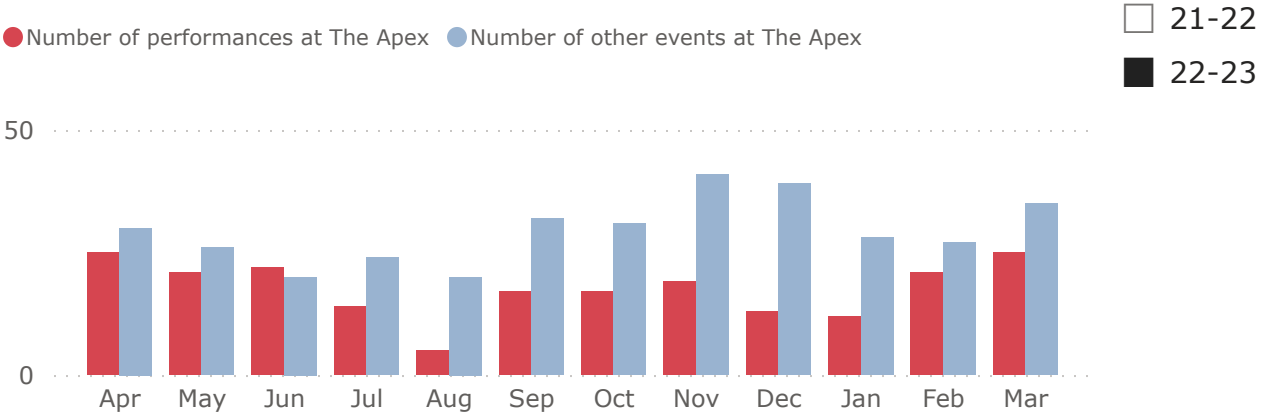
### 33. Leisure, Culture and Community Hubs

Latest Data Period:  
March 2023

Commentary or Summary

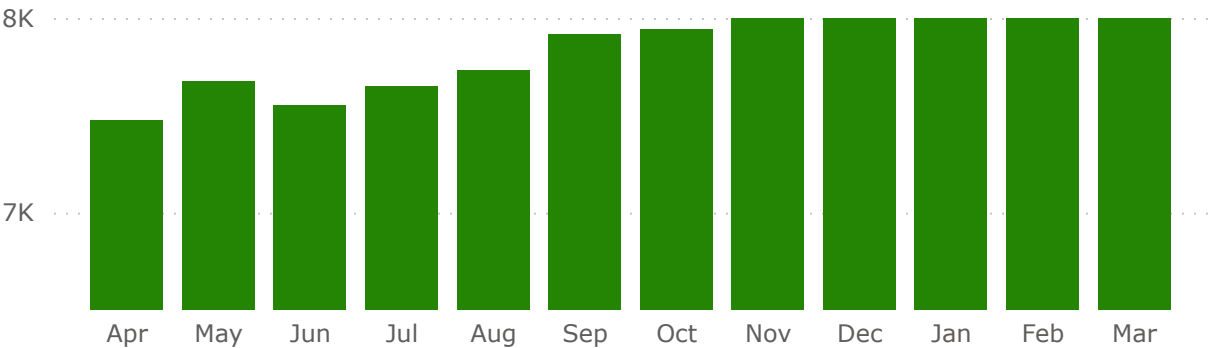
Page 63

Number of performances and other events at The Apex



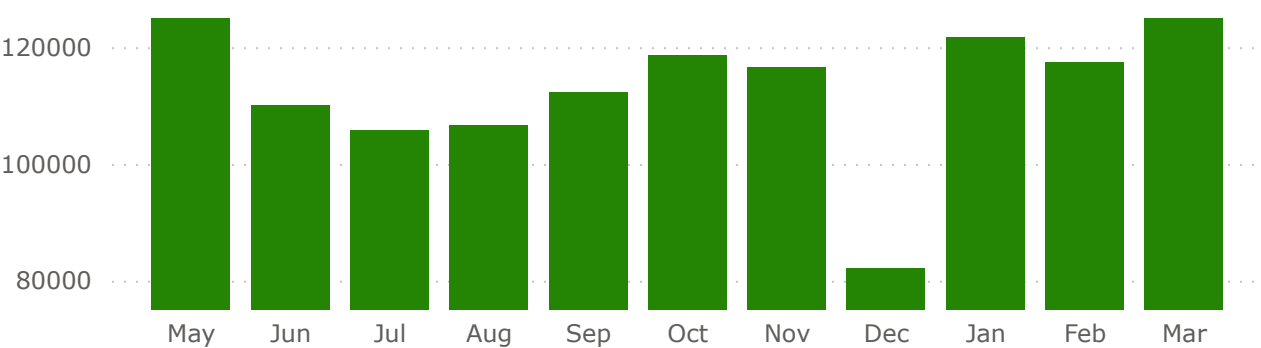
Number of Abbeycroft memberships (one month lag)

Financial Year ● 22-23



Number of non-membership admissions to Abbeycroft (one month lag)

Financial Year ● 22-23



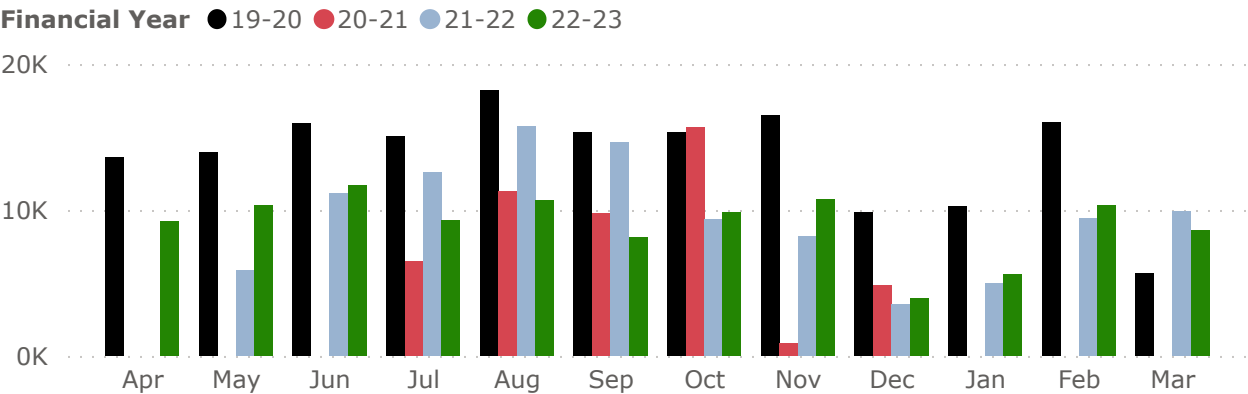
# 34. Leisure, Culture and Community Hubs

Latest Data Period:  
March 2023

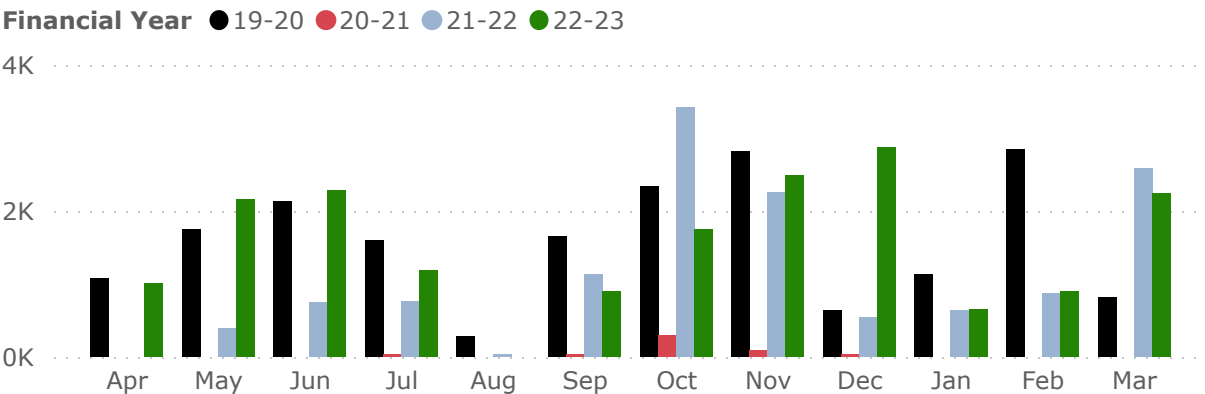
Commentary or Summary

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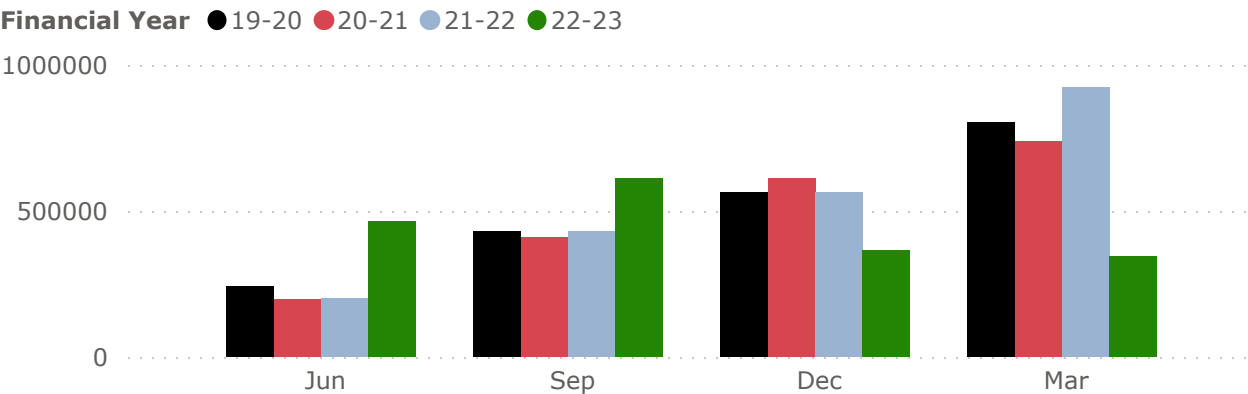
Number of visitors to West Suffolk heritage sites



Number of visits from school pupils to West Suffolk heritage sites



Number of visitors to West Suffolk parks



## 35. Planning

Latest Data Period:

March 2023

### Commentary or Summary

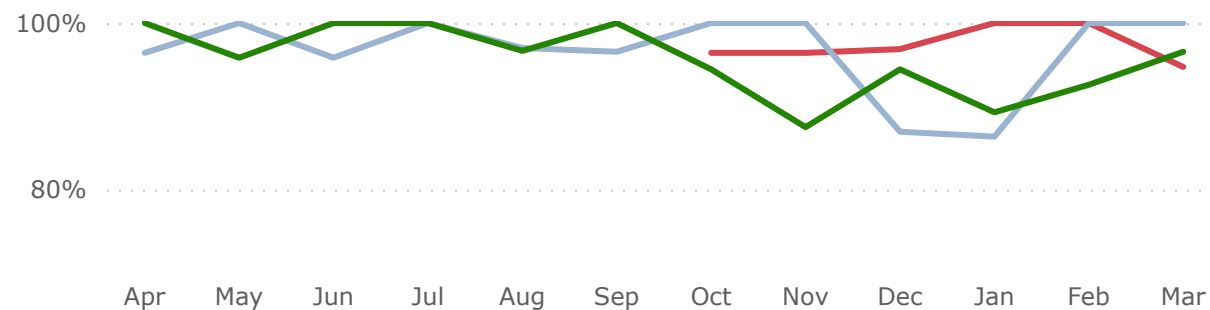
4 major planning applications were determined in March 2023. All were determined in target, and all required an extension of time.

29 minor planning applications were determined in March 2023. 8 applications were determined within 8 weeks, 20 required an extension of time. 1 application with an extension of time was determined outside of target.

89 other planning applications were determined in March 2023. 43 were determined within 8 weeks, 41 required an extension of time. 5 applications with an extension of time were determined outside of target.

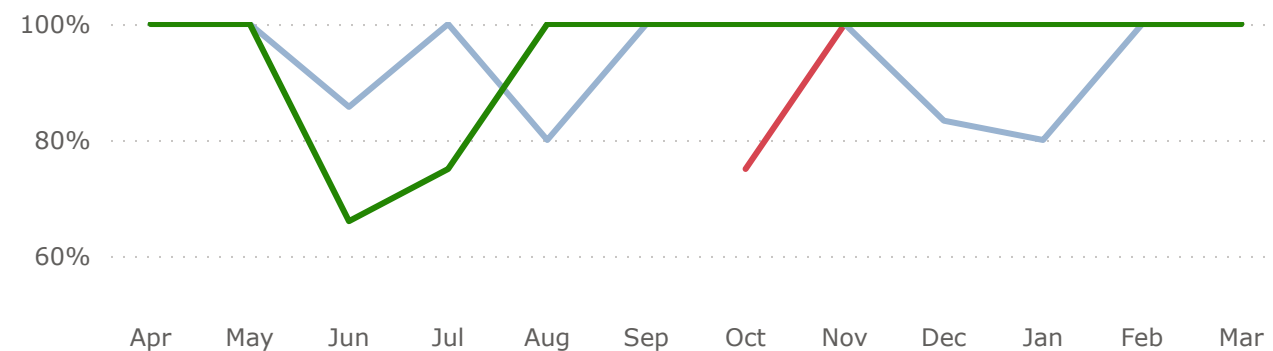
### Percentage of minor planning applications determined within the agreed timescales

Financial Year ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



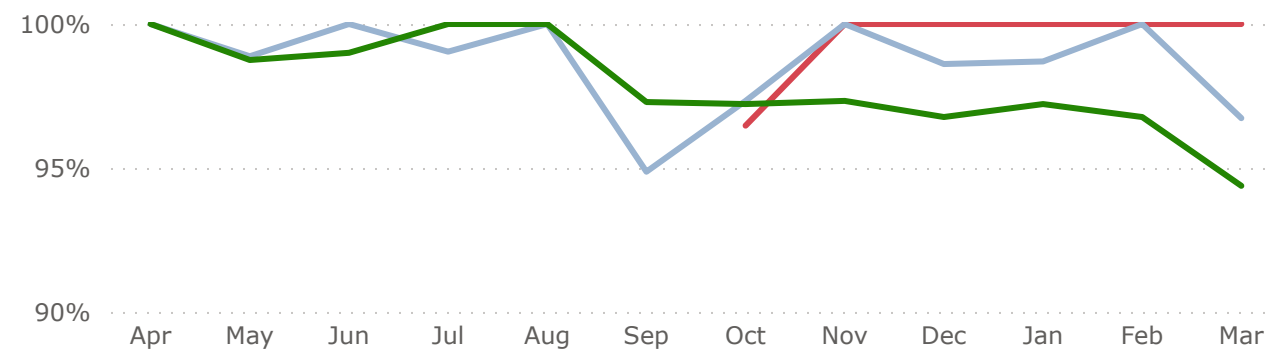
### Percentage of major planning applications determined within the agreed timescales

Financial Year ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



### Percentage of other planning applications determined within the agreed timescales

Financial Year ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



## 36. Planning

Latest Data Period:

March 2023

### Commentary or Summary

**% of major and minor applications with pre- application advice:** 31 major and minor application were received in March 2023, 14 of those had a pre-app.

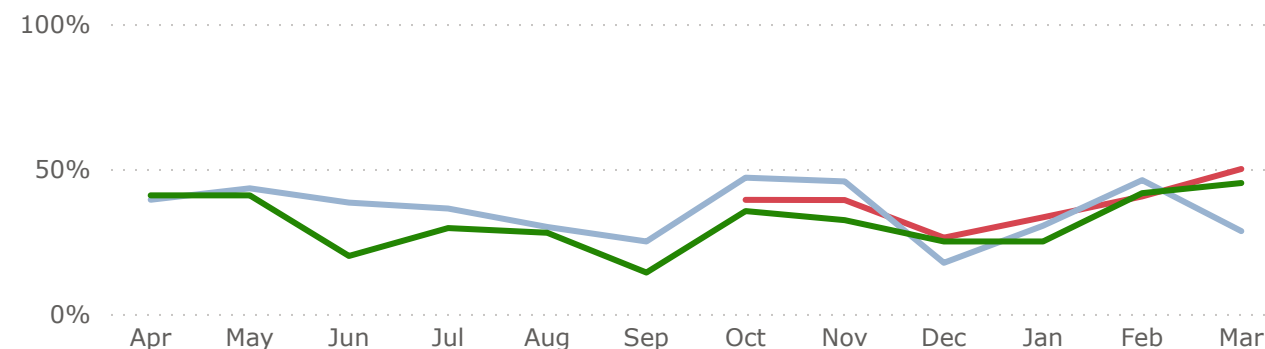
It should be noted that the percentage of pre-applications does not take into account the relative complexity of pre-application requests. Neither does it reflect the fees received (which are linked to complexity).

**% Applications with pre-app advice:** 199 applications were received in March 2023. 70 of these had pre-app advice of which 33 were valid first time.

This provides a useful measure of the value of pre-application enquiries and

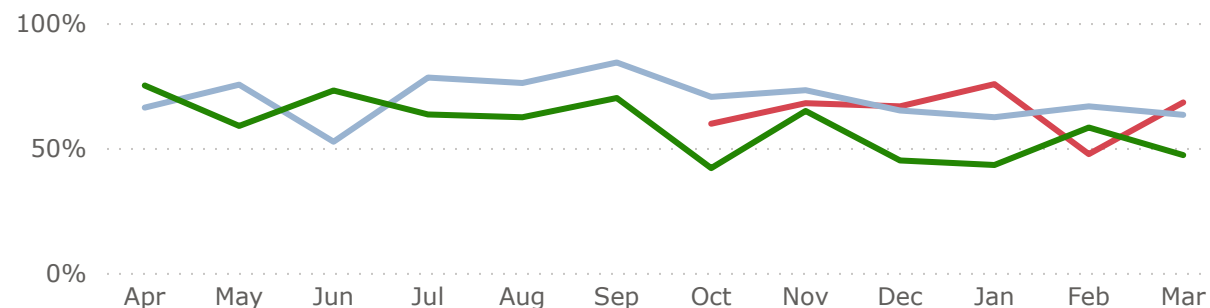
Percentage of major and minor applications with pre-application advice.

Financial Year ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



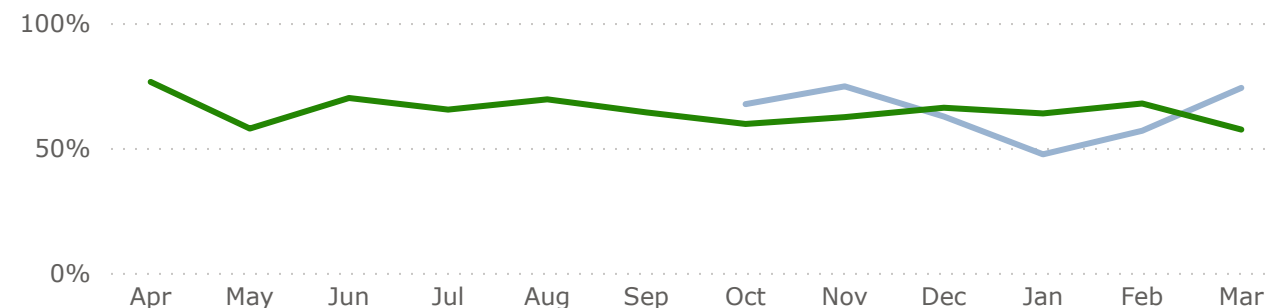
Percentage of applications with pre-application advice that are right first time out of all received

Financial Year ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



Percentage of applications without pre-application advice that are right first time out of all received

Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23



## 37. Planning

Latest Data Period:

March 2023

### Commentary or Summary

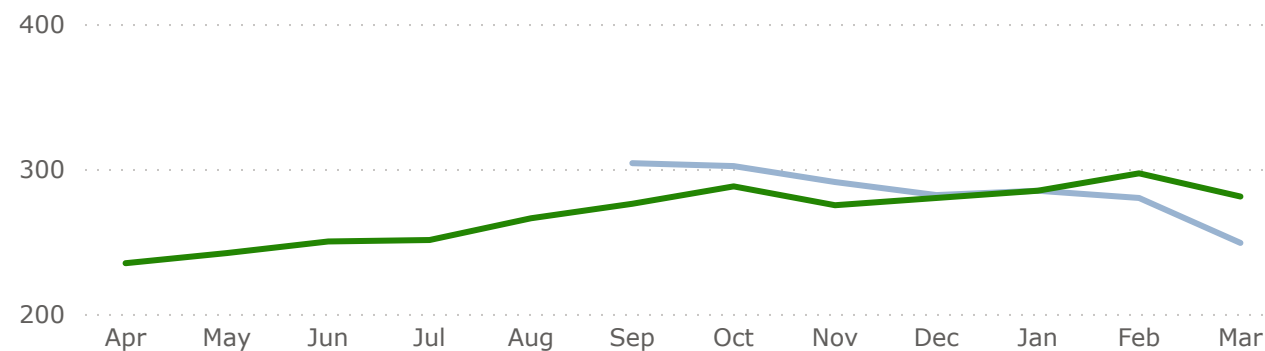
**Planning enforcement cases:** We have received 19 new cases in March 2023, we have resolved 33 cases. The reasons closed are detailed below:

- No breach established - 12
- Not expedient to pursue - 10
- Planning application approved - 2
- Remedied following informal action - 8
- Transferred to new case - 1

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### Number of open planning enforcement cases

Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23



# 38. Planning

Latest Data Period:  
March 2023



## Commentary or Summary

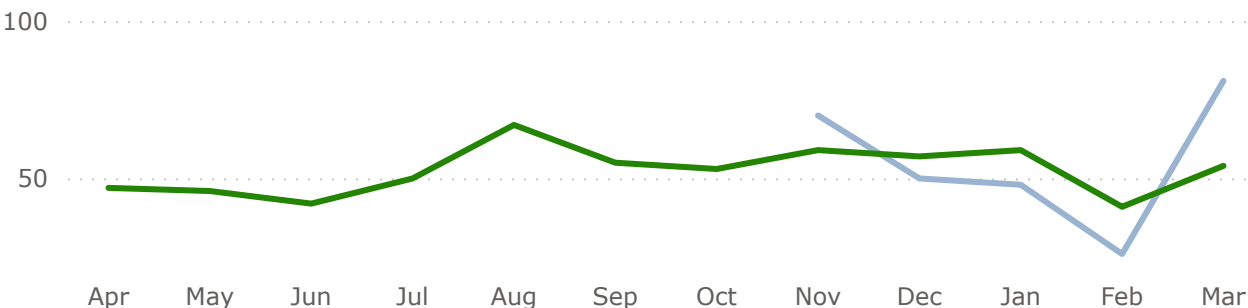
### Housing targets:

- 791 dwellings per annum (rounded to 800 by Strategic Planning team). This target now has now been met in March 2023 with 1003 net additional houses completed.
- 5 year land supply 5.4 years (currently reviewed for 2022/23)

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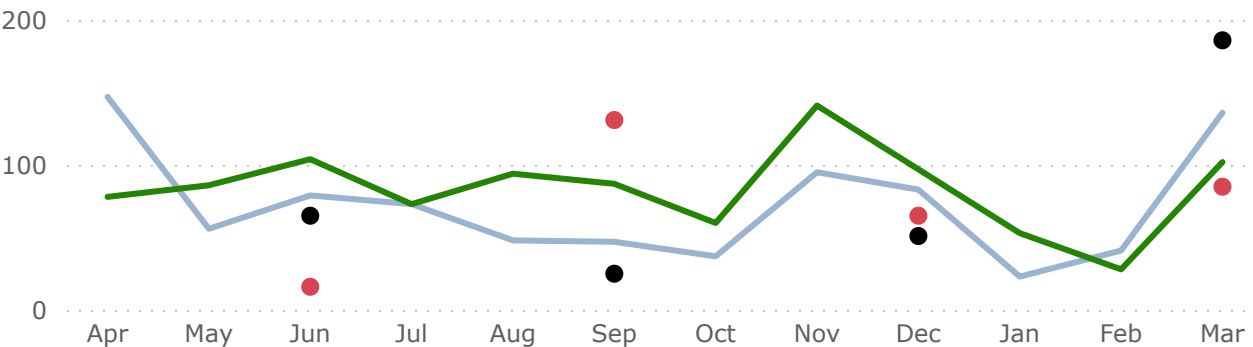
Number of applications not monitored by DLUHC which are included on government returns

Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23



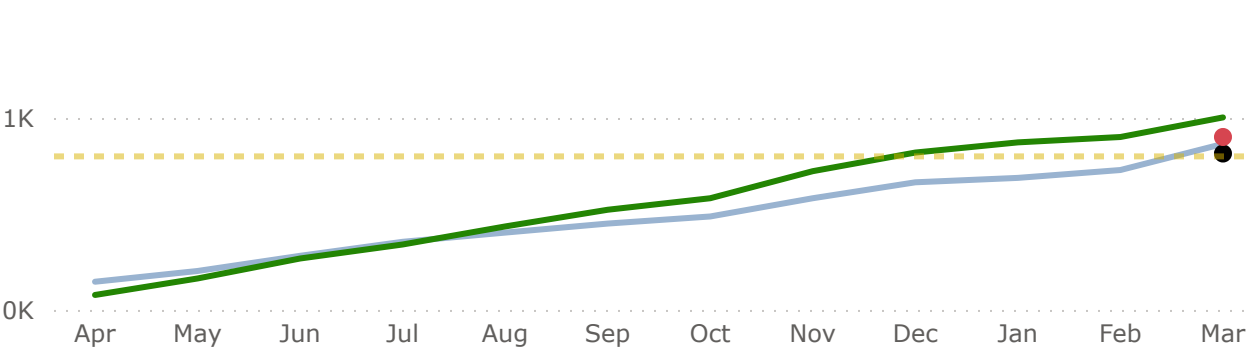
Number of housing units delivered

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



Number of net additional housing units completed (YTD)

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



39. Operations

Latest Data Period:  
March 2023

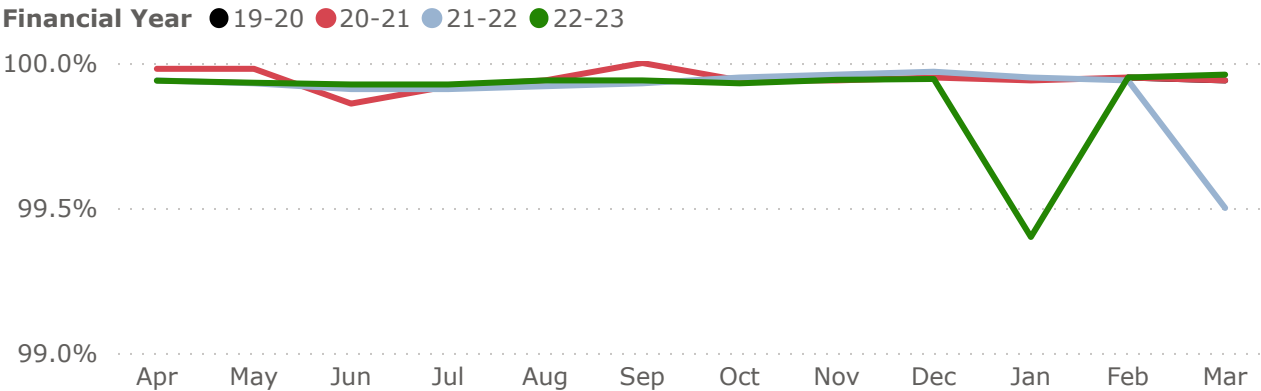


Commentary or Summary

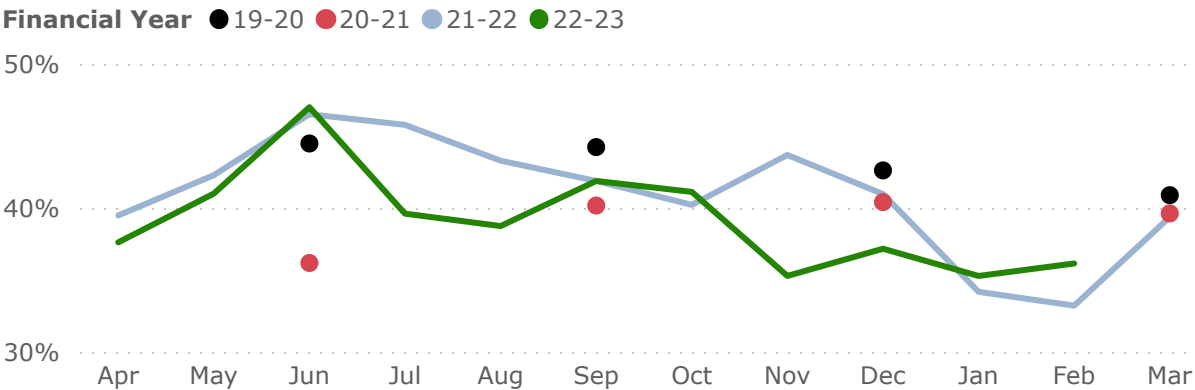
**Percentage of household bins successfully collected:** Waste collections staff levels have stabilised, and services are running to schedule, collections rates continue to be near 100%.

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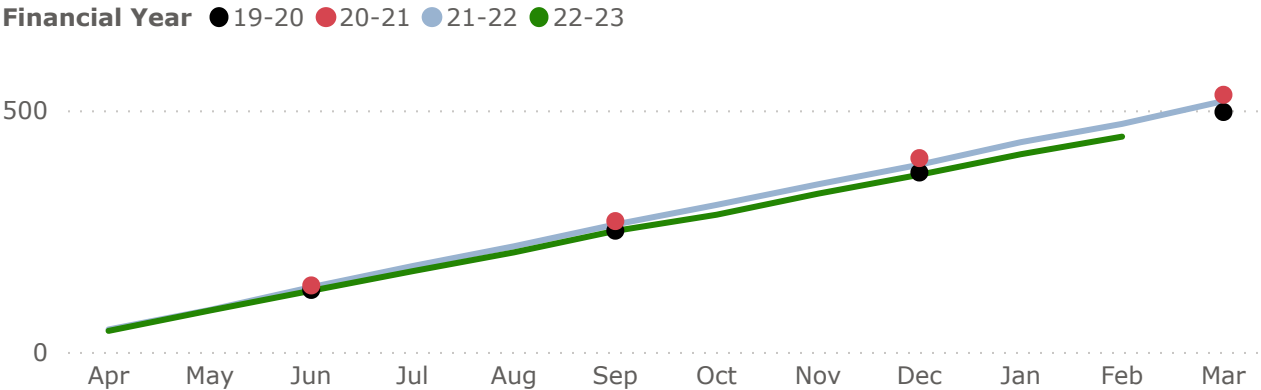
Percentage of household bins successfully collected



Percentage of household waste recycled and/or composted (one month lag)



Average amount of residual waste per household - KG (YTD - one month lag)



# 40. Operations

Latest Data Period:  
March 2023

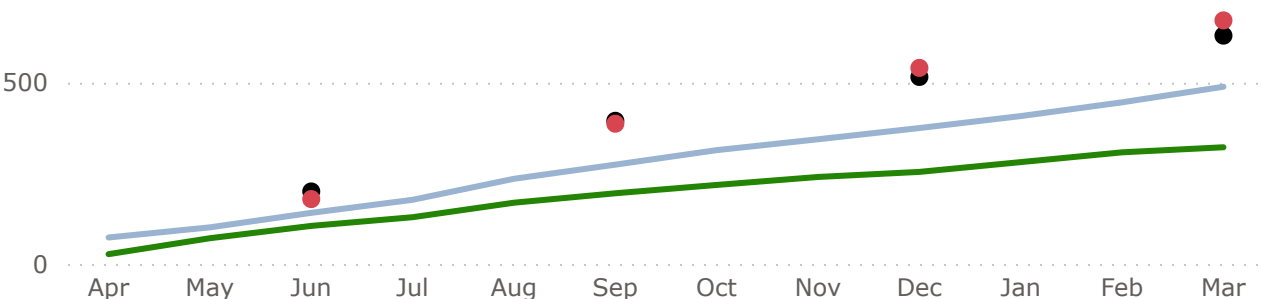
## Commentary or Summary

**Number of fly tipping incidents recorded (YTD):** Q4 has seen a slight increase in the number of fly tipping incidents from the previous quarter but overall, the number of incidents are down 34% compared to the previous financial year (this will be mainly due to a new method of recording data only on cleared fly tipping incidents not on all that are reported. Further work is underway to understand the implications of this).

**Number of actions taken to combat fly tipping (YTD):** Enforcement actions for Q4 are the highest of the financial year which is mainly due to proactive work carried out by the food safety team checking on the Duty of Care of premises they visit but this also includes 8 EPNs issued for minor fly tipping offences.

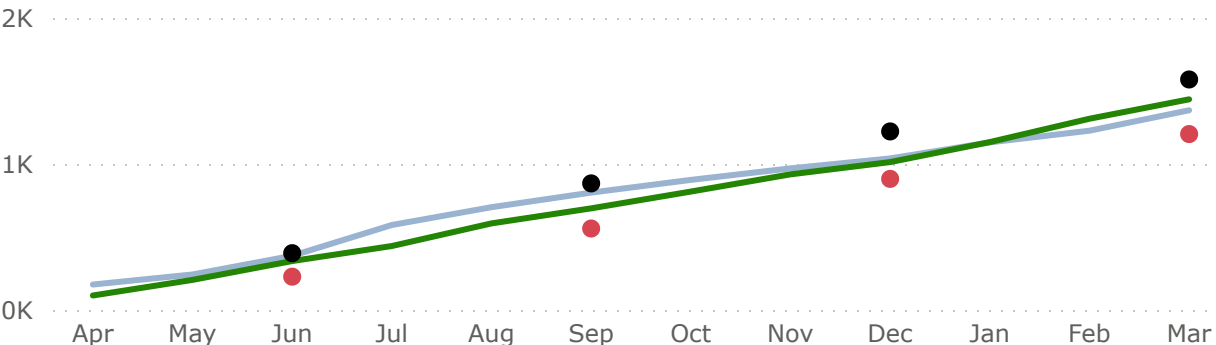
Number of fly tipping incidents recorded (YTD)

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



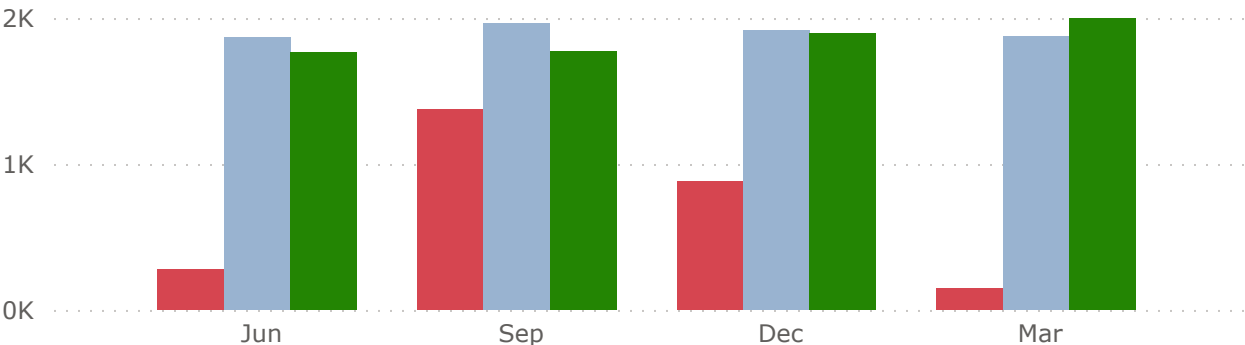
Number of actions taken to combat fly tipping (YTD)

Financial Year ● 19-20 ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



Number of hours contributed to green and heritage spaces by volunteers

Financial Year ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23





Latest Data Period:  
March 2023

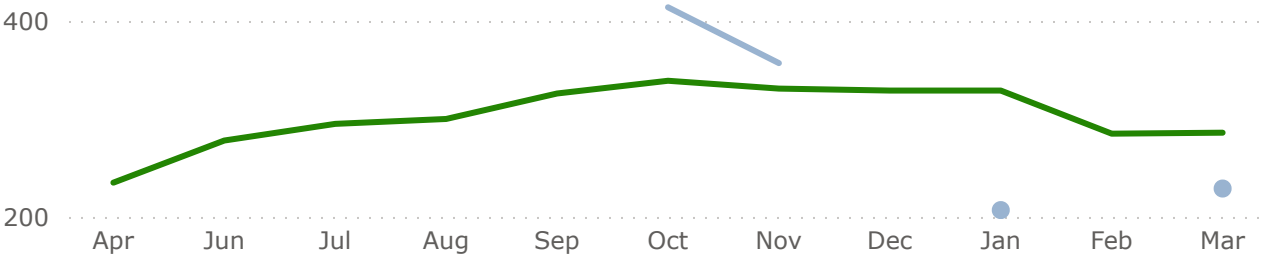


Commentary or Summary

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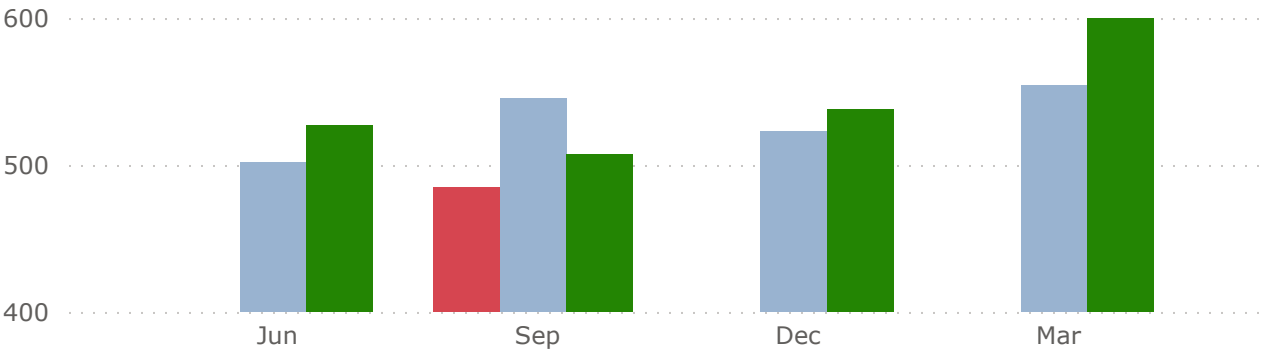
Number of tree-related public enquiries

Financial Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23



Number of registered volunteers

Financial Year ● 20-21 ● 21-22 ● 22-23



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## Appendix B - income and expenditure - year end outturn against budget - March 2023

	Year end outturn £	Annual budget £	Net (positive) or negative variance £	Forecast variance notes - figures in brackets represent underspends or additional income achieved.
Transfer payments: Net (Income) and expenditure on Benefits	(182,082)	(199,870)	17,788	<b>Net Benefit position slightly worse than budgeted</b> Overall gross budgets comprises: £28,068,000 rent allowances, temporary accommodation rebates and discretionary benefits, mostly funded by benefits and rent rebate subsidy, discretionary rent allowance subsidy and overpayments recovered.
<b>Total Net Benefits (income) or expenditure:</b>	<b>(182,082)</b>	<b>(199,870)</b>	<b>17,788</b>	
Income from Business Rates	1,825,366	1,825,366	0	<b>Net overall Business Rate income in line with overall budget</b> The year end outturn position includes: (£961,000) section 31 grants (provided by Central Government to compensate for national reliefs awarded such as small business rates relief and retail hospitality relief) higher than budgeted (£1,152,000) increased share of Suffolk pool income as a result of more than budgeted business rates income across Suffolk authorities including West Suffolk (agreed sharing of business rate benefits across Suffolk authorities) £2,240,000 increased levy payable to Suffolk pool (proportion of business rate benefit payable to the pool in accordance with statutory provisions).  Net overall income reduction increase mitigated by a lower transfer to the Business Rates Equalisation reserve.
Income from Formula Grant (Business Rate Retention Scheme), Council Tax and New Homes Bonus Grant	(17,333,008)	(17,333,008)	0	<b>Formula Grant income in line with budget</b> Grants received by the council, based on the annual local government finance settlement. These include the following: (£4,524,000) Business Rate Retention scheme income (£1,756,000) New Homes Bonus grant (£312,000) Services grant (£10,741,000) Council Tax income (net of Parish demand).

## Appendix B - income and expenditure - year end outturn against budget - March 2023

	Year end outturn £	Annual budget £	Net (positive) or negative variance £	Forecast variance notes - figures in brackets represent underspends or additional income achieved.
Income from other grants	(3,462,334)	(3,164,743)	(297,591)	<p><b>Income higher than budgeted</b>            (£200,000) additional income for Test and Trace Administration grant            (£37,000) Business Grant post-scheme recovery grant            (£10,000) Self Isolation Payments funding            The above government grants, which were all COVID-related, were "one-off" for 2022 to 2023 administrative grants plus several smaller grants</p> <p><b>Budget and year end position includes the following:</b>            (£328,500) COVID-19 outbreak management funding, utilised for public health protection            (£260,000) Household Support Fund grant, used for supporting Housing Options initiatives            (£656,000) Homelessness Prevention Grant, used to fund Housing Options Services            (£475,000) Rough Sleeping Initiative, used for Housing Options Outreach Services            (£207,000) Revenue Support Grant, non-specific grant utilised to support the net cost of council services            (£181,000) Rural Services Delivery Grant, additional grant reflecting the rural nature of the council            All of the above are fully committed for utilisation against services during the year.</p>
<b>Total income from external grants, business rates and council tax:</b>	<b>(18,969,976)</b>	<b>(18,672,385)</b>	<b>(297,591)</b>	
Income from external contributions and reimbursements	(4,686,216)	(3,875,740)	(810,476)	<p><b>Income higher than budgeted:</b>            (£469,000) income from Suffolk County Council. This is predominantly due to increased Recycling Performance Payments (RPPs). These are based on prices for recycled materials which are traded worldwide, net of the operational costs. Although operating costs increased, this was more than offset by higher material values which were sustained for longer than anticipated. A revised RPP credit is factored into the 2023 to 2024 budget.            (£273,000) reimbursement for increased utilities and other costs from other partner organisations sharing our offices            (£178,000) increased reimbursement from Anglia Revenues Partnership as a result of reduced net costs across the other partner councils, linked primarily to "one-off" government grants for the administration of the Energy Bills Support Scheme Payments.            £52,000 reduced income in respect of Shared Legal service with Babergh Mid Suffolk Councils, and Off Street Car Parks (linked to spend and income recovered)            £25,000 reduction in Planning Section 106 monitoring contributions from developers.</p>

## Appendix B - income and expenditure - year end outturn against budget - March 2023

	Year end outturn £	Annual budget £	Net (positive) or negative variance £	Forecast variance notes - figures in brackets represent underspends or additional income achieved.
Income from Service Level Agreements (SLAs)	(910,802)	(891,260)	(19,542)	<b>Income higher than budgeted</b> Includes service level agreements for the provision of ICT, payroll, facilities and financial services to outside bodies.
Income from ticket sales, commission and memberships	(1,891,072)	(1,853,024)	(38,048)	<b>Income higher than budgeted</b> Whilst events income at the Apex is recovering strongly, it is yet to reach previous levels and the ticket Sales outturn position is around £24,000 lower than budgeted. There are other income streams that are still recovering, for example membership fees, £18,000 lower than budgeted. The improved year end position is largely due to increased commission income from catering (£77,000)
Income from other Leisure sales	(444,094)	(441,139)	(2,955)	<b>Income slightly higher than budgeted</b> Comprises various smaller variances across a number of leisure sites.
Income from Planning Fees	(1,744,233)	(1,622,039)	(122,194)	<b>Income higher than budgeted</b> (£23,000) Planning Application Fees (£100,000) Income from Planning Performance Agreements and Pre-application fees.
Income from Building Regulation Fees	(358,610)	(367,050)	8,440	<b>Income lower than budgeted</b> Income continues to recover, year end position 2.3 per cent lower than budgeted.
Income from Refuse collection and sales of scrap materials	(4,707,227)	(4,664,882)	(42,345)	<b>Income lower than budgeted</b> £60,000 Replacement bin income lower than budget. The new estimated budget target was an assumption based on previous demand. Whilst the implementation of the new charging policy was delayed (implemented in June 2022), the charges are being targeted at applicable replacement household bins. This has been factored into the 2023 to 2024 budget.  <b>Income higher than budgeted:</b> (£102,000) refuse collection and sales of scrap material, including plastic and cardboard. Income was higher than budgeted due to the sustained high recycled material values during the year.

## Appendix B - income and expenditure - year end outturn against budget - March 2023

	Year end outturn £	Annual budget £	Net (positive) or negative variance £	Forecast variance notes - figures in brackets represent underspends or additional income achieved.
Income from Car Parking	(7,156,737)	(8,404,042)	<b>1,247,305</b>	<p><b>Income lower than budgeted</b></p> <p>This is due to continued reduced numbers in our car parks. Whilst these are gradually recovering from the levels seen during COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, it is not yet clear if there are now lower levels of activity in the Bury St Edmunds central car parks due to longer term behavioural change, shorter term impacts from the cost of fuel or lower available disposable income.</p> <p>This will continue to be closely monitored on an ongoing basis; however, it is uncertain how quickly this trend will develop, and how any customer behavioural changes will impact on our income in the short and medium term.</p> <p>This lower income expectation has been factored into the 2023 to 2024 budget.</p>
Income from Solar Farm and other energy initiatives	(2,594,972)	(2,408,170)	<b>(186,802)</b>	<p><b>Income higher than budgeted</b></p> <p>As a result of increased generation from April 2022 to March 2023 (12,415 Mwh against a target of 11,385 Mwh), income from the Toggam Solar Farm exceeded the budget for this financial year by (£172,000).</p> <p>Income from feed-in tariffs and sales of fuel energy income was also higher than budgeted as a result of continued investment in renewables (£25,000).</p>
Income from Licensing	(387,158)	(401,647)	<b>14,489</b>	<p><b>Income lower than budgeted</b></p> <p>Licensing income levels are generally showing signs of recovery, however the year end position includes lower income from premises licences of £23,000.</p>
Income from Markets	(252,168)	(359,140)	<b>106,972</b>	<p><b>Income lower than budgeted:</b></p> <p>The Markets income has struggled to recover to pre-pandemic levels. Whilst this is lower than budgeted, it is subject to ongoing review and actions from the recent markets review.</p> <p>This lower income expectation has been factored into the 2023 to 2024 budget.</p>

## Appendix B - income and expenditure - year end outturn against budget - March 2023

	Year end outturn £	Annual budget £	Net (positive) or negative variance £	Forecast variance notes - figures in brackets represent underspends or additional income achieved.
Income from other sales	(2,015,244)	(2,115,708)	100,464	<p><b>Overall income lower than budgeted:</b></p> <p><b>Income lower than budgeted</b>            £127,000 General Landscaping, as a result of prioritising internal demand from council owned land across the District. Increased council demand is factored into the 2023 to 2024 budget.            £35,000 Vehicle workshop. The income target was associated with implementation of an Authorised Testing Facility (ATF) at the West Suffolk Operational Hub (WSOH) to Undertake heavy goods vehicle MOTs. Due to an embargo on new facilities during the pandemic, combined with a post pandemic change to the ATF application criteria, alternative income opportunities were sought. This has included the team offering alternative services and securing maintenance agreements with third party fleet operators. Service demand and the associated income has been increasing steadily although current service capacity will restrict income growth. This has been factored into the 2023 to 2024 budget.            £65,000 Tree Maintenance income, offset in part by reduction in salary costs, factored into the 2023 to 2024 budget            £43,000 Land Charges, as a result of migration of income to the Land Registry, factored into the 2023 to 2024 budget            £29,000 Renewable Heat Incentive income, as a result of faulty Ground Source Heat Pump at Mildenhall Hub for 4 months</p> <p><b>Income higher than budget:</b>            (£117,000) Additional Car Parking administration income (Ringo), to offset increased costs, factored in to the 2023 to 2024 budget            (£15,000) income from Electric Vehicle Chargers (invested by West Suffolk), factored in to the 2023 to 2024 budget            (£32,000) Strategic Marketing income            (£20,000) Increased income from CCTV, factored into the 2023 to 2024 budget            (£39,000) other sales, factored into the 2023 to 2024 budget            Plus a number of smaller variances across the services.</p>
Income from Rentals	(7,310,146)	(6,724,112)	(586,034)	<p><b>Income higher than budgeted</b>            (£388,000) Industrial Units rents due to unplanned tenant secured in Olding Road            (£300,000) additional income from backdated rent review and lease surrender premium</p> <p><b>Income lower than budgeted:</b>            £85,000 income lower than budgeted on 17/18 Cornhill as a result of project timings.</p> <p>Plus a number of smaller variances.</p>

## Appendix B - income and expenditure - year end outturn against budget - March 2023

	Year end outturn £	Annual budget £	Net (positive) or negative variance £	Forecast variance notes - figures in brackets represent underspends or additional income achieved.
Income from investment interest and dividends received	(2,031,730)	(695,275)	(1,336,455)	<p><b>Income higher than budgeted</b></p> <p>Mainly due to (£1,317,000) Investment interest, based on higher balances than originally anticipated and improved rates due to increases in the Bank of England base rate.</p> <p>This variance includes a reduction in loan interest from Barley Homes, based on the projected pipeline and timing of developments for the year and the subsequent need for loan drawdown. This is currently offset with a corresponding increase in the Barley Homes dividend. This will be managed within the wider context of the capital project financing reserve.</p>
<b>Total income from Sales, contributions and reimbursements:</b>	<b>(36,490,409)</b>	<b>(34,823,228)</b>	<b>(1,667,181)</b>	
<b>Total income (excluding Benefits):</b>	<b>(55,460,385)</b>	<b>(53,495,613)</b>	<b>(1,964,772)</b>	
Expenditure - total cost of employment	31,610,916	31,115,718	495,198	<p><b>Employment costs higher than budgeted</b></p> <p>This heading includes basic pay and associated oncosts such as employers national insurance and pension, plus costs of agency staff, recruitment, training and so on. It also includes an allowance of around 2.5 per cent to allow for vacancies and recruitment timings during the year.</p> <p>The year end overspend is mainly due to the effect of the agreed national pay inflation (around £1.3 million total impact in year), offset to a large extent by robust vacancy management to manage and mitigate the impact in year and other savings such as reduced travelling expenses.</p>
Percentage of total spend	55.8%	57.9%	16.6%	



## Appendix B - income and expenditure - year end outturn against budget - March 2023

	Year end outturn £	Annual budget £	Net (positive) or negative variance £	Forecast variance notes - figures in brackets represent underspends or additional income achieved.
Expenditure - premises costs	6,610,640	5,774,987	835,653	<p><b>Spend higher than budgeted</b>                      £502,000 Electricity, gas and water costs higher than budgeted, due to increased energy costs worldwide and the council's energy contract renewal part way through the year, factored into the 2023 to 2024 budgets                      £305,000 Increased building and plant repair and maintenance costs. It should be noted that a proportion of these costs are recharged to the council's partners.                      £116,000 Increased facilities costs, in part due to additional provisions at provincial house Haverhill, an element recharged where buildings shared, factored into the 2023 to 2024 budgets                      £118,000 Other premises costs (Council Tax, insurance, service charges and so on).</p> <p><b>Spend lower than budgeted:</b>                      (£201,000) reduced Business rates costs as a result of revaluations. Factored into the 2023 to 2024 budget.</p>
Percentage of total spend	11.7%	10.8%	27.9%	
Expenditure - transport and related costs	1,821,652	1,696,623	125,029	<p><b>Spend higher than budgeted</b>                      £212,000 vehicle fuel as a result of inflationary increases, factored into the 2023 to 2024 budget                      £55,000 vehicle hire, additional costs as a result of timings in the vehicle replacement programme</p> <p><b>Spend lower than budgeted:</b>                      (£100k) Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil (HVO) fuel costs - contributed to reserves for future utilisation due to delay in implementation as a result of increased costs.</p>
Percentage of total spend	3.2%	3.2%	4.2%	

## Appendix B - income and expenditure - year end outturn against budget - March 2023

	Year end outturn £	Annual budget £	Net (positive) or negative variance £	Forecast variance notes - figures in brackets represent underspends or additional income achieved.
Expenditure - supplies and services costs	9,183,668	8,404,500	779,168	<p><b>Spend higher than budgeted</b></p> <p>£32,000 increased bank charges as a result of increased transaction volumes, factored into the 2023 to 2024 budget</p> <p>£50,000 Legal and court fees, including £32,000 ARP costs recharged from Legal Shared Service, factored into the 2023 to 2024 budget</p> <p>£104,000 fees in respect of planning appeals</p> <p>£103,000 professional advice for Development Control, large element of which is recharged through Planning Performance Agreement income.</p> <p>£40,000 Services for rent and lease renewals advice and marketing, resulting in additional estates income</p> <p>£33,000 postages, based on increased volumes, some of which is recovered from partners</p> <p>£51,000 Fees and charges, including £42,000 additional enforcement costs, factored into 2023 to 2024 budget</p> <p>£103,000 Computer charges, reflecting a 10 per cent increase in costs of cyber security and licences. These are funded from reserves on a rolling five year programme, and reviewed in the light of inflationary impacts and technology changes.</p> <p>£256,000 tools, equipment and materials. Expenditure has been impacted by non-budgeted inflationary increases (up to 10 per cent), resulting from higher commodity prices for fuel, energy, steel and so on. Key areas of additional cost include the purchase of household wheeled bins to meet housing growth and bin replacements, which experienced an average price increase of 18 per cent, combined with the need to upfront purchase the bins to reflect the 16 week delivery lead time - our stock holding has increased by £58,000 to avoid running out of bins. Other key areas are the purchase of plastic sacks, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and the recondition/repair of skips used for the trade waste service. We continue to monitor these areas of expenditure moving forward.</p> <p>Plus a number of smaller variances across all services.</p>
Percentage of total spend	16.2%	15.7%	26.0%	

## Appendix B - income and expenditure - year end outturn against budget - March 2023

	Year end outturn £	Annual budget £	Net (positive) or negative variance £	Forecast variance notes - figures in brackets represent underspends or additional income achieved.
Expenditure - third Party Payments, for example provision of services by other organisations that could be performed in-house.	2,870,051	2,886,405	(16,354)	<p><b>Spend lower than budgeted</b>                      (£199,000) Waste Tipping Charges. This is based of an estimated waste data figure for Quarter 4. The lower Waste Tipping Charge is due to lower quantities of waste collected during the year and requiring disposal. The cost of disposal has increased by 6% for 2023 to 2024, and whilst this is offset by increased service charges to customers, the overall disposal cost is sensitive to increases in the quantity of waste that customers dispose of.</p> <p>£60,000 Off-Street Car Parks cash collection fees (Ringo and Six Card payment costs). See also increased income from convenience fees under other sales, factored into the 2023 to 2024 budget                      £10,000 Shared Legal Services recharge from partner councils                      £14,000 The Apex, work associated with events (e.g. seating)                      £19,000 Noise Control, additional equipment purchases                      £33,000 increased recycling glass disposal costs as a result of changing contractor, factored in the 2023 to 2024 budget</p> <p>Plus a number of smaller variances across all services.</p>
Percentage of total spend	5.1%	5.4%	-0.5%	
Expenditure - capital costs, for example interest on borrowing, Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP).	2,259,947	2,268,350	(8,403)	<p><b>Spend in line with the budget</b>                      These costs are tied in with our projected borrowing and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) requirements during the year.</p>
Percentage of total spend	4.0%	4.2%	-0.3%	

## Appendix B - income and expenditure - year end outturn against budget - March 2023

	Year end outturn £	Annual budget £	Net (positive) or negative variance £	Forecast variance notes - figures in brackets represent underspends or additional income achieved.
Net expenditure - contributions to or (from) reserves (excluding employee-related and premises contributions which are included under their respective expenditure headings)	2,330,340	1,548,900	781,440	<p><b>Net overall contributions to reserves higher than budgeted</b></p> <p><b>Increased contributions to reserves:</b>  £658,000 contribution to capital financing reserve in respect of borrowing assumptions and investment interest as previously assumed during the year  £100,000 contribution in respect of Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil (HVO) implementation. The transition to HVO fuel as a replacement for diesel has not progressed due to overall significant increase in the cost of fuel.  £261,000 backdated rent review income contributed to building maintenance reserve to offset increased repair and maintenance costs</p> <p><b>Reduced contribution to reserve:</b>  (£75,000) Civil Parking Enforcement as a result of increased costs</p> <p><b>Increased contributions from reserves:</b>  (£53,000) for ICT equipment purchases in year  (£21,000) other parks and play provision commuted sums  (£46,000) Trade Waste skip purchases  (£47,000) Housing Options - Outreach Services, increased costs as a result of more rough sleepers being accommodated.  (£83,000) Temporary Accommodation costs higher than anticipated due to increased repair and maintenance and utilities costs throughout the year.</p>
Percentage of total spend	4.1%	2.9%	26.1%	
<b>Total expenditure (excluding Benefits):</b>	<b>56,687,214</b>	<b>53,695,483</b>	<b>2,991,731</b>	
<b>Net (surplus) or deficit:</b>	<b>1,044,747</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,044,747</b>	
Budgeted contribution from the General Fund in respect of income recovery pressures	0	474,688	(474,688)	Included in the original approved budget for 2022 to 2023. The year-end outturn position is included in the adverse variances shown above, particularly in the income areas that are still recovering, for example car parking and market income.
<b>Year end variance</b>	<b>1,044,747</b>	<b>474,688</b>	<b>570,059</b>	

Appendix B - income and expenditure - year end outturn against budget - March 2023

	Year end outturn £	Annual budget £	Net (positive) or negative variance £	Forecast variance notes - figures in brackets represent underspends or additional income achieved.
Proposed funding:				
Part utilisation of General Fund	(1,044,747)	(474,688)	(570,059)	Additional contribution from the General Fund reserve to fund net pressures in year. General Fund balance at 31 March 2023 is £5m (agreed policy level)
Final year end variance after funding:	0	0	0	

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Description	Revised Budget for Year £	Funded Externally £	Actual Spend for Year £	Over/(under) Spend For Year £	Proposed Carry Forward £	Notes	Total Project Budget 2022 to 2026 £
<b>Resources and Property</b>							
Western Way development	5,600,000	0	1,514,717	(4,085,283)	4,085,283	Report to Council (CAB/WS/22/068) in December 2022 approved continuation of this scheme, with a number of approval gateways built in. Second stage tender to happen in the next financial year.	91,275,000
Abbeycroft Leisure loan	500,000	0	500,000	0	0	Initial loan drawdown of £250,000 was made in July 2022. Second £250,000 was drawn down in March 2023.	500,000
Smartpay Set Up Costs	2,588	0	0	(2,588)	2,588	Upgrade to cash receipting system. Will be fully spent 2023 to 2024 year.	2,588
Mildenhall Hub	498,336	0	68,966	(429,370)	100,000	Building is open and operational. Final account has been agreed and recharges made to partners. We are still working to the original delegation of cost neutral scheme as per Overview and & Scrutiny committee report OS/WS/23/003. Carry forward relates to final elements of the original capital investment.	498,336
<b>Asset Management Plan - Property</b>							
Property Asset Management Plan.	0	0	0	0	0	Planned works programme. Funds moved into the appropriate project when identified.	3,730,500
Net Zero Plan - Asset Management Investment	340,000	0	306,043	(33,957)	33,957	Investment in the council's properties in respect of energy saving and generation initiatives. Year 1 of the 4 year project.	2,840,000
Parkway Multi-storey Car Park, Bury St Edmunds - structural works	1,200,000	0	958,625	(241,375)	241,375	Part of planned works programme. Works due to conclude July 2023. Carry forward relates to timing of works and payment to contractor.	1,200,000
1 Highbury Road, Brandon - external upgrade & fit out	672	0	0	(672)	0	Part of planned asset management works programme prior to re-let	672
8,10,12 & 14 Hollands Road, Haverhill - External envelope upgrade and energy efficient lighting upgrades	6,174	0	0	(6,174)	0	Part of planned asset management works programme prior to re-let	6,174
West Stow Visitors Centre - roof renewal	131,021	0	131,021	0	0	Part of planned asset management works programme.	131,021
Athenaeum - south store building roof renewal	250,000	0	2,830	(247,170)	247,170	Part of planned asset management works programme - bulk of the work to happen in the 2023 to 2024 financial year.	250,000
Haverhill Leisure Centre - replace rooflights and cladding	183,449	0	183,448	(1)	0	Part of planned asset management works programme.	183,449

Description	Revised Budget for Year £	Funded Externally £	Actual Spend for Year £	Over/(under) Spend For Year £	Proposed Carry Forward £	Notes	Total Project Budget 2022 to 2026 £
Moreton Hall Community Centre Improvements	0		151,314	151,314		Improvement to the heating & ventilation system, funding through various routes including contribution from the asset management plan	0
Units 2&3 Highbury Road Brandon	300,000	0	218,019	(81,981)	81,981	Part of planned asset management works programme prior to re-let	300,000
20 Putney Close, Brandon - Roof upgrade and internal alterations	91,095	0	91,095	0	0	Part of planned asset management works programme prior to re-let	91,095
Provincial House, Haverhill, urgent repair works	480,000	0	226,593	(253,407)	253,407	Landlord works to be funded primarily from the lease surrender premium.	480,000
West Stow Country Park - sewage treatment plant	50,000	0	0	(50,000)	50,000	Part of planned asset management works programme.	50,000
West Front and St Mary's Churchyard, Bury St Edmunds - Samson's Tower roofing works	121,154	0	121,154	0	0	Part of planned asset management works programme.	121,154
The Guineas Public Toilets, Newmarket	0	0	0	0	0	Part of planned asset management works programme.	0
Abbey Gardens Toilets, Bury St Edmunds	0	0	0	0	0	Part of planned asset management works programme.	0
Recreation Ground Toilets, Haverhill	0	0	0	0	0	Part of planned asset management works programme.	0
Bunting Road, Bury St Edmunds - Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Rating Changes	114,572	0	114,572	0	0	Part of planned asset management works programme prior to re-let	114,572
11 Hollands Road, Haverhill - Roof renewal and refurbishment	100,000		21,056	(78,944)	78,944	Part of planned asset management works programme prior to re-let	100,000
The Lodge, Brandon Country Park refurbishment	100,000		30,584	(69,416)	69,416	Part of planned asset management works programme prior to re-let	100,000
<b>Families and Communities</b>							
Housing Solutions	145,749	0	0	(145,749)	145,749	In 2021 to 2022 this project funded two bespoke adapted bungalows in Brandon which are now complete. Carry forward of budget provision for future project(s) allocation.	145,749
Customer Access project	93,843	0	22,185	(71,658)	71,658	Software now procured. Implementation and staff training has started. Carry forward relates to timing of spend.	93,843



Description	Revised Budget for Year £	Funded Externally £	Actual Spend for Year £	Over/(under) Spend For Year £	Proposed Carry Forward £	Notes	Total Project Budget 2022 to 2026 £
<b>Human Resources, Governance and Regulatory Services</b>							
Private Sector Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)	<b>1,605,447</b>	0	1,491,953	<b>(113,494)</b>	113,494	Revised budget for the year includes £705,000 brought forward from 2021 to 2022. Recent fast track developments in the service should have ensured that works are approved and completed more quickly. Funded externally, carry forward will be added to 2023 to 2024 budget provision.	<b>4,305,447</b>
Community Energy Plan and Net Zero Plan	<b>2,527,595</b>	0	1,240,597	<b>(1,286,998)</b>	1,286,998	The revised budget comprises £1.25 million Net Zero investment, £0.5 million Community Energy Plan plus the unspent budget from the previous financial year.  The council continues to invest in this project in line with the expected pipeline. Carry forward relates to timing of project spend.	<b>7,277,595</b>
Public Sector Decarbonisation	<b>134,216</b>	0	21,950	<b>(112,266)</b>	0	Grant funding of £1.328 million combined with match funding from the Council of £1.034 million (funded from the Invest to Save reserve) estimated to generate £109,400 of annual savings / income, as well as significant carbon savings.  All installations are now completed, and the expected revenue savings and income are beginning to be generated.	<b>134,216</b>
Toggam Solar Farm - new Transformer	<b>97,068</b>	0	97,068	<b>0</b>	0	Investment in new transformer (spare) to minimise future generation downtime. Funded from the Invest to Save Reserve.	<b>97,068</b>
<b>Operations</b>							
Car parking improvements: Vehicle Management System (VMS) signage	<b>140,000</b>	0	0	<b>(140,000)</b>	140,000	Improvements being funded from the Car Park Reserve. Works expected to commence in 2023 to 2024.	<b>240,000</b>
Car parking improvements: Newmarket Car parking improvements	<b>80,000</b>	0	0	<b>(80,000)</b>	80,000	Improvements being funded from the Car Park Reserve. Works expected to commence in 2023 to 2024.	<b>180,000</b>
Car parking improvements: Ram Meadow, Bury St Edmunds improvements	<b>100,000</b>	0	1,350	<b>(98,650)</b>	98,650	Improvements being funded from the Car Park Reserve. Works expected to commence in 2023 to 2024.	<b>200,000</b>

Description	Revised Budget for Year £	Funded Externally £	Actual Spend for Year £	Over/(under) Spend For Year £	Proposed Carry Forward £	Notes	Total Project Budget 2022 to 2026 £
Car parking improvements: Moreton Hall, Bury St Edmunds improvements	116,446	0	116,446	0	0	Improvements being funded from the Car Park Reserve. Works to resurfacing and reconfiguration of the car park complete.	216,446
Car parking improvements: Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points	80,000	0	65,429	(14,571)	14,571	EV charging points installed in Haverhill Arts Centre car park and St Andrews Long Stay car park in Bury.	180,000
Car parking improvements: Car park in Clare (subject to business case)	100,000	0	0	(100,000)	100,000	Improvements being funded from the Car Park Reserve. Works expected to commence in 2023 to 2024, subject to business case approval.	200,000
Car parking improvements: Haverhill disability / access improvements project	32,237	0	32,237	0	0	Improvements being funded from the Car Park Reserve.	132,237
Car parking improvements: St Andrews resurfacing work project	89,797	0	89,797	0	0	Improvements being funded from the Car Park Reserve.	189,797
Vehicle and plant purchases	2,281,419	0	1,974,306	(307,113)	307,113	In line with the vehicle replacement programme. Carry forward relates to timing of replacement programme and delays in vehicle deliveries.	6,593,833
Net Zero Plan - Electric Vehicle fleet investment	325,000	0	111,678	(213,322)	213,322	Electric sweeper and forklift purchased during the year.	1,160,000
Barton Hill Footpath Works	109,547	0	109,547	0	0	Improvement works to the footpath on Barton Hill, Bury St Edmunds to link to the West Suffolk Operational Hub.	109,547
Community Sports Facility - Moreton Hall, Bury St Edmunds	1,552,500	0	0	(1,552,500)	1,552,500	The project partners are finalising the legal details. The project relates to the Skyliner project completed in 2016 to 2017	1,552,500
The Apex, Bury St Edmunds - equipment	12,674	0	12,674	0	0	Project relates to replacement projector. Funded from the Office Equipment Reserve.	12,674

Description	Revised Budget for Year £	Funded Externally £	Actual Spend for Year £	Over/(under) Spend For Year £	Proposed Carry Forward £	Notes	Total Project Budget 2022 to 2026 £
<b>Asset Management Plan - Leisure</b>							
Leisure Asset Management Plan	0	0	0	0	0	Projects are allocated when identified during the year, including ongoing review of leisure projects to ensure reserve is not over utilised. All funds allocated for the current year.	920,000
Haverhill Splash Park	5,540	0	5,540	0	0	Project completed in 2021 to 2022 - spend this financial year was retention.	5,540
Babwell Meadows Landscaping	28,074	0	0	(28,074)	28,074	Project under review. Expecting this to commence in 2023 to 2024 financial year.	28,074
Hardwick Heath, Football pitch relocation and play area renewal	80,880	0	74,953	(5,927)	0		80,880
Mildenhall Hub - Creation of a Pump Track	49,740	0	0	(49,740)	49,740	Work expected to commence in 2023 to 2024 financial year. Works have gone out to tender again, and we have received expressions of interest this time which are currently being evaluated.	49,740
St John's Close Recreation Ground - Play Area Renewal	29,410	0	29,410	0	0	Works completed.	29,410
At John's Close Recreation Ground - Skate Park	111,765	0	111,765	0	3,235	Works more expensive than anticipated. Budget increase to be draw down from leisure asset management plan budget. Only further spend expected is retention.	111,765
Abbey Gardens Yard - Removal of Asbestos and other H&S Issues	162,760	0	162,760	0	0	Works onsite complete, final invoices being wrapped up.	162,760
St Johns Close Recreation Ground, Mildenhall - renewal of MUGA	60,000	0	0	(60,000)	60,000	Works expected to be completed in the next financial year.	60,000
New Cheveley Road, Newmarket - renewal of play area	56,109	0	56,109	0	0	Works completed.	56,109
Warren Close, Brandon - renewal of play area	48,468	0	48,468	0	0	Works completed.	48,468
Railway Walk, Haverhill - surface improvements	35,648	48,099	35,648	0	0	Funded from Barley Homes S106 monies. Project nearing completion.	35,648
West Stow - Car Park refurbishment	7,000		7,000	0	0	To address health & safety concerns and to maximise footfall.	7,000
Flying Fortress - Water Fountain	10,688		10,688	0	0	Works expected to be completed in the next financial year.	10,688

Description	Revised Budget for Year £	Funded Externally £	Actual Spend for Year £	Over/(under) Spend For Year £	Proposed Carry Forward £	Notes	Total Project Budget 2022 to 2026 £
Abbey Gardens - new items of play equipment	20,729		20,729	0	0	Works completed.	20,729
Nowton Park - Creation of outdoor seating area by the café	17,346		17,346	0	0	Works completed.	17,346
<b>Planning and Growth</b>							
Traveller Sites	62,844	0	55,874	(6,970)	6,970	Kelly's Meadow Traveller site is now complete and was funded by a grant from central government. The remainder of this grant is now being used towards work on a site on Rougham Hill.	62,844
Barley Homes.	10,972,340	0	726,500	(10,245,840)	10,245,840	Stonemill Park site has reached practical completion. All open market sales have taken place, and the affordable houses transferred over as well. Work continues to progress on future pipeline sites. Carry forward relates to loan drawdown timings linked to development pipeline.	10,972,340
High Street, Haverhill - improvements	693,000	0	0	(693,000)	693,000	External grant funded. Fund to be reviewed.	693,000
Investing in our Growth Agenda	16,319,027	0	52,880	(16,266,147)	16,266,147	Fund to be used for investments identified that ensure a balanced blend of return which provide wider strategic, place-shaping, social and economic benefits. Carry forward relates to agreed project timings	16,319,027
17 to 18 Cornhill, Bury St Edmunds - renovation	1,740,755	0	1,729,963	(10,792)	10,792	Works commenced in September 2020. Completion occurred in March 2023, with first flat sales at the end of March 2023. Final account process in progress.	1,740,755
MENTA, 21 to 27 Hollands Road, Haverhill	7,565		7,565	0	0	Expenditure relates to electric vehicle charging on the site.	7,565
Haverhill Research Park - loan facility	586,818	0	0	(586,818)	586,818	Epicentre building that loan was being used to fund is complete - only potential further call on facility is capitalisation of interest. Value of loan drawdown is £2,913,182, from a total loan facility of £3.500,000.	586,818
Suffolk Business Park - Incubation Units	8,652,453	0	176,036	(8,476,417)	8,476,417	Report to Cabinet and Council (CAB/WS/21/052) - currently working through design stages. Carry forward relates to project timing.	12,100,000
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>59,451,558</b>	<b>48,099</b>	<b>13,356,488</b>	<b>(46,095,070)</b>	<b>45,795,209</b>		<b>169,122,019</b>

# Earmarked reserves year end outturn position - March 2023

## Appendix D



Reserve description	2022 to 2023 Opening balance £	2022 to 2023 Net budgeted movement to or (from) reserve £	2022 to 2023 Budgeted closing balance £	2022 to 2023 Net movement to or (from) reserve £	2022 to 2023 Closing reserve balance £	2022 to 2023 Year end variance (over) / under utilised £	Variance notes (variances in brackets denote greater reserve usage than budgeted)
<b>Strategic reserves.</b>							
Strategic Priorities and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) reserve.	3,279,952	662,773	<b>3,942,725</b>	2,036,478	<b>5,316,430</b>	<b>1,373,705</b>	<p>This reserve is primarily comprised of monies received in respect of the New Homes Bonus grant, set aside as agreed to support the delivery of the council's priorities and medium term financial strategy.</p> <p>The year end balance is higher than budgeted as a result of:  £1,152,000 transfer from the Business Rates Equalisation Reserve in respect of the Suffolk Pool surplus  £100,000 contributed in respect of HVO fuel project timings  £12,000 reduced utilisation for central training costs  £60,000 Lifelink Project funding carried forward into 2023 to 2024  £48,000 Families and Communities funding accommodated within the budget.</p>
COVID-19 reserve	306,721	(300,000)	<b>6,721</b>	(306,721)	<b>0</b>	<b>(6,721)</b>	<p>This reserve was set up in order to hold monies related to the COVID-19 pandemic. It includes contributions in respect of government grants and utilisation to mitigate the adverse effects on the council's budgets.</p> <p>The grant monies received have been fully utilised and this reserve will close from 1 April 2023.</p>

# Earmarked reserves year end outturn position - March 2023

## Appendix D

Reserve description	2022 to 2023 Opening balance £	2022 to 2023 Net budgeted movement to or (from) reserve £	2022 to 2023 Budgeted closing balance £	2022 to 2023 Net movement to or (from) reserve £	2022 to 2023 Closing reserve balance £	2022 to 2023 Year end variance (over) / under utilised £	Variance notes (variances in brackets denote greater reserve usage than budgeted)
Investing in our Growth Agenda reserve.	794,432	(106,648)	<b>687,784</b>	(103,128)	<b>691,304</b>	<b>3,520</b>	<p>This reserve was set up in order to support the delivery of the council's growth agenda.</p> <p>The year end balance is slightly higher than budgeted as a result of reduced staff funding due to vacant posts.</p>
Business Rates Retention Pilot: place-based reserve.	2,146,604	(692,143)	<b>1,454,461</b>	(513,551)	<b>1,633,053</b>	<b>178,592</b>	<p>This reserve was set up to hold the benefit from the Suffolk 100 per cent business rate retention pilot in 2018 to 2019. To be utilised against projects as agreed by the district and county leaders in West Suffolk. This reserve is largely committed across the medium term financial strategy.</p> <p>Utilisation of this reserve during the year is mainly in respect of:  £331,000 Feasibility spend on the Western Way Development  £160,000 capital spend on 17/18 Cornhill  £23,000 Lifelink project.  The balance at the year end is higher than budgeted due to timings on Lifelink, the remaining funds to be utilised in 2023 to 2024.</p>



# Earmarked reserves year end outturn position - March 2023

## Appendix D



Reserve description	2022 to 2023 Opening balance £	2022 to 2023 Net budgeted movement to or (from) reserve £	2022 to 2023 Budgeted closing balance £	2022 to 2023 Net movement to or (from) reserve £	2022 to 2023 Closing reserve balance £	2022 to 2023 Year end variance (over) / under utilised £	Variance notes (variances in brackets denote greater reserve usage than budgeted)
<b>Financial planning reserves.</b>							
Invest to save reserve.	4,402,327	(420,064)	<b>3,982,263</b>	216,934	<b>4,619,261</b>	<b>636,998</b>	The year end balance is higher than budgeted due to:  £741,000 Annual reduction in Employers Pensions contributions to Suffolk County Council contributed to the reserve, future reduction in cost has been included in 2023 to 2024 budget and medium term plans. £97,000 Lower reserve utilisation against the Public Sector Decarbonisation capital project (see also appendix C), slightly offset with: (£200,000) net higher utilisation of budgeted funding across various services due to structure changes and vacancies.
Business Rates Retention equalisation reserve.	15,832,530	(6,926,543)	<b>8,905,987</b>	(8,117,564)	<b>7,714,966</b>	<b>(1,191,021)</b>	This reserve is intended to neutralise the impact of any fluctuations in growth or reductions in Business Rates income under the Business Rates Retention Scheme, primarily relating to statutory timing differences and appeal costs.  The year end balance is lower than budgeted. This is as a result of £960,000 increase in S31 grants, £18,000 enterprise zone allocations, offset by a £2,240,000 increased levy payable to the Suffolk Pool.  In addition to this the £1,152,000 increased share of the in-year Suffolk pooling benefit has been transferred to the Strategic Priorities and Medium Term Financial Strategy reserve.

# Earmarked reserves year end outturn position - March 2023

## Appendix D

Reserve description	2022 to 2023 Opening balance £	2022 to 2023 Net budgeted movement to or (from) reserve £	2022 to 2023 Budgeted closing balance £	2022 to 2023 Net movement to or (from) reserve £	2022 to 2023 Closing reserve balance £	2022 to 2023 Year end variance (over) / under utilised £	Variance notes (variances in brackets denote greater reserve usage than budgeted)
Housing Benefits equalisation reserve.	558,141	(282,892)	<b>275,249</b>	23,780	<b>581,921</b>	<b>306,672</b>	This reserve is utilised in order to smooth out the effect of variations between the amounts of Housing Benefits paid out and subsequently grant funded by Department of Works and Pensions (DWP).
Capital project financing reserve.	4,902,184	0	<b>4,902,184</b>	1,645,882	<b>6,548,066</b>	<b>1,645,882</b>	<p>This Reserve was set up in order to facilitate the capital financing requirements of the council, and to account for fluctuations and timing differences in the expected spend profile and interest rates. Fund will be utilised in the medium term towards the increased cost of borrowing.</p> <p>The increased balance at the year end is due to higher contributions relating to savings in interest payable budgets in year whilst the council's treasury management approach utilises internal funds.</p>
Self insured reserve.	393,815	0	<b>393,815</b>	(30,639)	<b>363,176</b>	<b>(30,639)</b>	Monies set aside to provide funds in order to finance any high insurance excesses that may arise.
Election reserve.	215,856	59,418	<b>275,274</b>	90,651	<b>306,507</b>	<b>31,233</b>	Monies set aside each year in order to fund the local elections when required. Additional monies received in-year for New Burdens Funding.
Planning reserve.	351,330	(36,020)	<b>315,310</b>	(44,917)	<b>306,413</b>	<b>(8,897)</b>	Monies set aside in order to fund the Local Plan and other planning-related expenditure.



# Earmarked reserves year end outturn position - March 2023

## Appendix D

Reserve description	2022 to 2023 Opening balance £	2022 to 2023 Net budgeted movement to or (from) reserve £	2022 to 2023 Budgeted closing balance £	2022 to 2023 Net movement to or (from) reserve £	2022 to 2023 Closing reserve balance £	2022 to 2023 Year end variance (over) / under utilised £	Variance notes (variances in brackets denote greater reserve usage than budgeted)
<b>Service delivery reserves.</b>							
Computer and telephone equipment reserve.	175,479	(48,387)	<b>127,092</b>	(86,125)	<b>89,354</b>	<b>(37,738)</b>	Monies set aside for major ICT hardware refreshes and software purchases and upgrades.
Office equipment reserve.	311,867	35,326	<b>347,193</b>	9,506	<b>321,373</b>	<b>(25,820)</b>	Monies set aside to purchase significant replacement items of office equipment.
Anglia Revenues Partnership reserve.	742,121	5,935	<b>748,056</b>	6,692	<b>748,813</b>	<b>757</b>	Government grant monies received by the Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) for specific purposes which are held in reserve due to timings of receipts and usage.
Vehicle, plant and equipment reserve.	1,450,991	(1,078,069)	<b>372,922</b>	(255,782)	<b>1,195,209</b>	<b>822,287</b>	This reserve is utilised to fund the council's vehicle replacement programme.  Year end balance higher than budgeted, due to timing differences in the acquisition of vehicles (see also appendix C).
Waste management reserve.	243,429	(45,385)	<b>198,044</b>	(71,187)	<b>172,242</b>	<b>(25,802)</b>	This reserve includes monies set aside for purchases related to the Waste and Street Scene service, including wheeled bins and associated equipment.  Lower year end balance than budgeted due to skip purchases funded from this reserve, resulting in increased revenue income.

# Earmarked reserves year end outturn position - March 2023

## Appendix D

Reserve description	2022 to 2023 Opening balance £	2022 to 2023 Net budgeted movement to or (from) reserve £	2022 to 2023 Budgeted closing balance £	2022 to 2023 Net movement to or (from) reserve £	2022 to 2023 Closing reserve balance £	2022 to 2023 Year end variance (over) / under utilised £	Variance notes (variances in brackets denote greater reserve usage than budgeted)
Building repairs reserve - property.	3,514,289	320,142	<b>3,834,431</b>	1,648,715	<b>5,163,004</b>	<b>1,328,573</b>	Higher closing balance than budgeted, mainly as a result of timing in capital spend (see also Appendix C).
Industrial unit service charge reserve.	107,897	0	<b>107,897</b>	6,080	<b>113,977</b>	<b>6,080</b>	This reserve holds monies received in respect of service charges which are intended to be utilised on specific industrial estate works.
Car Park development reserve	1,021,481	(422,576)	<b>598,905</b>	(78,400)	<b>943,081</b>	<b>344,176</b>	This reserve holds monies set aside from parking income which are intended to be utilised on car park improvements and developments.  The year end balance is higher than budgeted due to lower spend on the capital programme as a result of project timings (see also appendix C).
Industrial rent reserve.	1,030,000	(590,000)	<b>440,000</b>	(438,275)	<b>591,725</b>	<b>151,725</b>	Monies set aside to meet lost lease income on the former Co-op building at Jubilee Walk, Haverhill, plus Provincial House, Haverhill works.  Higher year end balance than budgeted due to timings of the Provincial House capital project (see also Appendix C).
Building repairs reserve - leisure.	396,364	(279,345)	<b>117,019</b>	(135,604)	<b>260,760</b>	<b>143,741</b>	This reserve is utilised in order to fund the Leisure Capital programme.  Higher year end balance than budgeted due to project timings as further outlined in appendix C.
Abbey Gardens donation reserve.	38,766	0	<b>38,766</b>	0	<b>38,766</b>	<b>0</b>	Monies held for the improvement of the Abbey Gardens, Bury St Edmunds.

# Earmarked reserves year end outturn position - March 2023

## Appendix D



Reserve description	2022 to 2023 Opening balance £	2022 to 2023 Net budgeted movement to or (from) reserve £	2022 to 2023 Budgeted closing balance £	2022 to 2023 Net movement to or (from) reserve £	2022 to 2023 Closing reserve balance £	2022 to 2023 Year end variance (over) / under utilised £	Variance notes (variances in brackets denote greater reserve usage than budgeted)
Newmarket Stallion statue reserve.	20,809	0	20,809	0	20,809	0	Monies held for the maintenance and repair of the Newmarket Stallion statue.
Housing Options reserve.	1,553,331	197,537	1,750,868	591,740	2,145,071	394,203	This reserve holds the funding received from the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and is utilised to fund the Housing Options team and associated expenditure.  Year end balance higher than budgeted due to some additional grant contributions, plus lower utilisation within the service than anticipated due to vacancies and reduced spend.
<b>Section 106 reserves.</b>							
Commuted maintenance reserve.	1,351,608	(82,930)	1,268,678	8,530	1,360,138	91,460	Monies received from developers in order to maintain additional play areas and public open space adopted.
Public Service Village reserve.	79,699	0	79,699	0	79,699	0	Section 106 monies to be utilised to fund the council's Green Travel scheme and associated initiatives.
Section 106 monitoring officer reserve.	40,437	(7,844)	32,593	(33,894)	6,543	(26,050)	This reserve is utilised in order to fund the Section 106 Monitoring Officer post.  Lower year end balance as a result of lower section 106 income than budgeted during the year.
Section 106 revenue reserve.	80,287	0	80,287	0	80,287	0	Monies held in respect of revenue Section 106 contributions received. No movement in the year.

Reserve description	2022 to 2023 Opening balance £	2022 to 2023 Net budgeted movement to or (from) reserve £	2022 to 2023 Budgeted closing balance £	2022 to 2023 Net movement to or (from) reserve £	2022 to 2023 Closing reserve balance £	2022 to 2023 Year end variance (over) / under utilised £	Variance notes (variances in brackets denote greater reserve usage than budgeted)
<b>Other reserves.</b>							
Gershom Parkington reserve.	586,346	1,660	<b>588,006</b>	(454)	<b>585,892</b>	<b>(2,114)</b>	Monies received from the Gershom Parkington Trust in order to maintain and develop the council's horological collection.
<b>Reserves totals:</b>	<b>45,929,093</b>	<b>(10,036,055)</b>	<b>35,893,038</b>	<b>(3,931,253)</b>	<b>41,997,840</b>	<b>6,104,802</b>	

# West Suffolk Strategic Risk Register 2022/23 - March 2023

Type: A = Action, C = Control

RISK ID NUMBER	Date risk added to register	Type	Current Owners	Title	Description - What are we trying to avoid? Why is this important	WS Inherent Risk	Type	Summary of Controls / Actions - What we are doing / need to do to prevent it.	Who is responsible for the actions	Start date	Target completion date/ Complete	WS Residual Risk
WS1	10-Jul-14	Financial	Director & Portfolio Holders- Resources and Property	Financial management	Failure in specific areas to achieve projected income, or expenditure exceeds the approved budgets (revenue or capital).		C	1) Monthly monitoring reports (revenue and capital) to budget holders and Leadership Team. Quarterly revenue and capital monitoring reports to PASC.	Director - Resources & Property	N/A	N/A	
							C	2) Business rate retention income and localising of Council tax being monitored monthly by Finance and ARP	Director - Resources & Property	N/A	N/A	
							C	3) Regular meetings between budget holders and Resources and Performance business advisors/partners	Service Managers / Business Partners / Advisers	N/A	N/A	
							C	4) Scrutiny of financial reports by LT and Members through Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee	LT	N/A	N/A	
							A	5) Ongoing financial system upgrade/development in order to take advantage of latest budget planning / monitoring functionality.	LT		Ongoing	
							A	6) Continue to review and strengthen the overall Performance Management Framework. E.g. Balanced Scorecards, PDRs, (also see WS18),Risk management, Project monitoring, Financial Reporting.	LT	Apr-17	Ongoing	
							C	7) Regular updates of projects, assessment of any additional risks associated with new projects.	LT	N/A	N/A	
							C	8) Monitoring of investment decisions and original business cases targets/outcomes through Business Partner Model. Will also seek external advice when relevant.	Director - Resources & Property	N/A	N/A	
							C	9) Longer term financial planning across MTFS. To include implications of Fair Funding review.	Director - Resources & Property	Sep-16	N/A	
							A	10) Utilise Suffolk wide Business Rates monitoring and forecasting tool to assist with control #2 above. Input from Economic Development included to improve accuracy.	Director - Resources & Property	Jul-17	Ongoing	
WS2	10-Jul-14	Financial	Director & Portfolio Holders- Resources and Property	Financial planning	Failure to deliver a sustainable Medium Term Financial Strategy, especially in view of continued financial uncertainty around areas such as Comprehensive Spending Review, localisation of Business Rates, increased service demand, and use of reserves.  Over reliance on any one particular MTFS theme such as behaving more commercially or being an investing authority		A	1) Annual Budget preparation focus on MTFS and key uncertainties including Fair Funding Review, New Homes Bonus Business Rate Retention.Delivery on six MTFS themes.	LT	N/A	N/A	
							C	2) Demand trends and financial implications validated as part of budget setting. Using monitoring reports to identify trends.	Service Managers / Business Partners / Advisers	N/A	N/A	
							C	3) Medium Term Financial Strategy update - including review of assumptions, sensitivity analysis and review of reserve and balance levels	Director - Resources and Property	N/A	N/A	
							C	4) Scrutiny of financial reports by LT and Members through Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee	LT	N/A	N/A	
							C	5) Monitor Government statements on future of local government funding and lobby as necessary.	LT	N/A	N/A	
							C	6) New investment proposals to be considered through the Councils governance and decision making process including challenge by Business Partners.	LT	N/A	N/A	
							C	7) Use of data and intelligence in forecasting future scenarios.	LT	N/A	N/A	
							A	8) Utilise Suffolk wide Business Rates monitoring and forecasting to assist with forecasting and financial planning across the MTFS.	Director - Resources and Property	Jul-17	On-going	

# West Suffolk Strategic Risk Register 2022/23 - March 2023

Type: A = Action, C = Control

RISK ID NUMBER	Date risk added to register	Type	Current Owners	Title	Description - What are we trying to avoid? Why is this important	WS Inherent Risk	Type	Summary of Controls / Actions - What we are doing / need to do to prevent it.	Who is responsible for the actions	Start date	Target completion date/ Complete	WS Residual Risk
WS3	10-Jul-14	Customer	Chief Executive	Maintain and promote our public image, maintain effective communications	Lack of public trust and confidence in the council leads to a poor reputation. The council needs to champion it's area and be a trusted part of the community. It is vital therefore in making sure people access services, which often means the handling of sensitive information, that the council has a strong reputation. This is also the case in working with communities to deliver growth or large projects as well as in times of crisis, when the council must be a trusted source of information. Therefore the council needs a good reputation to enter positive partnerships with others, or secure funding.  This could also potentially impact on our ability to recruit staff in competitive market.		C	1) Monitor and measure media coverage through daily media alerts and, where appropriate, provide a robust response.	Service Manager (Strategic Communications)	N/A	N/A	
							C	2) Public stakeholders and partners have a range of channels including news and social media to disseminate information about West Suffolk services and strategic priorities and address errors or misrepresentation.	Service Manager (Strategic Communications)	N/A	N/A	
							C	3) Close liaison with local and national partners on coordinated communications on multi-agency issues.	Service Manager (Strategic Communications)	N/A	N/A	
							C	4) Train and support staff and Members in proactive communications, liaising with the media and using social media platforms.	Service Manager (Strategic Communications)	N/A	N/A	
							C	5) Deliver strategic communications plan and work with them to engage appropriately with communities to encourage channel shift.	Service Manager (Strategic Communications)	N/A	On-going	
							A	6) Ensure that appropriate communications planning and support are identified for strategic projects as per individual project plans	Service Manager (Strategic Communications)	Aug-14	On-going	
							C	7) 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.	Service Manager (Corporate Policy)	N/A	N/A	
WS4	10-Jul-14	Customer	Director & Portfolio Holders- Families & Communities	Adopt technological advances in managing the customer journey	Service delivery methods do not meet customer needs or expectations with potential to damage the council's reputation; customer expectations need to be understood and managed; council not appreciating and/or delivering methods of contact and response time which are expected by customers.		C	1) Continue to develop new web presence with full digital by default capability. Ensure that staff, councillors and external support/advisory services are aware of the councils' digital offer and benefits for use.	Director - Families & Communities	N/A	N/A	
							A	2) Working in the wider Suffolk system to enhance the customer experience.	Director - Families & Communities	Jun-18	On-going	
							C	3) Clear and consistent public communications to explain changes to services and establish realistic expectations of service levels. Ensure that delivery of the customer journey meets government guidance requirements.	Service Manager (Corporate Communications) and Service Manager (Customer Service)	N/A	N/A	
							A	4) Continue to explore technological options to support customer service delivery.	Service Manager (Corporate)	N/A	On-going	
WS5	10-Jul-14	Professional	Director & Portfolio Holders - Human Resources, Legal & Democratic Services	Staff retention and recruitment. Staff trust, goodwill (morale), health and well-being.	Lack of staff with appropriate skills, experience and capacity could prevent delivery of services and high levels of performance. Failure to have motivated staff with appropriate workload.		A	1) Workforce strategy revised in June 2022, focussing on developing our employer brand, promoting a flexible and agile workforce, supporting health and well-being, integrating diversity and inclusion and developing talent management linked to performance management. New leadership development programme being introduced from Sept 2022. Continue to develop succession routes - apprentices and career pathways	HR Manager	Reviewed OD plan 2016	On-going	
							C	2) Regularly evaluate outcome of Performance Reviews to identify talent management to inform succession planning. New PDR scheme focuses on performance, pay progression and career progression	HR Manager	Jun-14	On-going	
							A	3) Annual workforce monitoring data presented to the West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel and Joint Negotiation Meeting for feedback, review and collective consideration of any actions required.	HR Manager	N/A	On-going	
							A	4) Salary benchmarking continues to be undertaken in order to ensure salaries are competitive. Monitor Recruitment to identify challenging areas to address. Maintain focus on strong employer brand.	Director - HR, Governance and Regulatory	N/A	On-going	
							C	5) Workforce Planning Meetings to assess need and closely monitor rising turnover and the recruitment challenge (e.g. HGV drivers) and consider any mitigating action that may be required to support services, such as redeployment. HR team exploring ways to review, streamline and speed up the recruitment process, including the introduction of a new approach to on-boarding	Director - HR, Governance and Regulatory	Nov-20	On-going	
							A	6) Wellbeing group established and initiatives regularly launched and communicated to all staff.	Director - HR, Governance and Regulatory	Nov-20	On-going	
							A	7) COVID-19. Proactive monitoring and management of sickness, through effective management interventions with the support of HR and various support networks and champions as relevant.	Director - HR, Governance and Regulatory	Nov-20	On-going	



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WS6	10-Jul-14	Political	Chief Executive & Leader	Managing public / councillor expectations with less resources	Falling short of providing the level of service that the public and councillors expect and demand.		C	1) Understand and communicate priorities and expectations through Strategic Plan and MTFs. Assign dedicated corporate project resources to support new projects.	LT	N/A	On-going	
							A	2) Review and align service and skilled resources available to the strategic plan including communication resources.	LT	Jun-14	On-going	
							C	3) Regular monitoring and update discussions with portfolio holders on the corporate project plan progress	LT	N/A	N/A	
							C	4) Regular monitoring of Balanced Scorecards to include complaints, compliments and trends.	LT	N/A	On-going	
							C	5) Ensure delivery of the customer journey matches government guidance requirements.	LT	Mar-20	On-going	
							C	6) Represent clear position of members to government through lobbying and DELTA returns.	LT	Mar-20	On-going	
WS7	10-Jul-14	Technological Financial Customer	Service Manager (Corporate Policy) / All Directors & Portfolio Holders	Project management	Key strategic outcomes not being delivered due to projects failing to be completed on time. Budgets are overspent due to delays. Peaks and troughs in resource demands for support services are not managed, resulting in unmanageable workloads for e.g. IT team, exacerbating the delays.		A	1) Maintain and develop an efficient programme and project management framework understanding timetabling and interdependencies between projects and programmes (led by Service Manager Corporate Policy).	Service Manager Corporate Policy	May-17	On-going	
							A	2) Maintain oversight of corporate project matrix at Leadership Team, to manage demands on services and resource appropriately.	Service Manager Corporate Policy	May-17	On-going	
							A	3) Training and support to staff involved in corporate projects including key project management skills.	L&D team/Service Manager Corporate Policy	May-17	On-going	
							C	4) Project support and resources to be included in future Project Initiation Documents and project business cases, including support services such as: ICT, Finance, Legal and Property	LT and All Service Managers	May-17	On-going	
							C	5) Early identification of Corporate capacity / priorities as part of business plan / project initiation. Review of programmes to assist with prioritisation.	LT	May-17	On-going	
							C	6) Carry out Project Close Out Reports, Project Assurance, Benefit Realisation reviews and Project Health Checks as appropriate.	LT and All Service Managers	May-17	On-going	
WS8	10-Jul-14	Technological	Director & Portfolio Holders- Families & Communities	ICT integration	Integration of ICT across services and systems not being achieved. Failure to keep Business Applications aligned.		A	1) Maintain alignment of ICT infrastructure and corporate systems through corporate project planning (ICT Board)	Infrastructure Support Manager	Jun-14	On-going	
							A	2) Continued Business Applications integration / alignment including remote working.	Project Managers & Service Manager (ICT)	Jun-14	Individual project plans	
							C	3) Regular review of both integration programmes for strategic fit and resources/skills capacity through corporate projects plan.	Service Manager Corporate Policy/ LT	N/A	N/A	
							C	4) Monthly testing of the Council PSN compliance including the checking and monitoring of new and existing staff profiles. No tolerance approach adopted.	Infrastructure Support Manager	N/A	N/A	
							A	5) Development of a West Suffolk Information Strategy and links to the wider public sector integration agenda (Transformation Challenge Award).	Service Manager (ICT)	N/A	Complete	

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WS9	10-Jul-14	Political										
Page 102	(a)		Director & Portfolio Holders- Families & Communities	Deliver; Families & Communities agenda	<p>Opportunities being missed to create or influence the provision of:</p> <p>(i) a thriving voluntary sector and active communities who take the initiative to help the most vulnerable</p> <p>(ii) people playing a greater role in determining the future of their communities</p> <p>(iii). improved wellbeing, physical and mental health</p> <p>(iv) accessible countryside and green spaces</p>		A	1) Community Chest consideration part of the Review of Grants to External Organisations. Grant review recommendations agreed by Cabinet. Grant guidance and Community Chest progress agreed.	Service Manager (Families & Communities)	Apr-19	On-going	
							C	2) Families and Communities Officers continue to work closely with Councillors on a variety of projects and initiatives.	Service Manager (Families & Communities)	N/A	On-going	
							A	3) Community Chest funds are subject to quarterly monitoring and reported to Grant Working Party. Locality Budgets are allocated by Councillors but supported by Families and Communities Officers. Portfolio Holder and F&C officers continue to remind Cllrs to allocate funding before financial year end.	Service Manager (Families & Communities)	Oct-13	On-going	
							A	4) Families and Communities monitor and evaluate the impact of initiatives/projects in localities. Including qualitative (in the form of case studies) and quantitative information.	Service Manager (Families & Communities)	Jun-18	Ongoing	
							A	5) Extensive ongoing partnership work, including County Lines, homelessness and refugees. West Suffolk Council is a partner in the West Suffolk Alliance which includes health and care partners.	Service Manager (Families & Communities)	Jun-18	Ongoing	
	(b)		Director & Portfolio Holders - Growth	Deliver; Growth Agenda inc coping with growth and increase in demand	<p>Opportunities being missed to create or influence the provision of:</p> <p>(i) beneficial growth that enhances prosperity and quality of life</p> <p>(ii) existing businesses that are thriving and new businesses brought to the area</p> <p>(iii) people with the educational attainment and skills needed in our local economy</p> <p>(iv) vibrant, attractive and clean high streets, village centres and markets</p>		C	1) Developing engagement with the Local Enterprise Partnership and supporting development of the combined authority business board. Monitoring the local economy.	Director - Planning and Growth	N/A	N/A	
							C	2) Deliver Growth Delivery Plan.	Director - Planning and Growth	N/A	N/A	
							C	3) Deliver on the Investing for Growth Strategy. Report progress through Balanced Scorecards.	Director - Planning and Growth	N/A	N/A	
							C	4) Small budget to support businesses with grants. Business rate income being closely monitored from April 2013 by ARP. Developing Inward Investment strategy. Increase Business engagement	Director - Planning and Growth	N/A	N/A	
							C	5) Support to WSC, SCC, UCS and other agencies involved with skills development. Monitoring attainment levels.	Director - Planning and Growth	N/A	N/A	
							C	6) Continue to develop close working relationships with Whitehall, Norfolk partners, LEPS to influence the design of any devolution agreements and business rates retention schemes.	Director - Planning and Growth	N/A	N/A	
							A	7) Development and delivery of Local Plans	Director - Planning and Growth	N/A	N/A	
							A	8) Continued liaison with providers Menta and Oxford Innovation to supporting new start up growth and activities at Bury St Edmunds and Epicentre Haverhill.	Director - Planning and Growth	N/A	N/A	
							A	9) Development of funding pipeline of projects and signposting businesses to available grants as well as working with the CNTC partnership to roll out the funding fit programme to relevant businesses.	Director - Planning and Growth	N/A	N/A	



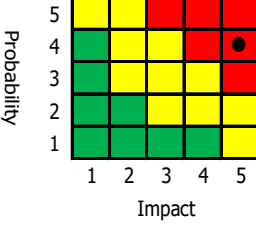
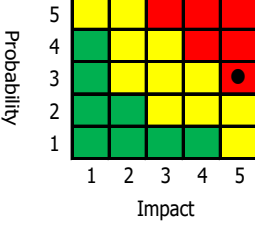
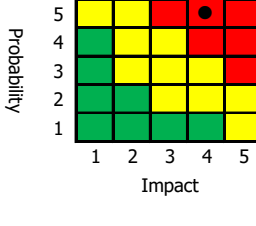
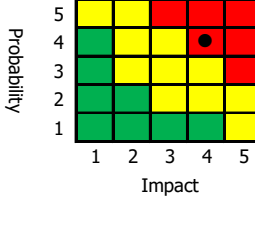
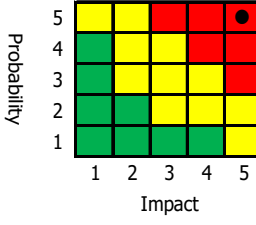
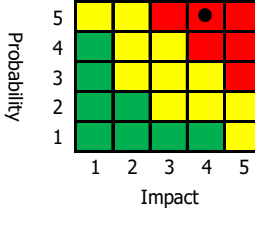
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	( c )		Director & Portfolio Holders - Growth, Families & Communities and Planning.	Deliver; Housing Agenda	Opportunities being missed to create or influence the provision of:  (i) sufficient housing for current and future generations, including more affordable homes and improvements to existing housing  (ii) new developments that are fit for the future, properly supported by infrastructure, and that build communities, not just housing  (iii) homes that are flexible for people's changing needs		<b>C</b>  <b>C</b>  <b>A</b>  <b>A</b>  <b>A</b>  <b>A</b>	1) West Suffolk Housing strategy adopted, implementation of agreed Action Plan, with annual monitoring.  2) West Suffolk Choice Based Lettings Scheme regularly reviewed to reflect changes in legislation. Operation of scheme monitored through CBL Management Board. Letting Policy to be reviewed from end September 2020 with public consultation prior to Cabinet and sub-regional approval in April 2021.  3) Review of West Suffolk Lettings Partnership to ensure that the package of support provided meets the needs of the landlords and local housing market, particularly in light of Universal Credit and cost of living challenges.  4) Disabled Facilities Grants process and Home Improvement Agency contract reviewed with partners in order to introduce a more co-ordinated and integrated service across agencies.  5) Proceed with business plan and report on progress for Barley Homes (Group) Ltd to build open market, private rented and affordable housing.  6) Undertook targeted consultation with market on supporting housing delivery. Actions now being implemented under the Housing Delivery Plan.  7) Preparation of West Suffolk Local Plan.	Directors for Growth, Families Service Manager (Housing Options) Service Manager (Housing Options) Service Manager (Housing Standards) Service Manager (Strategic Housing) Directors for Growth, Families and Communities and Planning Director - Planning and Growth	N/A N/A Apr-19 Apr-14 Apr-15 N/A N/A	N/A N/A N/A Tracked monthly through balanced scorecard. N/A N/A N/A	
WS10	10-Jul-14	Economic Financial Competitive	Chief Executive / Directors & Portfolio Holders	Adapt to new public sector models, explore opportunities with partners	The council fails to deliver better services for public sector customers (regardless of the organisation), fails to close its budget gap due to missing opportunities for new sources of funding and opportunities for savings through economies of scale and better integration; or fails to take account of wider changes in national and local legislations, policy and structure proposals (including EU).		<b>C</b>  <b>C</b>  <b>C</b>  <b>C</b>  <b>A</b>  <b>A</b>	1) Keep a watching brief on, and disseminate information on new policies (i.e. the Environment Bill, Resource & Waste Strategy), funding models and opportunities through DLUHC, RSN, LGA, EELGA etc.  2) Maintain good relationships with public sector partners, e.g. CCG, SCOLT, SCEG, ARP authorities to hear of, and take opportunities arising from opportunities for partnership working.  3) Robust business cases for identified opportunities.  4) Keeping a watching brief on the new/changing National policies with Suffolk colleagues, including local government funding changes, county deal working and changes to healthcare governance and proposed structural changes for local government in Suffolk and the wider East Anglia area.  5) Lead the integration and rationalisation of the public estate through membership, and local leadership, of the Government's One Public Estate Programme.  6) Explore shared services opportunities with other Local Authorities.	LT Chief Executive and Directors LT Chief Executive and Directors Director LT	N/A N/A N/A N/A Jul-14 Apr-15	N/A N/A N/A N/A On-going On-going	

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WS11	10-Jul-14	Partnership	Director & Portfolio Holders - Growth	Loss of a key employer or industry.	Failure to retain major employers in the area and the economic impact that it would have		A	1) Liaison with the key employers to understand issues and opportunities by: coordinating and attending the West Suffolk Business Forum; organising the West Suffolk Business Festival (which provides opportunities for engagement with key employers); arranging visits to key employers for Leadership Team; promoting the ED team as a key point of contact for businesses and as a result responding to concerns and issues raised; and meeting and supporting business leaders in conjunction with the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Hub advisors.	Director - Planning and Growth	Jun-14	On-going	
							C	2) Ensuring there is sufficient employment land / premises for expansion.	Director - Planning and Growth	N/A	N/A	
							C	3) Understand skills shortage and requirements by linking business to education providers and encourage businesses to take on apprentices.	Director - Planning and Growth	N/A	N/A	
							A	4) Help businesses access third party funding.	Director - Planning and Growth	Jun-14	On-going	
							A	5) Further development of the growth delivery plan.	Director - Planning and Growth	Jun-14	On-going	
							A	6) In the worst case scenario (actions 1 - 5 ineffective) the ED team liaises with key partners such as Job Centre Plus and West Suffolk College to mitigate the impact of downsizing/restructuring.	Director - Planning and Growth			
WS12	10-Jul-14	Partnership Financial	Directors & Portfolio Holders	Partner / Public Sector failure	Partners or partnerships failing or under strain; cost shunting (transfer of costs between partners); partnerships not achieving desired outcomes.		C	1) Ensure robust SLA (Service Level Agreement) & Joint Venture arrangements are in place. Ensure good due diligence procedures are used.	All Directors	N/A	N/A	
							C	2) Regular monitoring of arrangements / outcomes.	All Directors	Jun-14	N/A	
							A	3) Regular meetings with key partners, including Suffolk Resilience Forum, fortnightly Suffolk CEO meetings and supporting groups to discuss impact and potential response of the Suffolk wide system.	All Directors	Jun-14	On-going	
							C	4) Understand the cumulative impact of complex partnership delivery arrangements.	CEO and LT	Dec-15	N/A	
							A	5) Develop robust governance arrangements for council owned companies. Barley Homes Business Plan under review in detail as part of regular reporting.	LT	On-going	On-going	
							A	6) Continue to work with health and other partners to develop the integrated delivery of health and leisure.	LT	On-going	On-going	
							A	7) COVID-19. Develop and implement local and county wide response and recovery plans with partners and stakeholders for potential new outbreaks and restrictions.	LT	On-going	On-going	
WS13	10-Jul-14	Physical Social Legal	Director & Portfolio Holders	Service failure through unplanned events	Failure to deliver services to both internal and external clients due to unforeseen events.		A	1) Services must have a workable, up to date Business Continuity Plan in place.	All Directors/All staff	Aug-14	On-going	
							C	2) Combined West Suffolk Business Continuity Plan is in place for major identified threats, regularly reviewed and practised.	LT	N/A	N/A	
							C	3) Appointed officers within each service to be responsible for the continuity plans.	All Appointed Officers	N/A	N/A	
								Please also see WS14 - Breach of data protection and information security				
							A	5) Adoption of lessons learned from Carillion and Capita issues. Procurement and contract management policies updated.	LT	Apr-18	Ongoing	

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WS14	10-Jul-14	Legal	Director & Portfolio Holders	Breach of data protection and information security	Failure to ensure the accuracy and control of data. Not using good practice when handling data. Damage to council's reputation. Damage to individuals. Avoid legal challenge. Prevent potential claims for compensation. Financial penalty for failing to comply with GDPR		C	1) Information governance group coordinates councils' approach to risks.	Director - Families & Communities	N/A	N/A	
							C	2) Regular monitoring to ensure information is held securely, including physical checks and provision of advice and guidance.	Service Manager (Internal Audit), Information	N/A	N/A	
							A	3) Improve staff and member communication on good practices and data security.	Service Manager (Corporate Communications)	Apr-14	On-going	
							A	4) Information Security e-learning - 1st phase, existing officers, completed. All new staff and members to complete module as part of induction programme.	Director - Families & Communities	Apr-14	On-going	
							A	5) Monitoring changes in service delivery and customer engagement to identify potential data protection and information security risks, along with potential action to mitigate these.	Service Manager (Corporate Communications)	Dec-20	On-going	
							A	6) Use of Information Sharing Agreements and Data Protection Impact Assessments where there are changes to data processing practices (including sharing of data).	Director - Families & Communities	N/A	On-going	
WS15	10-Jul-14	Customer Financial Professional	Chief Exec, Director & Portfolio Holders - Resources & Property	Service Performance	Risk of individual services having below par performance levels and possible dips in performance while establishing new service models.		C	1) Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee (PASC) receive comprehensive performance monitoring report.	Director - Resources & Property / R&P Business Partners	N/A	N/A	
							A	2) Early identification, reporting and monitoring of potential problem areas.	Service Managers / Business Partners / Advisers	Aug-14	On-going	
							C	3) Strengthen the overall Performance Management Framework. E.g. Balanced Scorecards, PDRs, Risk management, Project monitoring, Financial Reporting.	LT	Apr-17	Complete	
							C	4) Use PDR's to aid early identification of potential problem areas.	Line Managers	N/A	N/A	
							A	5) - Implications of implementing Business Continuity Plan on service delivery understood and communicated.				
								Please also see WS7 - Poor Project Management				
WS16	10-Jul-14	Economic Social	All Directors & Portfolio Holders	Demographic changes	Unable to meet the demands created by population changes (caused by growth, ageing, diversity, employment) including the impact on infrastructure and other related service provision.		C	1) Key services (planning, housing and waste) use forecasting models (e.g. East of England forecasting model, POPGROUP) to build population change into future Strategic Planning, Service Planning and Policy Development.	Director - Families and Communities/ Planning /Growth/Operations	N/A	N/A	
							A	2) Monitor, research and analysis around demographics through DLUHC, ONS, LGA, LGC and other sources and share key findings with relevant services.	Service Manager (Corporate Policy)	Jun-14	On-going	
							A	3) Attend meetings of Suffolk Office of Data and Analytics Partnership Management Group to share best practice around population monitoring and forecasting. NB particular attention needs to be paid to population forecasts not being able to deal accurately with USAFE population.	Service Manager (Corporate Policy)	Jun-14	On-going	

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WS17	10-Jul-14	Physical	Director & Portfolio Holders - Human Resources, Legal & Democratic Services	Implementation of the Corporate Health and Safety Policy	Failure to ensure the safety and well being of staff and councillors. Failure to provide safe and healthy environment for visitors and the general public. Risk of HSE (Health & Safety Executive) prosecutions.		C	1) Corporate Health and Safety strategy, objectives and implementation plans in place for all internal and external functions performed by the Council.	Service Manager (H&S)	N/A	N/A	
							A	2) Well being programme in place.	Service Manager (H&S)	Jun-14	On-going	
							C	3) Requirement for all staff to complete online H&S training and members to complete appropriate H&S induction programme.	Service Manager (H&S)	N/A	N/A	
							A	4) Communications to staff and councillors.	Service Manager (H&S)	Jun-14	On-going	
							A	5) Appropriate insurances in place and regularly reviewed.	Service Manager (H&S)	Jun-14	On-going	
							C	6) Continue a programme of health and safety audits according to H&S Risk.	Service Manager (H&S)	N/A	N/A	
							C	7) Adoption of COVID-19 H&S procedures in alignment with central government guidance.	Service Manager (H&S)	N/A	N/A	
WS18	10-Jul-14	Social Legal	Service Manager & portfolio Holders- Strategic Housing	Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults	Failing to recognise and respond appropriately to safeguarding matters that could lead to a deterioration in individuals circumstances and potentially challenge to the Council's policies and procedures.		A	1) Working in Countywide safeguarding partnership - external annual S11 Audit of Council procedures and the annual self-assessment.	Director - Jill Korwin	Jul-09	On-going	
							C	2) Safe recruitment procedures are adopted for all staff recruitment.	Director - HR, Governance and Regulatory	Jul-09	On-going	
							A	3) Regular staff and member training and briefing sessions taking place included as part of induction and training programme.	Service Manager- Strategic Housing/HR, Legal & Dem services	Jun-14	On-going	
							A	4) Ensure the Council has an up to date Safeguarding Policy that reflects legislative requirements.	Director	Nov-15	Ongoing	
							A	5) Develop toolkit for Staff and Councillors to deal with vulnerable individuals	Director - Jill Korwin	Dec-19	On-going	
							A	6) Work with Suffolk County Council as they conduct checks for Homes for Ukraine.	Director - Families & Communities	May-22	On-going	
WS19	06-Oct-17	Economic, Financial, Political, Legal	Directors & Portfolio Holders	Cyber Security	Failure to appropriately protect West Suffolk's systems and Services from Cyber Attack		A	1) User Education & Awareness - Update Info Sec training to include more detail on data protection and introduce new education programme for all staff.	Service Manager ICT HR Business Partner	Oct-17	On-going	
							A	2) User Education & Awareness - Info Sec policy to be reviewed and disseminated to all staff (inc ARP) - and to be reviewed regularly	Service Manager ICT HR Business Partner	Oct-17	On-going	
							A	3) Incident Management - Business continuity planning card to be finalised, tested and disseminated.	Service Manager ICT HR Business Partner	Oct-17	On-going	
							A	4) Incident Management - Review of Business Continuity Plan to be finalised with the plan then agreed and published - this requiring a revisit of each service area to agree operational procedures and where stored to provide assurance that arrangements are in place in event of an incident	Service Manager ICT HR Business Partner	Oct-17	On-going	
							A	6) Secure Configuration - Carry out a user access / change control process for key systems, given that many are internet based.	Service Manager ICT HR Business Partner, Service Manager IA	Oct-17	On-going	

# West Suffolk Strategic Risk Register 2022/23 - March 2023

Type: A = Action, C = Control

RISK ID NUMBER	Date risk added to register	Type	Current Owners	Title	Description - What are we trying to avoid? Why is this important	WS Inherent Risk	Type	Summary of Controls / Actions - What we are doing / need to do to prevent it.	Who is responsible for the actions	Start date	Target completion date/ Complete	WS Residual Risk
WS20	04-Jan-19	Economic, Financial, Political, Legal	Directors & Portfolio Holders	Economic impact of rising costs on local business	Failure to manage the impact of rising inflation and increasing energy costs leading to loss of staff, supplier failure or West Suffolk business failure		A	1) Share information with businesses and business representatives about issues the Council is aware of that could impact on them and link them to sources of information. 2) Review suppliers and identify those that could be at risk in the current environment and make appropriate contingencies	Service Manager Economic development All ADs	Dec-18 Dec-18	On-going Complete	
							A	3) Monitor impact in partnership with NALEP and other Suffolk LAs and identify new issues and respond accordingly.	Director	Jan-21	Ongoing	
							A	4) Continue to maximise the use of renewables in all Council buildings.	Director- Resources & Property	N/A	Ongoing	
WS21	03-Apr-19	Economic, Financial, Political, Legal	Directors & Portfolio Holders	Environmental & Climate Change	Failure to address this could increase the emissions the Council generates, thus failing to improve environment and address climate change and damage the reputation of the Council.		A	1) Monitor activity and produce an annual Environmental Statement	Environment and Climate Change Task group	May-19	On going	
							A	2) Implement and track the Climate Change Action Plan including the Net Zero 2030 plan and the Council's Carbon Budget.	Environment and Climate Change Task group	May-20	On going	
							A	3) Implement and track the Council's £9m Decarbonisation Fund.	Director	Jun-22	On going	
							A	4) Continue to maximise the opportunities from external funding to address climate change challenges.	Director	Jun-22	On going	
							A	4) Environment and Climate Change Action Plan to be followed and specific actions and controls within to be monitored and included in regular performance management (WS15)	Relevant Service Leads	Sep-20	On going	
WS22	03-Apr-19	Economic, Financial, Political, Legal	Directors & Portfolio Holders	Financial Impact on individuals due to rising cost of living, inflation etc.	Failure to address the challenges posed by increased demand on services as a result of increased personal debt in the region.		A	1) Monitor and report on outstanding debt position relating to UC, HB and CT through the Anglia Revenues Partnership.	Service Manager - Finance & Performance	May-19	On going	
							A	2) Monitor and report on demand on Homelessness Support through the Families & Communities team.	Service Manager - Housing Options	May-19	On going	
							A	3) Response to increasing demand built in to Suffolk-wide recovery work.	Director	Sep-20	On going	

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# Internal Audit Annual Report 2022 to 2023 including results of External Assessment of Internal Audit

<b>Report number:</b>	<b>PAS/WS/23/008</b>	
<b>Report to and date:</b>	<b>Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee</b>	1 June 2023
<b>Cabinet member:</b>	To be confirmed at Annual Council on 23 May 2023 Tel: Email:	
<b>Lead officer:</b>	Jon Snares Service Manager (Internal Audit) Tel: 01284 757239 Email: <a href="mailto:jon.snares@westsuffolk.gov.uk">jon.snares@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	

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

**Wards impacted:** Not applicable.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee:

1. Notes the Internal Audit Annual Report 2022 to 2023
2. Notes the Annual Fraud Report 2022 to 2023.
3. Notes the External Assessment of Internal Audit

## 1. Context to this report

- 1.1 It is vital for our communities continued confidence and the smooth and proper running of a local authority that thorough, open and transparent auditing takes place. This internal audit annual report is part of that process, together with the annual governance statement, to help inform those who have responsibility for the council's framework of risk management, control and governance processes.
- 1.2 The conclusions of this report should give our residents and councillors confidence in our processes and that the council has a good bill of health in how it works and manages risk as well as looking at ways of improving. In essence this should be seen as a very positive result and is confirmation that overall, controls and processes have continued to work well.
- 1.3 Internal auditing is an independent and objective assurance and consultancy function designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes. A professional, independent and objective internal audit service is one of the key elements of good governance.

## 2. Proposals within this report

- 2.1 The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards govern internal audit within the public sector. These standards require the Service Manager Internal Audit to provide an annual report to those charged with governance which includes an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the council's framework of risk management, control and governance processes. The internal audit annual report at **Appendix A** gives an overview of the work carried out during the year which forms the basis of this opinion.
- 2.2 The annual audit opinion, included at **Appendix A**, has been split into the four constituent elements of governance, risk, internal control, and financial control, with a specific conclusion drawn on each, as well as the direction of travel.
- 2.3 The council recognises that fraud, theft and corruption are an ever-present threat to the resources available in the public sector. The purpose of the annual fraud report at **Appendix B** is to demonstrate West Suffolk's progress in developing and maintaining an anti-fraud and anti-corruption culture and publicise the action taken where fraud or misconduct have been identified.
- 2.4 The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards require that an external assessment of internal audit is carried out every five years. Our first external assessment was carried out in March 2018 and therefore our next



assessment was due in March 2023. This was duly carried out with very positive results, including confirmation from the external assessor that internal audit complies with the Standards. The assessor's full report is included at **Appendix C**.

### **3. Alternative options that have been considered**

- 3.1 The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards require that an annual internal audit report is provided to those charged with governance. It is also good practice to provide an annual fraud report. No alternative options were considered.

### **4. Consultation and engagement undertaken**

- 4.1 These reports were produced in consultation with the Leadership Team.

### **5. Risks associated with the proposals**

- 5.1 Risks are covered within the reports at Appendices A, B, and C.

### **6. Implications arising from the proposals**

- 6.1 Any implications arising are covered at covered at Appendices A, B and C.

### **7. Appendices referenced in this report**

- 7.1 Appendix A - Internal Audit Annual Report 2022 to 2023
- 7.2 Appendix B – Annual Fraud Report 2022 to 2023
- 7.3 Appendix C – External Assessment of Internal Audit

### **8. Background documents associated with this report**

- 8.1 None

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# Internal Audit Annual Report 2022 to 2023



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This report has been prepared solely for the use of councillors and management of West Suffolk Council. Details may be made available by internal audit to specified external organisations, including external auditors, but otherwise the report should not be used or referred to in whole or in part without prior consent. No responsibility to any third party is accepted as the report has not been prepared and is not intended for any other purpose. The matters raised in this report are only those that came to our attention during the course of our work – there may be weaknesses in governance, risk management and the system of internal control that we are not aware of because they did not form part of our work programme, were excluded from the scope of individual audit engagements, or were not brought to our attention.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 West Suffolk Council is responsible for establishing and maintaining appropriate risk management processes, control systems and governance arrangements. Internal audit plays a vital role in providing independent risk-based and objective assurance and insight on how these arrangements are working. Internal audit forms part of West Suffolk Council's assurance framework.
- 1.2 Council services recognise that while they may be delivering a good service they can always improve or look for best practice. They will therefore often proactively engage with internal audit to help achieve this and therefore audit activity in service areas demonstrates the council's culture of continuous improvement.
- 1.3 The purpose of the Internal Audit Annual Report is to meet the Service Manager Internal Audit's annual reporting requirements as set out in the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (the 'Standards') which govern how internal audit teams operate in the public sector, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. In particular to:
- include an opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the council's governance, risk, and control framework, and therefore the extent to which the council can rely on it
  - inform how the audit plan was discharged and the overall outcomes of the work undertaken that supports the annual audit opinion
  - include a statement on conformance with the Standards and the results of the internal audit quality assurance processes
  - draw attention to any issues particularly relevant to the council's annual governance statement.
- 1.4 The Service Manager Internal Audit is responsible for effectively managing the internal audit activity in accordance with the Standards, which are mandatory, and encompass the Core Principles for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing, the Definition of Internal Auditing, the Code of Ethics, and the Standards themselves.

## **2. Annual opinion**

### **Performance against the approved audit plan**

- 2.1 All of the work included in the approved 2022 to 2023 audit plan has been completed with the exception of the Performance Management audit which is currently in progress. In addition, although the Operational Risks audit has been completed the draft report for this audit is currently being discussed with management and remains to be finalised.
- 2.2 We consider that sufficient work has been undertaken in support of the annual audit opinion to give assurance that there is generally a sound system of internal control designed to meet the council's objectives, and that controls are generally applied consistently.

## **How the annual audit opinion has been formed**

2.3 The main sources of assurance contributing to the 2022 to 2023 audit opinion are those gained from the audit work carried out during the year which is detailed in the sections below including:

- audit work under each audit opinion category
- COVID-19 post payment assurance work
- other added value work
- work on the 2022 to 2023 Annual Governance Statement including review of the assurance framework
- other significant audit work

2.4 Assurances can also be gained from the following sources:

- counter-fraud work as set out in our Annual Fraud Report 2022 to 2023 at **Appendix B**
- consideration of committee and other reports for any areas affecting governance, risks, or controls
- attendance at officer working groups and managers meetings to understand current risks and actions being taken
- audit knowledge of council processes and initiatives
- internal audit seeks to comply with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. We have established quality working procedures including review mechanisms for work undertaken, and annual self-assessment of adherence to these procedures. We have also recently undergone an external assessment which confirmed that we comply with the Standards. The full report setting out the results of this assessment are included at **Appendix C**
- assurances received from external parties – the main relevant assurances for 2022 to 2023 relate to confirmation of compliance with the National Cyber Security Centre's Cyber Essentials and Cyber Essentials Plus schemes which help to guard the council against cyber-attack. These assurances were taken into account in arriving at the audit opinion for the 2022 to 2023 cyber security audit.

## Audit opinion definitions

<b>Good assurance</b>	<p>A sound system of governance, risk management and control exists, with internal controls operating effectively and being consistently applied to support the achievement of objectives in the area audited.</p> <p>No significant (medium risk) or fundamental (high risk) issues have been raised.</p> <p>An audit opinion of 'good' assurance will only be issued where sufficient relevant, reliable and timely evidence has been subject to recent audit review or testing.</p>
<b>Reasonable assurance</b>	<p>There is a generally sound system of governance, risk management and control in place.</p> <p>Some significant (medium risk) issues, non-compliance or scope for improvement were identified which may put at risk the achievement of objectives in the area audited; or</p> <p>Sufficient relevant, reliable and timely evidence may not be available and/or may not have been subject to recent audit review or testing to justify a 'good' opinion.</p>
<b>Limited assurance</b>	<p>Fundamental (high risk) and/or significant (medium risk) gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance were identified, and improvement is required to the system of governance, risk management and control to effectively manage risks to the achievement of objectives in the area audited; or</p> <p>Sufficient relevant, reliable and timely evidence may not be available and/or may not have been subject to recent audit review or testing to justify a 'reasonable' opinion.</p>
<b>No assurance</b>	<p>Immediate action is required to address fundamental (high risk) and significant (medium risk) gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance identified. The system of governance, risk management and control is inadequate to effectively manage risks to the achievement of objectives in the area audited; or</p> <p>Sufficient relevant, reliable and timely evidence may not be available and/or may not have been subject to recent audit review or testing to justify a 'limited' opinion.</p>

Please note – audit opinions are:

- evidence-based and levels of assurance awarded take into account not just control issues or risks raised, but also the adequacy of evidence which has been subject to audit review and testing, and are
- subject to the professional judgement of the Service Manager Internal Audit

## Risk definitions


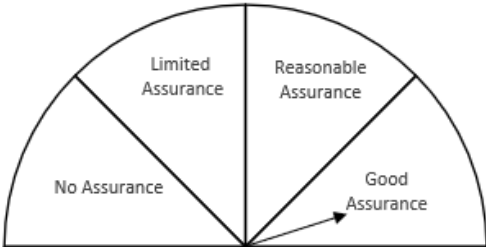

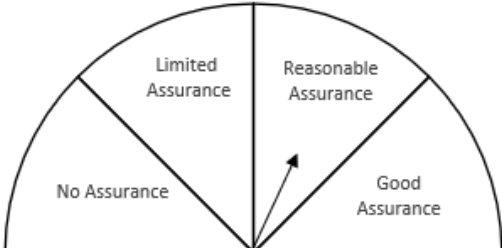

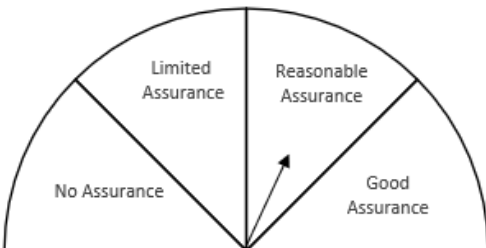

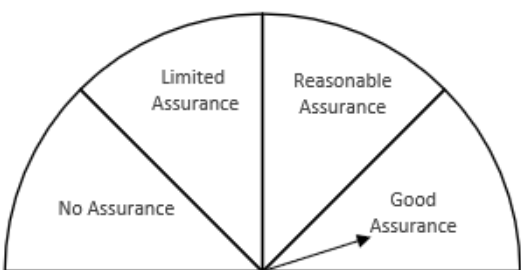
<b>Risk</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>High</b>	A fundamental control process, or statutory obligation, creating the risk that significant fraud, error or malpractice could go undetected.
<b>Medium</b>	A control process that contributes towards providing an adequate system of internal control.
<b>Low</b>	These issues would contribute towards improving the system under review.

- 2.5 In order to make the annual audit opinion informative and transparent, the opinion has been split into the four constituent elements of governance, risk, internal control, and financial control, and a specific conclusion drawn on each.
- 2.6 It should be noted that an opinion of 'reasonable assurance' for any of the four opinion elements should be interpreted as a good result and indicates that in general controls and processes are fit for purpose and working well, while recognising that there are opportunities for further improvements.
- 2.7 We have also included a direction of travel (see below) for each element of the audit opinion to highlight our view of whether the adequacy and effectiveness of arrangements has changed compared to the previous year.



## Annual opinion

- 2.8 For the twelve months ended 31 March 2023, based on the work undertaken and information from any other sources of assurance as explained above, the Service Manager Internal Audit's opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of West Suffolk Council's arrangements for governance, risk, internal control and financial control is as set out below.

<p><b>Governance</b></p> 	
<p><b>Risk</b></p> 	
<p><b>Internal Control</b></p> 	
<p><b>Financial Control</b></p> 	

## **Governance**

- 2.9 Governance comprises the systems, processes, culture, and values by which West Suffolk Council is directed and controlled and through which it accounts to, engages with, and where appropriate, leads its communities.
- 2.10 Each year local authorities are required to reflect on how their governance arrangements have worked, identifying any significant governance issues that should be drawn to the attention of the public, in the interests of accountability and transparency. This results in the production of an annual governance statement.
- 2.11 Work on the 2022 to 2023 West Suffolk Annual Governance Statement (AGS) is at an advanced stage, and no significant governance issues are expected to be disclosed for the period to 31 March 2023. There are no issues included in this report which need to be raised in the AGS.

2.12 The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee helps to ensure that governance arrangements are working effectively through considering reports that come before them, including approval of the AGS.

2.13 **Governance opinion.** The opinion remains the same as for 2021 to 2022 and is assessed as **good assurance**.

## **Risk**

2.14 Good risk management is part of the way we work. It is about taking the right risks when making decisions or where we need to encourage innovation in times of major change – balancing quality, cost, and affordability. This puts us in a stronger position to deliver our goals and provide excellent services.

2.15 Work during the year in this area on which the annual audit opinion on risk is based, included:

- carrying out an audit on the identification and management of operational risks within services to provide assurance that operational risks are being effectively managed in support of the achievement of organisational objectives. Based on the results of this work and existing audit knowledge of the services, the audit review concluded that service managers have a good awareness of their current and emerging operational risks, and that appropriate responses to these risks are chosen. However the audit also concluded that introducing a standardised but proportionate approach to recording operational risks within the services may add further value. Discussions are currently underway with management regarding taking this forward
- consideration of risk management arrangements around council projects as part of internal audit's ongoing project assurance work. These arrangements were considered to be working well
- attending the Strategic Risk Management Group meetings during the year to gain assurance over, and feed into as necessary, the strategic risk management process
- ongoing audit consideration of management's approach to, and mitigation of, risk as an integral part of all our audit work, and awareness of management activities
- consideration of relevant reports presented to Leadership Team

The conclusion drawn from the above work was that risk management arrangements for projects and strategic risks have continued to operate as expected during the period.

2.16 **Risk opinion.** The opinion remains the same as for 2022 to 2023 and is assessed as **reasonable assurance**.

## **Internal control**

2.17 This takes into account the outcomes of our work during 2022 to 2023. As our audit plans include different activities each year assurance may vary from year to year. However, the assurance level still gives insight into the council's control environment.

2.18 Results of the 2022 to 2023 reviews were as follows:

- Anglia Revenues Partnership enforcement – this audit was undertaken by the Fenland District Council internal audit team on behalf of the five councils working together as the Anglia Revenues Partnership. No actions were raised, and there were no actions to follow up from the previous audit. An opinion of **good assurance** was given.
- Cyber security – this was a high level review of cyber security arrangements in place which concluded that overall the control environment continues to be strong with robust arrangements in place, resulting in a **good assurance** opinion being given. Only minor findings and recommendations were raised regarding consideration being given to further improve the cyber security awareness culture and the approach to risk management. The two actions (both regarding the business continuity plan) included within the 2021 to 2022 Cyber Security Audit were discussed with the District Emergency Planning Officer and are considered to be completed. Note that this audit only included cyber security arrangements in respect of systems and data subject to the ICT team's controls and does not include 'Software as a Service' IT systems (where the software is located on external servers rather than on servers located in-house). An audit of the council's arrangements in place in respect of the use of Software as a Service is included in the 2023 to 2024 audit plan of work.
- Disabled facility grant from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities – this audit was carried out to provide assurance to both West Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council that for the year 2021 to 2022, the conditions of the disabled facility grant allocated to, and spent by West Suffolk Council, have been complied with. An audit opinion of **good assurance** was given, with no recommendations arising and no recommendations to follow up from the previous year's audit.
- VAT – an audit was carried out to review the adequacy of the arrangements for compliance with VAT rules, including VAT returns to HMRC. No audit findings or recommendations were made, and an opinion of **good assurance** was given.
- Civil parking enforcement - a risk-based audit was undertaken to provide assurance that the systems in place in respect of civil parking enforcement are operating as intended. Recommendations arising revolved around the need to further investigate options for recording the reasons for spoilt or cancelled penalty charge notices, and to continue to make further improvements in processes around recovering outstanding penalty charge notice payments. An opinion of **reasonable assurance** was given.
- Council tax billing, housing benefit and local council tax reduction scheme - this audit was undertaken by the West Suffolk Council internal audit team on behalf of the five councils working together as the Anglia Revenues

Partnership. A number of recommendations were made and covered areas such as anti-money laundering training and controls over system access. All actions from previous audits have been closed. An opinion of **reasonable assurance** was given.

- Recovery of council tax and housing benefit overpayments - this audit was undertaken by the West Suffolk Council internal audit team on behalf of the five councils working together as the Anglia Revenues Partnership. A number of recommendations were made and covered areas such as completion of review of some processes and associated procedure notes. One action (regarding anti-money laundering training) from the previous year's audit was considered to be still work in progress. An opinion of **reasonable assurance** was given.
- Non-domestic rates (NDR) – this audit was undertaken by the East Suffolk Council internal audit team on behalf of the five councils working together as the Anglia Revenues Partnership. A small number of recommendations were made and covered areas such as timeliness of reconciliations. An audit opinion of **reasonable assurance** was given.
- Procurement cards – an audit was undertaken to confirm that corporate procurement cards are used in accordance with guidance, expenditure is monitored and approved appropriately, best value is achieved, and the risk of fraud is minimised. The main recommendation from this audit was the need to review and reissue guidance to card holders, including to further clarify circumstances in which these cards should be used. An opinion of **reasonable assurance** was given.
- Geographic information system (GIS) - is a computer system for capturing, storing, checking, integrating, manipulating, analysing, sharing and displaying geographically referenced data and also feeds into the 'Find My Nearest' service provided to the general public. This was the first review of this area and was undertaken to provide assurance that the system continues to support the council's business needs. Recommendations arising focused on the need for guidance to be created for ICT staff to undertake tasks on the system in case of absence of the GIS Officer, and for further consideration to be given to review and update of data on the system. An opinion of **reasonable assurance** was given.
- Confidential waste service follow up audit – this review highlighted that progress against one action from the original audit remains outstanding, regarding the tendering of the contract for the confidential waste supplier.
- Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) follow up audit – this follow up review has confirmed that the remaining action from the original audit report has now been implemented.
- Health and safety estates follow up audit – this follow up review has confirmed that the remaining actions from the original audit report have now been implemented.
- Heritage assets follow up audit – this review highlighted that the remaining actions from the original audit report have now been implemented.

- Civic regalia follow up audit – this follow up review has confirmed that the remaining actions from the original audit report have now been implemented.
- Health and safety lone working follow up audit - this review highlighted that the remaining actions from the original audit report have now been implemented.
- Payment card standards follow up audit - this review highlighted that one action arising from the original audit remains to be fully completed, this being regarding the need to ensure that all relevant staff undergo regular training and that this can be evidenced.
- Community chest grants follow up audit - this review highlighted that the remaining actions from the original audit report have now been implemented.

No opinions are issued for follow up audits as they only look at implementation of previously agreed actions.

- 2.19 **Internal Control opinion.** The opinion remains the same as for 2021 to 2022 and is assessed as **reasonable assurance**.

## **Financial control**

- 2.20 Our audit work includes providing assurance over our key financial systems. This work is also of particular interest to the external auditor when planning and performing their audit of the council's annual statement of accounts.

- 2.21 During the year the following reviews were carried out and opinions issued:

- Treasury management – this audit covered controls relating to the management of the council's short-term and long-term investments with approved organisations to achieve the best possible rate of return. Audit work undertaken resulted in a **good assurance** opinion being given with no recommendations arising, and there were no actions to follow up from the previous audit.
- General ledger – this audit was undertaken to provide assurance that financial transactions are correctly recorded including ensuring their completeness and integrity, to provide a robust basis for managing the council's finances including preparation of the council's annual statement of accounts. A **good assurance** opinion was given, one action was agreed to further improve controls regarding banking processes and arrangements, and two actions were followed up from the previous audit both of which were considered to have been implemented.
- Payroll – the audit covered controls focusing on starters, leavers, amendments, and system access. A **good assurance** opinion was given, no actions were raised, and there were no actions to follow up from the previous audit.

- Car parks cash handling – this audit was carried out to provide assurance that effective controls are in place over car parking cash collection, retention and banking systems. A **good assurance** opinion was given with no actions raised, and one action was followed up from the previous audit and considered to have been implemented.
- Creditors – this audit was undertaken to provide assurance that payments made are valid, authorised, accurate and timely, in respect of goods and services received by the council. A **reasonable assurance** opinion was issued with one action raised regarding the need to raise official purchase orders wherever possible before goods or services are ordered.
- Debtors – an audit review was carried out, with the focus on raising of invoices and credit notes, data quality and debt recovery, and the follow up of actions from the previous year's audit in respect of write-offs and debt reporting. A **reasonable assurance** opinion was given. Five medium risk actions were agreed including two which remained as work in progress from the previous year's audit. These actions included the need to further raise awareness to relevant staff of guidance regarding writing off irrecoverable debts and the recovery of overdue fees and charges.

2.22 **Financial Control opinion.** The opinion remains the same as for 2021 to 2022 and is assessed as **good assurance**.

### 3. Scope of our work, organisational independence, and non-audit roles

- 3.1 Our risk-based 2022 to 2023 internal audit plan, approved by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee in May 2022, was prepared taking into account the critical activities and key risks to support the basis of the annual internal audit opinion.
- 3.2 The work of internal audit supports the delivery of all the council's priorities by promoting probity, integrity, accountability, efficiency and effective management of public funds. The achievement of corporate priorities is dependent on the council making efficient and effective use of its resources and in operating robust and transparent governance arrangements. The audit plan sets out a series of risk-based work that will provide assurance over the adequacy of the arrangements established to mitigate risks that may threaten the delivery of the council's priorities.
- 3.3 Where issues have been raised as a result of audit work undertaken actions have been agreed with management to address any findings raised. Progress against these actions, where not already followed up in 2022 to 2023, will be followed up by internal audit as part of our 2023 to 2024 work plan.
- 3.4 In carrying out our work we identified no unexpected restrictions to the scope of our work. Also, we have not experienced any impairment to our independence or objectivity during the conduct and delivery of the 2022 to 2023 audit plan.
- 3.5 The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards require internal audit to confirm to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee at least annually the

organisational independence of the audit activity. Internal audit effectively achieves this through the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee's involvement in the following:

- approval of the risk-based internal audit plan
- receiving communications from the Service Manager Internal Audit on internal audit activity relative to the audit plan and other matters
- approval of the internal audit charter - this formally defines our statutory role, responsibility, status and authority within the council - as and when required.

3.6 The Standards require specific safeguards to be in place where the Service Manager Internal Audit has responsibilities for matters beyond internal auditing. The most significant ongoing area relevant to us is in respect of financial due diligence work, mainly undertaken by the Service Manager Internal Audit. Should any independence issues arise in relation to this or any other of our work the matter would be referred to the Section 151 Officer.

## **4. Other added value work**

4.1 These are pieces of work identified by management and internal audit which are designed to provide support or advice to management including reviewing relevant arrangements on behalf of management and assisting where appropriate in making improvements. The nature of this work means that it will not always result in a report being issued. Added value work carried out during the year includes the following:

### **Highways processes**

4.2 An exercise to document highways processes so that appropriate improvements can be designed and planned for.

### **Virtual parking permits**

4.3 Internal audit support was provided to a package of work reviewing the council's existing parking permit processes with a view to the council moving away from paper-based parking permits and how this could be taken forward.

### **Residential housing properties**

4.4 An exercise to bring together into a single document a comprehensive and detailed list of information and data in respect of the council's residential housing properties, to assist asset management requirements.

### **Greenspace and heritage helpdesk analyses**

4.5 Review of type and frequency of demand going through the helpdesk.

### **Use of social media to support investigations**

4.6 This review looked at whether staff understand and act in accordance with existing guidance around the use of social media in investigations, and whether



that guidance is sufficient. The review concluded that staff are acting in accordance with guidance but that further training would be useful in this area.

**Affordable housing**

- 4.7 Internal audit support to review and better understand the council's approach and processes relating to the provision of affordable housing within the Strategic Housing function.

**Planning teams (technical, business support, land charges and systems)**

- 4.8 Review of type and frequency of demand going through the various teams.

**Payroll checking**

- 4.9 An exercise was carried out at the request of the payroll team to map the current processes in respect to starters, leavers, amendments, and payroll validation checks, which included liaising with staff offering advice and suggestions regarding the efficiency of the controls in operation in the payroll area.

**Park events**

- 4.10 Internal audit support given to mapping the current processes for major and minor park events.

**5. Fee earning work**

- 5.1 Internal audit has continued to undertake fee earning work during 2022 to 2023 which brings in approximately £10k of income. This work consists of the audit of the council tax billing and benefits, and overpayments recovery, systems at the Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) on behalf of East Cambridgeshire District Council and Breckland Council.

**6. Other significant work**

- 6.1 Other key work undertaken during 2022 to 2023 included:

**Annual governance statement**

- 6.2 Co-ordination of the production of the West Suffolk Annual Governance Statement.

**Financial due diligence**

- 6.3 During the year internal audit responded to around 60 requests for financial due diligence or other related financial advice including assessments of organisations' financial suitability to undertake specified contracts for the council.

**Mildenhall hub**

- 6.4 We performed a high-level review of the external project manager's report on the final account and concluded that information and conclusions contained within that report were robust.

**Grants to businesses**

- 6.5 Internal audit resource has continued to support post payment activity in respect of the COVID-19 related grants to businesses as follows:
- completion of the post payment assurance work undertaken at the request of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Confirmation has been received from BEIS that West Suffolk Council followed an appropriate and robust process in completing the minimum assurance checks when awarding and paying the first cohort of business grants issued in 2020 to 2021 (Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund, Small Business Grant Fund and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund)
  - monitoring of recovery in respect of businesses which were identified post-payment as not being eligible for the grant payments received; and
  - fraud – providing the necessary information as requested by external organisations regarding national organised crime activity related to COVID-19 business grants.

**Other grants assurance work**

- 6.6 Community Outbreak Management Fund – positive assurance was provided to Suffolk County Council that the funds issued to West Suffolk Council to manage and control the outbreak of COVID-19 in the community have been spent in accordance with the conditions of the grant.
- 6.7 Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme Funding Grants – positive assurance was provided to the Government over the process and payment of self-isolation payments in support of people on low incomes who have been directed to self-isolate and are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result.
- 6.8 Contain Outbreak Management Fund – positive assurance was provided to the Government that the expenditure incurred was used appropriately to mitigate against and manage local outbreaks of COVID-19.

**Welcome back fund - European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**

- 6.9 Funding was received as part of the wider support government provided to communities and businesses to protect jobs, support the most vulnerable, support the safe return to high streets and help build back better from the pandemic. Work was undertaken by the internal audit team to review the expenditure claims made by the council, and advise on the supporting evidence required in the grant conditions and compliance with the expenditure to reduce the risk of financial clawback.

## **Council Tax Energy Rebate**

- 6.10 Post payment assurance work to confirm that the grant, which was administered by ARP, was only awarded to eligible households meeting the criteria. No significant issues arose.

## **Green Homes Grant from the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy**

- 6.11 Work undertaken to enable sign off by the Chief Executive and Service Manager Internal Audit as required by the Energy Efficiency and Local division of the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to provide assurance that the grant conditions have been complied with. The grant gave funding to provide energy efficiency upgrades to low income homes. No significant issues arose.

## **Sustainable Warmth Grant Schemes**

- 6.12 Ongoing work to enable sign off by the Chief Executive and Service Manager Internal Audit as required by the Energy Efficiency and Local division of the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to provide assurance that the grant conditions which provides funding to improve household energy efficiency are being complied with.

## **UK Shared Prosperity Fund**

- 6.13 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) have awarded funds to support implementation of its Levelling Up White Paper, known as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). The Government's stated aim for the fund is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. West Suffolk Council was awarded £1.9m to provide funding to public or private organisations, procure services or in house provision for the period 2022 to 2025.
- 6.14 Internal audit have assisted service areas in completing a fraud risk assessment in respect of the fund. Ongoing work will continue to provide assurance that the authority has in place the processes to ensure proper administration of the financial affairs relating to the UKSPF allocation to enable routine sign off by the S151 Officer.

## **Energy Bills Support Schemes**

- 6.15 A package of energy bills support was provided by the government to support eligible recipients for meeting costs related to the use of energy in 2022 to 2023, for most households this was delivered through domestic electricity suppliers. For households who pay for their electricity in a different way and have not received support, a non-repayable payment of £400 is available through the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding (EBSS AF) Grant. For households that use alternative fuel as the main source of heating and did not receive support through their energy supplier, a non repayable payment of £200, is available through the Alternative Fuel Payment (AFP) Scheme Alternative Fund Grant.

- 6.16 Internal audit assisted in the preparations for the launch of the schemes which are administered by the Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP). Post payment assurance work will be undertaken at the end of the schemes.

### **COVID Additional Relief Fund (business rate relief)**

- 6.17 This fund was made available by the Government to support those businesses affected by the pandemic but that are ineligible for existing support linked to business rates. Internal audit work included undertaking pre-award checks on larger businesses to assist in identifying if subsidy levels have been exceeded and to confirm the business is still solvent. The scheme is mainly administered by ARP.

### **National Fraud Initiative (NFI)**

- 6.18 Internal audit co-ordinates the council's participation in this biennial exercise, run by the Cabinet Office, which matches electronic data within and between public and private sector bodies to prevent and detect fraud.
- 6.19 Data matches have been released by the NFI and are being worked through by internal audit and ARP. To date, there have been no significant frauds or errors identified with the matches from this exercise. More detail is contained within the Annual Fraud report regarding NFI activity.

### **West Stow accounts**

- 6.20 Similar to previous years, internal audit act as the Independent Examiner of the West Stow Anglo Saxon Village Trust 2021 to 2022 accounts. There were no matters of concern.

### **Other**

- 6.21 Ongoing advice and assistance provided to service areas and the S151 Officer.

## **7. Quality assurance**

- 7.1 We recognise the importance of meeting customer expectations as well as conforming to the UK Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (the 'Standards'). We continually focus on delivering high quality audits, seeking opportunities to improve where we can.
- 7.2 We are committed to training and developing internal audit staff, with training provision continually reviewed through the appraisal process and regular one-to-one meetings.
- 7.3 The Standards require that internal audit 'must develop and maintain a 'quality assurance and improvement programme' that covers all aspects of the internal audit activity'. This quality assurance and improvement programme is designed to check internal audit's conformance with the Standards and the profession's code of ethics and also assess its efficiency and effectiveness and identify any areas for improvement.

7.4 Currently, West Suffolk Council's internal audit quality assurance and improvement programme consists of the following elements:

- an external assessment to independently assess compliance with the Standards every five years. An external assessment of internal audit was conducted in March 2023, with very positive results, including confirming that the team complies with the Standards. The results of this assessment and an action plan to address further minor improvements suggested by the assessor are included in the assessor's report which is included in full at **Appendix C**
- a quality review process is undertaken for each individual audit. These reviews examine all areas of the work undertaken, from initial planning through to completion and reporting
- customer satisfaction questionnaires are issued with audit reports for completion by the service area subject to audit
- quality assurance checks by the internal audit team to ensure the Standards are consistently followed.

7.5 We aim to comply with the Standards and the Institute of Internal Auditors Code of Ethics in all our work and we are not aware of any significant areas of non-conformance.

## **8. Performance against key indicators**

8.1 Internal audit's performance is measured and monitored throughout the year using a range of indicators.

8.2 Performance against relevant indicators is summarised below:

<b>Performance indicator</b>	<b>2020 to 2021</b>	<b>2021 to 2022</b>	<b>2022 to 2023</b>
Percentage completion of Priority 1 work within the approved Audit Plan	85 per cent	93 per cent	97 per cent
High risk actions implemented or satisfactory/reasonable progress made by target date	See Note 1 below	100 per cent	100 per cent

Average number of days from fieldwork completion to issue of draft report	6 days	5 days	2 days
Average number of days from receipt of final management comment to issue of final report	4 days	6 days	2 days
Percentage of satisfactory (or better) ratings received from customers on individual audits	100 per cent	100 per cent	100 per cent

Note 1 – as reported in previous Internal Audit Annual Reports the follow up of high-risk actions was necessarily delayed due to the internal audit team supporting the council's response to the impacts of COVID-19. These high-risk actions were subsequently confirmed as having been implemented or reasonable progress having been made.

## 9. Glossary of terms

**Significance:** the relative importance of a matter within the context in which it is being considered, including quantitative and qualitative factors, such as magnitude, nature, effect, relevance and impact. Professional judgment assists internal auditors when evaluating the significance of matters within the context of the relevant objectives.

**Internal audit annual opinion:** the Service Manager Internal Audit's view, based on internal audit work undertaken and any other relevant assurances, of the adequacy and effectiveness of the council's arrangements for governance, risk and control.

**Governance:** governance comprises the arrangements (including political, economic, social, environmental, administrative, legal, and other arrangements) put in place to ensure that the outcomes for intended stakeholders are defined and achieved.

**Risk:** the possibility of an event occurring that will have an impact on the achievement of objectives. Risk is measured in terms of impact and likelihood.

**Control:** any action taken to manage risk and increase the likelihood that established objectives and goals will be achieved.

**Impairment:** impairment to objectivity may include personal conflict of interest, scope limitations, restrictions on access to records, personnel and properties and resource limitations.

# Annual Fraud Report 2022 to 2023

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 West Suffolk Council spends millions of pounds of public money each year on essential local services. It is essential that we continue to protect and preserve our ability to provide these services by ensuring assets are protected against risk of loss or damage.
- 1.2 This report summarises the work which has taken place during 2022 to 2023 to prevent and detect fraud, theft and corruption. The council aims to show its commitment to minimising the risk of fraud, theft and corruption and deter any would-be fraudsters by publishing this information.

## 2. The risk of fraud

- 2.1 Fraud, theft and corruption are an ever-present threat to the resources available in the public sector. They are costly, in terms of both reputational risk and financial losses.
- 2.2 The council's mitigating controls include:
  - clear policies and procedures
  - access to specialist and qualified staff to investigate potential areas of fraud
  - active participation in the National Fraud Initiative (NFI)
  - a sound internal control environment as demonstrated by internal and external audit opinions.
- 2.3 Whilst there are mitigating controls in place to manage the risks of fraud, theft and corruption, these risks cannot be completely eradicated. The council recognises the vulnerability to fraud and key fraud risk areas and takes positive action to minimise those risks. Emphasis is placed on preventative and early detection work in areas at greatest risk of fraud.

## 3. Policies and procedures

- 3.1 The council has a range of interrelated policies and procedures to provide a corporate framework to counter fraudulent activity. These include:
  - Codes of Conduct for Members and Officers
  - Code of Corporate Governance
  - Constitution – including Contract and Financial Procedure Rules
  - Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy
  - Whistleblowing Policy



- Anti-Money Laundering Policy
- Recruitment and selection procedures

3.2 Reviews of the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy and Anti-Money Laundering Policy were undertaken in 2022 to 2023 to update references to recent guidance and current legislation.

3.3 Policies are also supported with eLearning training modules. Refreshed anti-bribery and corruption, fraud awareness and anti-money laundering eLearning training modules were launched in 2022 to 2023.

## **4. Corporate fraud, theft, bribery and corruption arrangements**

4.1 West Suffolk's Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy applies to all West Suffolk Council activities and is in place to minimise the risk to the council's assets and good name, promote a culture of integrity and accountability in councillors, employees and all those that the council does business with, and enhance existing procedures aimed at preventing, discouraging, detecting and investigating fraud and corruption.

4.2 Fraud awareness messages are published on the intranet to increase staff awareness. This can include topics such as council tax and council tax reduction scheme fraud, mandate and supplier fraud, business rates fraud, housing benefit, vishing scams (the practice of making phone calls purporting to be from reputable companies to induce officers to reveal information), impersonation fraud, government scheme incentives including the energy bills support, and general fraud and corruption awareness such as money laundering. Where appropriate, messages are also posted on the council's social media accounts to alert the public to scams.

4.3 Internal audit receives and takes action on regular alerts from the National Anti-Fraud Network – an organisation recognised as a centre of good practice dedicated to protecting the public purse from fraud, abuse and error. Fraud trend data received from organisations such as Trading Standards, Action Fraud, City of London Police, CIFAS (the UK's fraud prevention community) and local intelligence sources concerning local and national fraud threats are circulated as appropriate to further increase staff awareness to take relevant steps in the prevention of fraud.

4.4 The Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) provides the revenues and benefits service on behalf of five partner authorities, including West Suffolk. The ARP has a dedicated fraud team which internal audit liaises with on a regular basis.

4.5 Staff vigilance continues to support the anti-fraud culture. For example, the finance team have strong controls in place which help to identify attempted mandate fraud.

## **5. Internal audit**

- 5.1 Fraud and corruption risks are identified as part of the annual audit planning process and flexibility is included within the annual internal audit work plan to undertake irregularity investigative work, coordination of the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) data matching exercise and proactive anti-fraud and anti-corruption work, including raising awareness.
- 5.2 The internal audit team is a member of the Suffolk Counter Fraud Group which aims to:
- identify and share emerging national and local fraud risks
  - explore the sharing and matching of data within Suffolk authorities to identify fraud and error
  - share best practice and explore joint working for proactive counter fraud exercises
- 5.3 Internal audit also attends fraud prevention webinars to maintain knowledge on local authority fraud threats.

## **6. Reported suspicions**

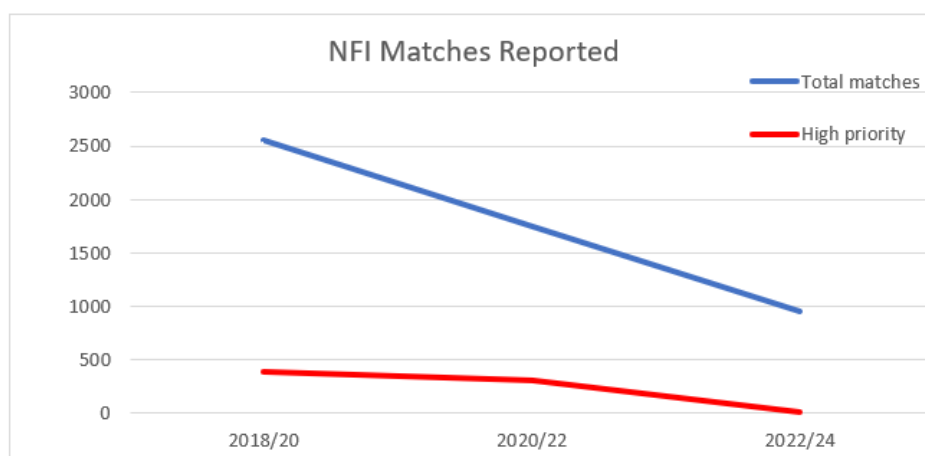
- 6.1 The internal audit team has a responsibility to investigate suspected irregularities resulting in potential loss to council resources and monies or money laundering concerns. No substantive investigations were undertaken by the team in 2022 to 2023.

## **7. COVID-19**

- 7.1 Internal audit were actively involved in the process design and checking of COVID-19 business grants, utilising government recommended tools to assist with identifying fraudulent grant applications and errors and working with colleagues to action recovery where necessary.
- 7.2 Internal audit followed guidance issued by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) in respect of prepayment and post payment assurance work required for the COVID-19 business grants. This includes the completion of risk assessments, post payment assurance plans, and reporting regimes.
- 7.3 Internal Audit have now completed the post payment assurance work as requested by BEIS in respect of COVID-19 Business Support Grants. BEIS confirmed that for Cohort 1 West Suffolk Council followed an appropriate and robust process in completing the minimum assurance checks when awarding and paying grants.

## 8. National Fraud Initiative

- 8.1 The National Fraud Initiative (NFI) is a mandatory exercise run by the Cabinet Office to match and compare electronic data within and between public and private sector bodies to prevent and detect fraud and error. These bodies include police authorities, fire and rescue authorities, NHS, local authorities, housing associations, DWP, HMRC and a number of other public sector bodies. Where a match in data is found, this indicates that there may be an inconsistency in the application, claim or payment which needs further investigation.
- 8.2 The main exercise takes place over a two-year period, matching records such as housing benefit, local council tax reduction scheme, student loans, payroll, companies house data, pensions, creditor payments, housing register waiting list, housing tenants, right to buy, and resident parking permits.
- 8.3 The current NFI exercise saw the majority of data matches being released between January and March 2023. This produced a reduction in the number of matches previously reported as the NFI continue to improve the quality of data matching and have amended the priority risk rating of matches.



- 8.4 High priority and a sample of other matches are reviewed by internal audit and ARP.
- 8.5 A separate annual exercise to match electoral register data to single person discount (SPD) records is also undertaken to identify where SPD may not be applicable as there is more than one liable person living at the property.
- 8.6 119 single person discount cases, with a savings value of £142,346 were identified through NFI work during 2022 to 2023.
- 8.7 Where fraud or error is found, recovery is made by way of the housing benefit overpayment process, credits obtained from suppliers (for example for duplicate invoice payments) or revised council tax bills are issued.

## **9. Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) fraud arrangements**

9.1 ARP are tasked to identify and prevent fraud in the following areas:

- Local Council Tax Support
- Single Person Discount
- Council Tax fraud
- Non-Domestic Rates fraud

9.2 Housing Benefit frauds are passed to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to investigate.

9.3 The ARP Fraud and Visits Team work with the Housing Options Team and also with housing associations to tackle Right to Buy and subletting abuse. The ARP Fraud and Visits team also forge closer working relations with service areas in an attempt to prevent and detect fraud and error, this includes a joint working approach with Planning Enforcement, Public Health and Housing (for example in relation to Houses in Multiple Occupation).

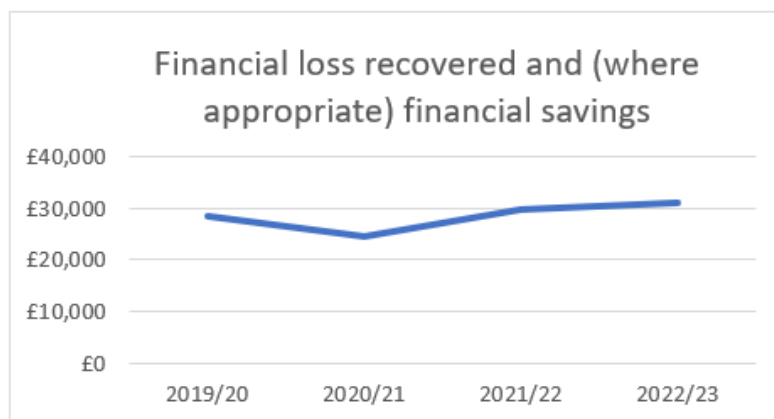
9.4 Proactive work includes:

- checks are made on single person discount (SPD) applications by the ARP Fraud Team to proactively prevent discounts being incorrectly granted, this approach also contributes to the reduced number of SPD matches reported in the NFI exercises
- identifying potential tax evasion due to properties not on the council tax or business rates databases
- new staff recruited to the ARP revenues and benefits team are given an induction session, to include training on fraud awareness, key documents and the role of the ARP Fraud Team
- working with housing teams and social housing providers to recover properties
- investigating referrals from West Suffolk Council, such as Electoral Register fraud.

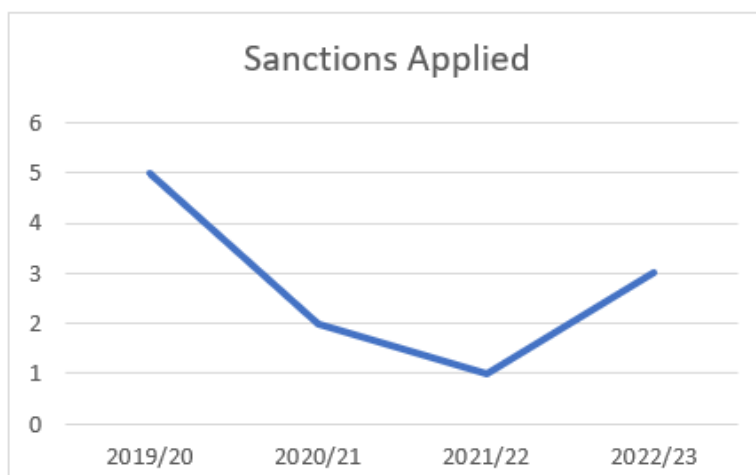
9.5 The data below has been provided by ARP to summarise some of the fraud work undertaken by them during 2022 to 2023.

## Council tax reduction scheme

- 9.5.1 Every effort is made to recover debt caused by fraud in line with DWP guidance. New council tax bills are issued for the period in question to enable collection to be made.
- 9.5.2 29 cases of ineligible Council Tax Reduction Scheme awards were identified with savings of £30,893 calculated. Savings are calculated from the actual overpayment plus 21 weeks as per DWP methodology.



## Sanctions applied



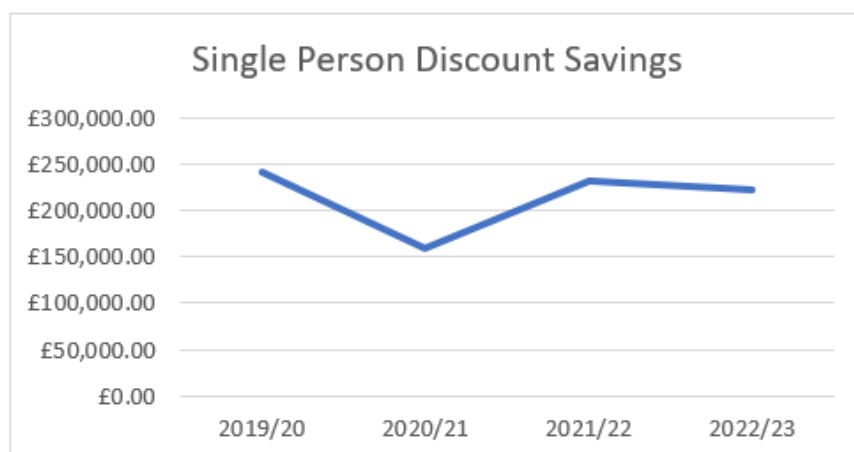
- 9.5.3 Investigations can be closed without a sanction because it is considered to be a genuine error, there is insufficient evidence of fraud, or it is not in the public interest to pursue the fraud. In these instances, the benefit is corrected, and the action taken is recovery action in respect of an overpayment; whilst this is not recorded as a fraud, there is a saving to the taxpayer.
- 9.5.4 Two administrative penalties for Council Tax Reduction Scheme were applied with a value of £1,117.02. Administrative penalties can be offered for lower value offences where sufficient evidence is held for prosecution, but it would not be in the public interest to prosecute.

## Housing benefit

- 9.5.5 Housing benefit fraud is investigated by the Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS) which is a partnership between the DWP Fraud Investigation Service, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), and local authorities. ARP will also regularly conduct joint working investigations with the DWP to ensure that frauds are dealt with in the most efficient and cost-effective manner and are informed if there is to be a change to the housing benefit award at the conclusion of the investigation.

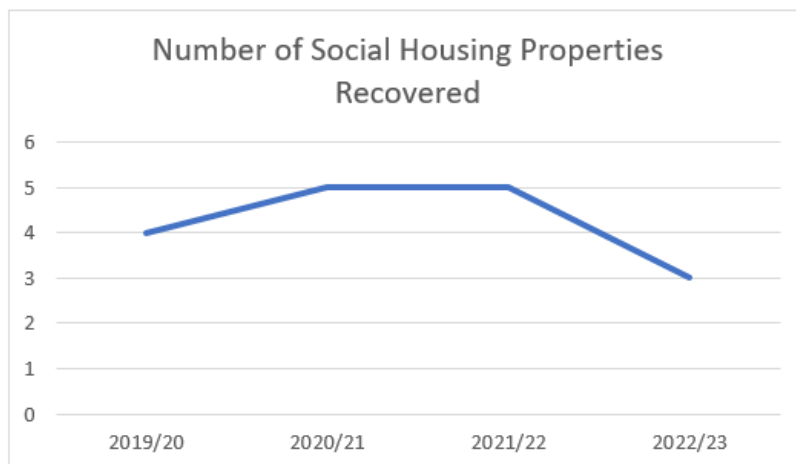
## Single person discount fraud

- 9.5.6 A rolling programme of work is undertaken to review single person discount against credit data to determine if the discount is appropriate. 241 cases were identified, with savings of £222,939 calculated. In line with NFI guidance, the savings are calculated from when the eligibility is removed, the liability for the remainder of the current year plus another year.



## Social housing fraud

- 9.5.7 Joint working with the housing team and housing associations to tackle fraud such as Right to Buy and subletting abuse. This resulted in three properties being recovered and the removal of an individual from the housing waiting list. These properties can then be offered to those who are eligible for social housing.



## Other fraud activity

9.5.8 Work continues to identify properties which are not on the business rates or council tax database. This can occur as the property has not been declared to the Valuation Office or incorrect information on the property status has been declared; officer vigilance can often identify these properties. Backdated bills are raised for these properties:

- six non-domestic rates (NNDR) properties were identified as not being on the database in 2022 to 2023; the value of the retrospective bills raised for these properties is £188,283.
- 26 cases of council tax avoidance, either through not being on the council tax database or properties no longer being eligible for discounts and exemptions were identified in 2022 to 2023 with bills to a value of £9,170 being raised.

## 10. Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally

- 10.1 The CIPFA Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally Strategy 2020 to 2025 estimates that fraud costs local authorities £7.8bn a year.
- 10.2 The strategy and its tools provide ways for local authorities to further develop and enhance their counter-fraud response by ensuring that it is comprehensive and effective and by focusing on the key changes that will make the most difference.
- 10.3 The strategy includes a checklist to make a proper assessment of fraud and corruption risks. The council has measured itself against this checklist and considers that fraud and corruption is well managed.
- 10.4 The fraud risks raised in the strategy are considered within the council's programme of fraud prevention work.

## **11. CIPFA code of practice – managing the risk of fraud and corruption**

- 11.1 The CIPFA Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption provides a number of key principles and expectations to embed effective standards for countering fraud and corruption.
- 11.2 An assessment was undertaken in 2022 to 2023 by internal audit, resulting in a small number of actions to be considered. This assessment continues to be reviewed and incorporated into the annual audit work plan.





# **Final report**

## **Validation of a self-assessment**

### **West Suffolk Council Internal Audit Function**

**5 April 2023**

**Elizabeth Humphrey CPFA**

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# **Validation of a self-assessment of West Suffolk Council's Internal Audit Function (March 2023)**

Internal audit within the public sector in the United Kingdom is governed by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) which have been in place since 1 April 2013, were revised on 1 April 2016 and further revised on 1 April 2017. The standards are currently being reviewed and changes are expected in 2024. The purpose of the PSIAS is to improve the professionalism and standing of internal audit, to support good governance in local government and to add value. The standards require periodic self-assessments and an assessment by an external person every five years. West Suffolk Council's internal audit function was last reviewed in 2018 and a re-evaluation was therefore due. The 2018 review was a full external quality assessment (EQA) and the Council decided to have a validation of a self-assessment this time. The review also included checking compliance with the Local Government Advisory Note (LGAN), where this has requirements in addition to those in the PSIAS, and against the ten questions asked in CIPFA's May 2022 publication, Untapped Potential.

The review was carried out through a process of interview and document review. As this was a validation of a self-assessment, the document review work was mostly undertaken by internal audit and then checked by me. I carried out full interviews, as for an EQA, and a list of interviewees is included at appendix 2. I should like to thank all those who took the time to talk to me for their help. The team reviewed five audits and I reviewed a further two, all carried out during the 2021 to 2022 and 2022 to 2023 financial years. We also examined key documents, including the Internal Audit Charter and reports to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee (PASC).

The internal audit function at West Suffolk Council **conforms with the PSIAS** (see appendix 3 for details of the PSIAS ratings). I identified no areas of non-compliance with the standards that would affect the overall scope or operation of the internal audit activity and the function is valued and well-regarded across the Council. I was particularly impressed with the way in which the internal audit opinion is presented and the link made to this opinion on each piece of audit work. I identified a number of minor changes that could be made to meet or more fully demonstrate adherence to the Standards and have made three recommendations (R) and six suggestions (S) to support these developments. The Service Manager (Internal Audit) (referred to as the CAE or Chief Audit Executive below) will need to take action to implement these and an action plan is included as appendix 1.

### Summary findings and recommendations

Standard	Conformance	Findings	Recommendations and suggestions	Recommendation number
<b>Mission</b>	Conforms	The mission is quoted in the Charter as required.		
<b>Core principles of internal audit</b>	Conforms	Internal Audit conforms to the Core Principles of Internal Audit. The recommendations and suggestions made below will help to reinforce these principles.	Consider setting out how the internal audit function delivers against the Core Principles and the Code of Ethics in the Internal Audit Charter and the Internal Audit Manual	S1
<b>Code of Ethics</b>	Conforms	All interviewees stressed the emphasis placed on ethics by Internal Audit and their independence and objectivity.	See S1	
<b>Attribute standards</b>				
<b>1000</b> Purpose, authority and responsibility	Conforms	The Charter includes almost all the required information but there is no reference to assurance provided to outside parties, for example, ARP (Standard 1000.A1) and the Core Principles and Code of Ethics are simply quoted rather than defined in the West Suffolk context (Standard 1010).	Set out how internal audit provides assurance to outside parties in the Charter See also R3  See S1	R1
<b>1100</b> Independence and objectivity	Conforms	No concerns were raised about Internal Audit's independence and objectivity and several		

Standard	Conformance	Findings	Recommendations and suggestions	Recommendation number
		interviewees mentioned this as something that they valued.		
<b>1200</b> Proficiency and due professional care	Conforms	The team is well qualified, both professionally and by experience. It is thoughtful in its audit planning and carries its work out with care.		
<b>1300</b> Quality assurance and improvement programme (QAIP)	Conforms	The requirements around quality assurance are met. Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme (QAIP) activities go beyond what is described in the manual and provide a broad challenge to the audit team to develop and improve.	Consider expanding the QAIP section in the manual to reflect what is done in practice	S2
<b>Performance standards</b>				
<b>2000</b> Managing the internal audit activity	Conforms	<p>Internal audit is well managed and audit planning is robust and risk based. This could be given greater emphasis in the annual plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no explicit reference to national issues and risks in the plan (LGAN)</li> <li>• The plan allocates percentages of audit time to each area of audit activity.</li> </ul>	<p>Highlight the national issues and risks considered in developing the plan</p> <p>Include time for managing the audit team in the annual plan</p>	<p>S3</p> <p>R2</p>

Standard	Conformance	Findings	Recommendations and suggestions	Recommendation number
		<p>100 per cent of time is dedicated to reviewing work, with no allowance for audit planning, reporting to PASC, etc (LGAN)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although the CAE relies on independent assurance providers (inspectors, external audit and others), this is not detailed in the Annual Plan (Standard 2050, LGAN).</li> </ul>	<p>Set out more detail about independent assurance providers in the Internal Audit Annual Plan</p> <p>See also R1</p>	R3
<b>2100</b> Nature of work	Conforms	Internal audit's work covers all the areas required by the PSIAS and LGAN. The way in which audits are planned, setting out areas that are and are not going to be covered (for example, fraud risks, ethical and environmental concerns), demonstrates this coverage.		
<b>2200</b> Engagement planning	Conforms	Engagement planning is thorough and well evidenced. It could be further improved if the audit briefing note set out opportunities for making significant improvements as part of audit's work (Standards 2201 and 2210.A3).	Expand audit briefing notes to set out how internal audit looks for opportunities to make improvements and achieve value for money	S4

Standard	Conformance	Findings	Recommendations and suggestions	Recommendation number
<b>2300</b> Performing the engagement	Conforms	Audit engagements are well performed, well documented and well managed. The CAE has recently started carrying out audit work and the self-assessment suggests that consideration needs to be given to a review process for his work. (Standard 2340, LGAN).	Consider how to undertake supervision of audit work carried out by the CAE	S5
<b>2400</b> Communicating the results	Conforms	Audit reports are clear and complete and they acknowledge satisfactory performance by giving an assurance rating against each area examined.  The annual opinion meets the requirements of Standard 2450 but more emphasis could be given to internal audit's role in supporting the delivery of WSC's strategic objectives, as is already done in the annual plan.	Include details of how internal audit's work contributes to the Council's strategic objectives as part of the annual report.	S6
<b>2500</b> Monitoring progress	Conforms	The follow-up process complies with the standards.		
<b>2600</b> Communicating the acceptance of risks	Conforms	There was no evidence that risks have been left unmitigated following an audit, highlighting the priority given to audit findings.		

<b>Untapped Potential</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Recommendations and suggestions</b>	<b>Recommendation number</b>
Does internal audit receive the right level of support and engagement from the audit committee?	The PASC chair, members of the audit team and others were all comfortable with the support provided by/ received from the committee.		
Does internal audit get good engagement from across the organisation when it plans and conducts audits?	Interviews and the review of working papers indicate that engagement is good.		
Do managers within the organisation seek advice or assurances from internal audit?	Interviewees said that audit is a useful sounding board and helpful in providing advice, reassurance and assurance. Members of the team contribute to the council by sitting on groups and providing early audit input to developments.		
Has the head of internal audit indicated that resources (capability or capacity) need to increase? What steps are being taken to address this?	There are currently no concerns about resources.		
Does internal audit conform to PSIAS (and LGAN) as demonstrated by an independent external quality assessment	The 2018 review and this review show that the team generally conforms to the PSIAS and LGAN.		

Untapped Potential	Findings	Recommendations and suggestions	Recommendation number
undertaken within the last five years?			
What action is internal audit taking to continually improve its quality, engagement and impact for the organisation? Is internal audit considering the skills and competencies it will need in the future as well as now?	The team works closely together to challenge itself to improve and develop. It carries out a broad array of QAIP activities and seeks feedback on its work, formally and informally. It is carrying out more added value work, reflecting the priorities of the council and looking for new ways to do so, including exploring data analytics for use in the coming audit year.		
Is there a clear view of the assurance that internal audit does and does not provide? What assurance is provided by other functions or parties? Are there gaps in the assurance that management or the audit committee require?	Internal audit is very clear in its planning and reporting documents about the contribution each assignment will make to the Council's strategic priorities and also to the auditor's annual opinion.  It receives assurance from other parties, particularly in relation to the Anglia Revenues Partnership, and this could be made more explicit in the annual plan and annual report.	See R3 and S6 above	
How do internal audit plans map to the organisation's strategic priorities and risks?	Both the annual plan and the individual briefing notes for each audit set out the links to the Council's strategic priorities and risks on the strategic risk register.		
How is internal audit developing its approach to providing assurance?	Internal audit is unusual in providing assurance in its annual report across four different dimensions, giving		



Untapped Potential	Findings	Recommendations and suggestions	Recommendation number
	<p>different ratings for different areas of activity. This approach is to be commended.</p> <p>Each audit brief sets out how that assignment will contribute to the different aspects of the annual opinion, a practice that I shall be recommending elsewhere.</p>		
What factors currently determine the internal audit strategy? Will the strategy deliver internal audit needs in the future?	The strategy focusses on being flexible and adding value while also covering the areas needed to form the annual opinion. The emphasis on flexibility will support the team to continue to deliver in the future.		

The Service Manager (Internal Audit) has details of the findings, standard by standard.

Elizabeth Humphrey CPFA

## Appendix 1: action plans

### Recommendations

No	Recommendation	Response	Responsible officer	Action date
R1	Set out how internal audit provides assurance to outside parties in the Charter	Agreed – this will be covered when the Internal Audit Charter is next reviewed	Service Manager Internal Audit	June 2024
R2	Include time for managing the audit team in the annual plan	Agreed – this will be covered in the Internal Audit Plan 2023 to 2024	Service Manager Internal Audit	June 2023
R3	Set out more detail about independent assurance providers in the Internal Audit Annual Plan	Agreed – this will be covered in the Internal Audit Plan 2023 to 2024	Service Manager Internal Audit	June 2023

## Suggestions

No	Suggestion	Response	Responsible officer	Action date
S1	Consider setting out how the internal audit function delivers against the Core Principles and the Code of Ethics in the Internal Audit Charter and the Internal Audit Manual	Agreed – this will be covered when these documents are next reviewed.	Service Manager Internal Audit	Internal Audit Manual June 2023  Internal Audit Charter June 2024
S2	Consider expanding the QAIP section in the manual to reflect what is done in practice	Agreed – this will be covered when the Internal Audit Manual is next reviewed.	Service Manager Internal Audit	June 2023
S3	Highlight the national issues and risks considered in developing the plan	Agreed – this will be covered in the Internal Audit Annual Plan 2023 to 2024.	Service Manager Internal Audit	June 2023
S4	Expand audit briefing notes to set out how internal audit looks for opportunities to make improvements and achieve value for money	Agreed – our standard template for briefing notes will be amended to ensure this is captured.	Service Manager Internal Audit	June 2023
S5	Consider how to undertake supervision of audit work carried out by the CAE	Agreed – this will be considered and incorporated into the Internal Audit Manual.	Service Manager Internal Audit	June 2023
S6	Include details of how internal audit's work contributes to the Council's strategic objectives as part of the annual report.	Agreed – this will be covered in the 2022 to 2023 Internal Audit Annual Report.	Service Manager Internal Audit	June 2023

## **Appendix 2: interviewees**

Chair Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee

Director of Resources and Property

Service Manager (Legal and Governance)

Service Manager (Finance and Procurement)

Service Manager (Customer and Digital)

HR Team Leader

Geographic Information System (GIS) Officer

Service Manager (Internal Audit)

Senior Auditors and Auditor

### Appendix 3: conformance gradings

<b>Conforms</b>	The internal audit service complies with the standards with only minor deviations. The relevant structures, policies, and procedures of the internal audit service, as well as the processes by which they are applied, at least comply with the requirements of the section in all material respects.
<b>Partially conforms</b>	The internal audit service falls short of achieving some elements of good practice but is aware of the areas for development. These will usually represent significant opportunities for improvement in delivering effective internal audit and conformance to the standards.
<b>Non-conforming</b>	The internal audit service is not aware of, is not making efforts to comply with, or is failing to achieve many/all of the elements of the standards. These deficiencies will usually have a significant adverse impact on the internal audit service's effectiveness and its potential to add value to the organisation. These will represent significant opportunities for improvement, potentially including actions by senior management or the audit committee.

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# Outline Internal Audit Plan 2023 to 2024

<b>Report number:</b>	<b>PAS/WS/23/009</b>	
<b>Report to and date(s):</b>	<b>Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee</b>	1 June 2023
<b>Cabinet member:</b>	To be confirmed at Annual Council on 23 May 2023 Tel: Email:	
<b>Lead officer:</b>	Jon Snares Service Manager (Internal Audit) Tel: 01284 757239 Email: <a href="mailto:jon.snares@westsuffolk.gov.uk">jon.snares@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	

<b>Decisions Plan:</b>	<b>This item is not required to be included in the Decisions Plan.</b>
<b>Wards impacted:</b>	<b>Not applicable.</b>
<b>Recommendation:</b>	<p><b>It is recommended that the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Approves the Outline Internal Audit Plan 2023 to 2024</b></li> </ol>

## **1. Context to this report**

- 1.1 The objectives of internal audit are to:
- Provide a professional, independent and objective assurance and advisory service that assists the Director Resources and Property in her statutory duty as Section 151 Officer to ensure that the council's finances are properly administered; and
  - Work with management to improve the operation of the council.
- 1.2 The internal audit service is delivered and developed in accordance with the internal audit charter approved by this committee in May 2019.
- 1.3 The Service Manager Internal Audit is responsible for effectively managing the internal audit activity in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, which are mandatory, and encompass the Core Principles for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing, the Definition of Internal Auditing, the Code of Ethics, and the Standards themselves.

## **2. Proposals within this report**

- 2.1 The proposed 2023 to 2024 audit plan, provided at **Appendix B**, is a risk-based plan of work for the internal audit team which takes into account the need to produce an annual internal audit opinion for the council which concludes on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the council's framework of governance, risk management, and internal control.
- 2.2 It is very important that the audit plan is flexible and able to adapt to changing risks facing the council, thereby ensuring that audit resources are used where they will add maximum value. During the year, specific audits may therefore need to be taken out of the plan or added in, according to changing circumstances.
- 2.3 Where possible the proposed audits will be carried out in priority order, and as many of these audits completed as possible, within the available resources.
- 2.4 Final approval of the audit plan is the responsibility of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee.

## **3. Alternative options that have been considered**

- 3.1 The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards require that a risk-based plan of internal audit work is produced. There are no alternative options.



#### **4. Consultation and engagement undertaken**

- 4.1 The draft audit plan was produced in consultation with the Leadership Team and service managers.

#### **5. Risks associated with the proposals**

- 5.1 An approved audit plan ensures that risk-based plans are in place to determine the priorities of the internal audit activity, consistent with the council's goals.

#### **6. Implications arising from the proposals**

- 6.1 Any implications arising from the proposal are covered in **Appendix A**.

#### **7. Appendices referenced in this report**

- 7.1 Appendix A - Internal Audit Plan Report
- 7.2 Appendix B – Outline Internal Audit Plan 2023 to 2024

#### **8. Background documents associated with this report**

- 8.1 None

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# West Suffolk Council Internal Audit Plan 2023 to 2024

## 1. Introduction

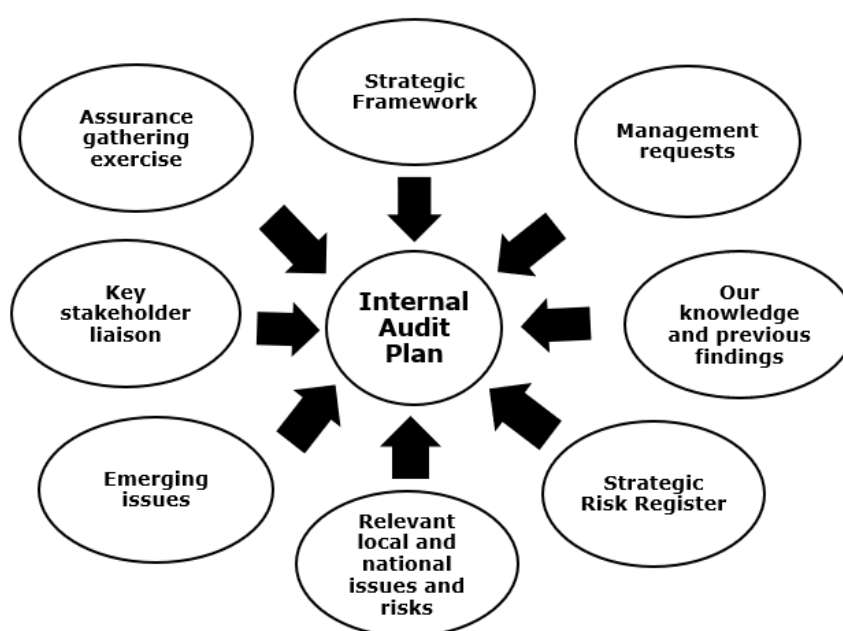
1.1 The role of internal audit is that of an:

'independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes'.

## 2. What is the Internal Audit Plan and why does it matter?

2.1 The proposed 2023 to 2024 audit plan, provided at **Appendix B**, is a risk-based plan of work for the internal audit team that provides a framework for ensuring that audit resources are focused on activities that will make the most difference to supporting the council's priorities.

2.2 The internal audit plan takes into account the need to produce an annual internal audit opinion which underpins the council's Annual Governance Statement, the diagram below shows key sources of information that help to inform the audit plan.



### 3. How was the draft internal audit plan produced?

- 3.1 A series of meetings was held with managers within the council to discuss and gain a better understanding of any current or upcoming service or corporate challenges or risks.
- 3.2 From these meetings, review of the strategic risk register, and additional knowledge of local and national risks arising from reading publications, attending training events and seminars, and networking with colleagues from other councils, a list of potential audit areas was produced and then risk assessed using the following criteria, resulting in a risk-based proposed plan of work.
- **Controls assurance** – information taken from previous internal audit work as well as other assurance processes within, and external to, the council.
  - **Corporate importance** – the extent to which the council depends on the correct running of the system, whether for legal or regulatory requirements or to meet strategic priorities.
  - **Materiality** – in monetary terms the relative significance or importance of the system or process to the council.
  - **Vulnerability** – the extent to which the system or process is liable to breakdown, corruption, loss, error and so on.
  - **Management concerns** – direct requests for support.

### 4. What is included in the draft internal audit plan?

- 4.1 **Appendix B** provides information on the key audit areas we have prioritised in our work programme for 2023 to 2024 as well as a rough approximation of the expected staff resource allocation for each audit area.
- 4.2 In essence, the draft internal audit plan includes two categories of work, that which supports the annual internal audit opinion either directly or indirectly (assurance work) and other, non-assurance work, as follows:

#### **Assurance work**

- main financial systems
- corporate and business area audits
- follow up work on previous audits to check whether agreed actions have been implemented

- added value work which are areas identified by management and internal audit that would benefit from appropriate audit input or resource in the form of providing support and advice to management including reviewing relevant arrangements
- grant certification work
- proactive anti-fraud work
- other assurance related work including working groups, general advice and assistance, and liaison with external audit.

### **Non-assurance work**

- fee earning Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) audits on behalf of other partners
- financial vetting, and financial due diligence for investment decisions
- annual independent examination of West Stow Anglo Saxon Village Trust accounts.

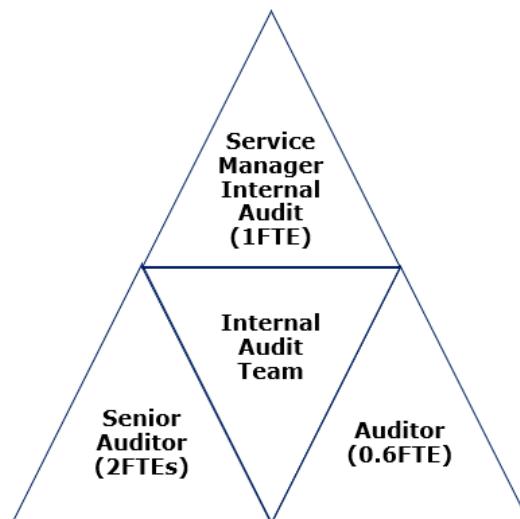
## **5. Delivering the plan**

- 5.1 It is very important that the audit plan is flexible and able to adapt to changing risks facing the council, and thereby ensure that audit resources are used where they will add maximum value.
- 5.2 The intention is that as far as possible the proposed audits will be carried out in priority order and as many of the audits completed as possible within the available resources. It should however be recognised that it is possible that not all of the identified pieces of work will be undertaken. Also, other pieces of work not currently in the plan may be carried out.
- 5.3 The draft audit plan as presented at **Appendix B** represents the Service Manager Internal Audit's current view of how audit resources can be used most effectively. An update on progress against the audit plan will be given to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee during the year.
- 5.4 The Service Manager Internal Audit will remain alert to changing circumstances and emerging risks through a number of channels, including:
  - attendance at senior officer meetings including Senior Management Team (Leadership Team plus Service Managers), officer working groups, feedback from the Section 151 Officer, and discussions with other West Suffolk colleagues
  - committee reports
  - professional reference material, websites, and discussion forums.

- 5.5 Internal audit is only one source of assurance and through the delivery of this plan we will not, and do not seek to cover all risks and processes within the organisation. We will however continue to consider the potential for taking into account the work of other assurance providers to ensure that duplication is minimised, and a suitable breadth of assurance is obtained. These external assurance providers include external audit and those who provide assurance over cyber security and other IT related areas.
- 5.6 Where any sources of assurance other than the work contained within this plan are relied on in forming the annual audit opinion, additional work may be undertaken by internal audit where necessary and appropriate to validate these other sources of assurance.

## **6. What staff resources does the internal audit team have and how are these allocated?**

- 6.1 West Suffolk Council's internal audit resource requirements are based on a recognition that:
- the ability to be flexible wherever possible and react to services' need for advice and assistance is a crucial element of internal audit's ability to add maximum value
  - the council has a statutory obligation to undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, thereby covering a broad spectrum of work
  - audit coverage needs to be appropriate and sufficient to enable the Service Manager Internal Audit to discharge his duty to provide a robust annual internal audit opinion in support of the council's annual governance statement.
- 6.2 The Service Manager Internal Audit considers that the current internal audit staff resource is adequate to fulfil the requirements of an annual plan of audit work to provide an annual audit opinion and meet statutory obligations.
- 6.3 The following full-time equivalent posts are filled:



- 6.4 The training and personal development needs of internal audit staff are established through a review process. The existing skills, knowledge and experience of internal audit staff have been taken into account when preparing the draft audit plan.

## 7. Conflicts of interest

- 7.1 We are not aware of any relationships that may affect the independence and objectivity of the team, and which are required to be disclosed under internal auditing standards.

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# Internal Audit Plan 2023 to 2024

Priority key

1	high
2	medium
3	low

## Main financial systems

These are the main financial systems that support the running of the council. These audit reviews are carried out to provide independent assurance to the Director (Resources and Performance) as the S151 Officer that arrangements are operating effectively, and in line with the Financial Procedure Rules and Treasury Management Strategy as appropriate. These audits are carried out annually and the coverage of each audit is decided on a risk basis.

Rough approximation of expected staff resource allocation: 23 per cent

Audit Area	Outline scope, audit opinion area, and links to strategic risk register and strategic priorities	Priority
Creditors	<p><b>Outline scope:</b> to provide assurance that payments made are valid, authorised, accurate and timely, in respect of goods and services received by the council and that they have been properly accounted for in the council's accounts.</p> <p><b>Audit opinion category:</b> financial control</p> <p><b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> WS1 – financial management, WS2 – financial planning</p> <p><b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> all</p>	1
Debtors and debt management	<p><b>Outline scope:</b> to provide assurance that income generating activities are identified and accurately invoiced, that all invoices are paid, and the income is accounted for and reflected in the council's accounts, the extent of debt is minimised, and overdue accounts are promptly followed up.</p> <p><b>Audit opinion category:</b> financial control</p> <p><b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> WS1 – financial management, WS2 – financial planning</p> <p><b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> all</p>	1
Treasury management	<p><b>Outline scope:</b> annual audit to provide assurance that accurate, complete, and timely information is produced to allow for effective monitoring and decision making in line with the investment strategy, that transactions are complete, accurate, valid and timely and made with institutions in line with the treasury management strategy, and that treasury management activities are monitored and scrutinised in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice.</p> <p><b>Audit opinion category:</b> financial control</p> <p><b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> WS1 – financial management, WS2 – financial planning</p> <p><b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> all</p>	1

Audit Area	Outline scope, audit opinion area, and links to strategic risk register and strategic priorities	Priority
<b>Car parks cash handling</b>	<p><b>Outline scope:</b> audit required due to significant sums involved and risks associated with cash handling. Provides assurance that effective controls are in place over car parking cash collection, retention, and banking systems.</p> <p><b>Audit opinion category:</b> financial control</p> <p><b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> WS1 – financial management, WS2 – financial planning</p> <p><b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> all</p>	1
<b>Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) audits 2023 to 2024:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Tax billing and benefits</li> <li>• overpayments recovery</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outline scope:</b> provides assurance over the administration of the revenues and benefits systems. West Suffolk undertakes the audits of Council Tax billing and benefits, and housing benefits overpayments recovery, on behalf of all the Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) partners for which a fee is charged. The audits of national non-domestic rates and ARP enforcement are currently undertaken by other partners.</p> <p><b>Audit opinion category:</b> internal control</p> <p><b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> WS1 – financial management, WS2 – financial planning, WS22 – personal debt and benefits changes</p> <p><b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> all</p>	1
<b>Payroll</b>	<p><b>Outline scope:</b> to provide assurance that key controls exist for payroll processing including adequate documentation for starters and leavers.</p> <p><b>Audit opinion category:</b> financial control</p> <p><b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> WS1 – financial management, WS2 – financial planning</p> <p><b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> all</p>	1
<b>General ledger</b>	<p><b>Outline scope:</b> to provide assurance that financial transactions are correctly recorded including ensuring their completeness and integrity, with the aim of providing the financial information from which the council's annual statements of accounts can be prepared.</p> <p><b>Audit opinion category:</b> financial control</p> <p><b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> WS1 – financial management, WS2 – financial planning</p> <p><b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> all</p>	1

Added value work

Areas identified by management and internal audit that would benefit from audit input or resource in the form of providing support and advice to management including reviewing relevant arrangements on behalf of management and/or assisting in making improvements. Care will be taken to ensure these activities do not impinge upon internal audit independence.

These pieces of work will generally be one-off activities (unlike the annual financial systems reviews) and will not always result in a formal report being issued or an opinion provided. However, these pieces of work will contribute to a balanced audit plan which enables the Service Manager (Internal Audit) to give his statutory annual audit opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the council’s framework of risk management, control and governance processes.

Work included in this category will be discussed and agreed with management during the year, and may include amongst other work, change and service improvement support and financial resilience work.

Rough approximation of expected staff resource allocation: 31 per cent

Corporate and business area audits

Reviews of systems, processes or tasks where the internal controls are identified, tested, and evaluated. These are therefore more traditional pieces of audit work in contrast to the ‘Added Value Work’ referred to earlier. Again, unlike the annual financial systems reviews these pieces of work will generally be one-off activities but they will normally result in a formal report being issued and an opinion provided. The work in this category is driven by a shared understanding between management and internal audit of relevant risks. Work included in this category is likely to include, but not necessarily be restricted to, the following pieces of work. An ongoing assessment of potential work areas will ensure that audit resource will be used in those areas which will benefit most from audit input.

Rough approximation of expected staff resource allocation: 13 per cent

Audit Area	Outline scope, audit opinion area, and links to strategic risk register and strategic priorities	Priority
IT audit	<p><b>Outline scope:</b> detailed discussions will be held with the ICT team to agree the scope of this work which is expected to include IT procurement.</p> <p><b>Audit opinion category:</b> governance, risk, internal control</p> <p><b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> WS8 – ICT integration, WS19 – cyber security</p> <p><b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> all</p>	1
Contract Procedure Rules	<p><b>Outline scope:</b> review of whether the new tendering limits and new requirements regarding sustainable procurement and modern day slavery, rolled out in November 2022, are being followed.</p> <p><b>Audit opinion categories:</b> internal control, governance</p> <p><b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> WS1 – financial management</p> <p><b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> all</p>	1
Performance management	<p><b>Outline scope:</b> review a sample of KPIs to check that the underlying data are reliable, accurate and timely, and consider whether the processes for capturing the data could be improved. Also, at the service level, review whether the measures actually capture the most important indicators of performance.</p> <p><b>Audit opinion categories:</b> internal control</p> <p><b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> WS15 – performance</p>	1

Audit Area	Outline scope, audit opinion area, and links to strategic risk register and strategic priorities	Priority
	<b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> all	
<b>Budget monitoring</b>	<b>Outline scope:</b> review of budget monitoring arrangements <b>Audit opinion categories:</b> financial control <b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> WS1 – financial management <b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> all	1
<b>VAT</b>	<b>Outline scope:</b> provision of assurance that appropriate controls are in place to reconcile and balance the VAT returns <b>Audit opinion category:</b> internal control, financial control <b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> WS1 – financial management <b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> all	1
<b>Focused mini audit reviews</b>	<b>Outline scope:</b> the scope of these 'quick' audit reviews remain to be agreed with services but are likely to include areas such as control of ICT assets, and stock control around spare parts / tools and equipment purchases, and fuel. <b>Audit opinion categories:</b> internal control, financial control <b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> all <b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> all	2
<b>Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)</b>	<b>Outline scope:</b> to provide assurance to both West Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council that the conditions of the grant allocated to, and spent by West Suffolk Council, have been complied with. The grant is for the provision of adaptations to disabled people's homes to help them to live independently in their own homes for longer. <b>Audit opinion categories:</b> internal control <b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> WS9(a) – deliver families and communities agenda, WS9(c) – deliver housing agenda <b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> resilient families and communities, housing	2

## Follow ups

Rough approximation of expected staff resource allocation: 3 per cent

Outline Scope	Priority
Whilst it is management's responsibility to manage the risks associated with the areas under their authority, internal audit will monitor progress against the implementation of all agreed audit recommendations deemed to be high and medium risk	1

## Fraud, irregularity and probity

Proactive testing of systems and processes to identify potential fraud and misappropriation or non-compliance with policies and procedures and potentially reactive investigations into potential wrongdoing, fraud, and corruption.

Rough approximation of expected staff resource allocation: 5 per cent

Audit Area	Outline scope, audit opinion area, and links to strategic risk register and strategic priorities	Priority
<b>COVID-19 business support payments recovery monitoring and counter-fraud work</b>	<p><b>Outline scope:</b> work to support the recovery of COVID-19 business support payments, to BEIS or other external agencies with information as required</p> <p><b>Audit opinion categories:</b> internal control, financial control</p> <p><b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> WS9(b) – deliver growth agenda</p> <p><b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> growth</p>	1
<b>Irregularity investigations</b>	<p><b>Outline scope:</b> reactive work where suspected irregularity has been detected.</p> <p><b>Audit opinion categories:</b> internal control, financial control</p> <p><b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> WS1 – financial management WS2– financial planning</p> <p><b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> all</p>	1
<b>Data matching</b>	<p><b>Outline scope:</b> organisation of the extraction of data and submission to the Cabinet Office for the National Fraud Initiative exercises, and co-ordination of review of the matches.</p> <p><b>Audit opinion categories:</b> internal control, financial control</p> <p><b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> WS1 – financial management, WS2– financial planning</p> <p><b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> all</p>	1
<b>Proactive fraud and corruption work</b>	<p><b>Outline scope:</b> proactive anti-fraud work that includes targeted testing of processes with inherent risk of fraud. To also include review and update of our fraud risk assessment.</p> <p><b>Audit opinion categories:</b> internal control, financial control</p> <p><b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> WS1 – financial management, WS2– financial planning</p> <p><b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> all</p>	1
<b>Fraud awareness and publicity</b>	<p><b>Outline scope:</b> continuing to raise awareness of fraud issues and how to report suspicions.</p> <p><b>Audit opinion categories:</b> internal control, financial control</p> <p><b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> WS1 – financial management, WS2– financial planning</p> <p><b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> all</p>	2

## Other audit activity to support the audit opinion

Includes providing advice on systems and processes and attendance at working groups to advise on risk and control, as well as responses to specific enquiries

Rough approximation of expected staff resource allocation: 6 per cent

<b>Audit Area</b>	<b>Outline scope, audit opinion area, and links to strategic risk register and strategic priorities</b>	<b>Priority</b>
<b>Annual Governance Statement 2022 to 2023</b>	<b>Outline scope:</b> co-ordination of production of the West Suffolk Annual Governance Statement and its associated documents. <b>Audit opinion categories:</b> governance <b>Link to strategic risk register:</b> all risks <b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> all	1
<b>Information governance</b>	<b>Outline scope:</b> audit support and advice on information governance policies and practices. <b>Audit opinion categories:</b> internal control <b>Link to strategic risk register:</b> WS14 – breach of data protection and information security <b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> all	1
<b>Strategic Risk Management Group</b>	<b>Outline scope:</b> feed in to review of strategic risks prior to submission to Leadership Team and Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee. <b>Audit opinion categories:</b> risk <b>Link to strategic risk register:</b> all risks <b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> all	1
<b>Financial due diligence in respect of investment decisions and potential suppliers / contractors</b>	<b>Outline scope:</b> financial due diligence checks on businesses (prospective suppliers, contractors, industrial unit tenants and partners) to minimise financial risks to the council. <b>Audit opinion categories:</b> financial control <b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> WS1 – financial management, WS2 – financial planning <b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> all	1
<b>Internal Audit Quality Assurance Improvement Plan (QAIP) work</b>	<b>Outline scope:</b> work to ensure internal audit conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards <b>Audit opinion categories:</b> all <b>Link to strategic risk register:</b> all risks <b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> all	1

Audit Area	Outline scope, audit opinion area, and links to strategic risk register and strategic priorities	Priority
<b>General advice and assistance and requests for support from management</b>	<p><b>Outline scope:</b> provision of advice and assistance on the risk, governance and internal control environment, and unplanned work assessing the impact on controls arising from changes in systems or processes.</p> <p><b>Audit opinion categories:</b> all</p> <p><b>Link to strategic risk register:</b> all risks</p> <p><b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> all</p>	2
<b>Internal Audit external working groups</b>	<p><b>Outline scope:</b> participation in the Suffolk Working Audit Partnership (consisting of the Suffolk local authority internal audit teams), Suffolk Fraud Group, and other relevant groups to share learning and good practice.</p> <p><b>Audit opinion categories:</b> all</p> <p><b>Link to strategic risk register:</b> all risks</p> <p><b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> all</p>	2
<b>Liaison with external audit</b>	<p><b>Outline scope:</b> to ensure there is no duplication of work between internal and external audit, and exchange knowledge as appropriate.</p> <p><b>Audit opinion categories:</b> all</p> <p><b>Link to strategic risk register:</b> all risks</p> <p><b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> all</p>	2

## Other work

Rough approximation of expected staff resource allocation: 8 per cent

Audit Area	Outline scope, audit opinion area, and links to strategic risk register and strategic priorities	Priority
<b>UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund</b>	<p><b>Outline scope:</b> audit work undertaken to enable the S151 Officer to provide written confirmation to central government that all necessary checks have been undertaken to ensure that the programme specific projects have in place the processes to ensure proper administration of financial affairs with regard to the funding programme.</p> <p><b>Audit opinion categories:</b> internal control, financial control</p> <p><b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> WS1 – financial management, WS9(a) – deliver families and communities agenda, WS9(b) – deliver growth agenda</p> <p><b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> resilient families and communities, growth</p>	1
<b>Community Outbreak Management Fund</b>	<p><b>Outline scope:</b> to provide assurance to Suffolk County Council that the conditions of the grant allocated to, and spent by West Suffolk Council, have been complied with. The grant provides support towards expenditure incurred in relation to COVID-19 Test and Trace services.</p> <p><b>Audit opinion categories:</b> internal control</p> <p><b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> WS9(a) – deliver families and communities agenda</p> <p><b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> resilient families and communities</p>	1
<b>Test and Trace Contain Outbreak Management Fund 2021-22</b>	<p><b>Outline scope:</b> audit work in support of the declaration required by the Department of Health and Social Care that the Chief Executive and Service Manager Internal Audit confirm that to the best of their belief that the conditions of this grant have been complied with. The grant provides support towards expenditure incurred in relation to the mitigation against and management of local outbreaks of COVID-19.</p> <p><b>Audit opinion categories:</b> internal control</p> <p><b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> WS9(a) – deliver families and communities agenda</p> <p><b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> resilient families and communities, growth</p>	1
<b>Green Homes Grant – Local Authority Delivery scheme</b>	<p><b>Outline scope:</b> audit work in support of the declaration required by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy that the Chief Executive and Service Manager Internal Audit confirm that to the best of their belief that the conditions of this grant have been complied with. The grant is to provide funding to provide energy efficiency upgrades to low income homes.</p> <p><b>Audit opinion categories:</b> internal control</p> <p><b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> WS21 – environmental and climate change, WS9(a) – failure to deliver families and communities agenda, WS9(c) – failure to deliver housing agenda</p> <p><b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> resilient families and communities, housing</p>	1
<b>Energy Bills Support Scheme – Alternative Funding</b>	<p><b>Outline scope:</b> assurance relating to the administration of energy bills support scheme payments.</p> <p><b>Audit opinion categories:</b> internal control, financial control</p> <p><b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> WS9 - failure to deliver families and communities agenda</p>	1



Audit Area	Outline scope, audit opinion area, and links to strategic risk register and strategic priorities	Priority
	<b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> resilient families and communities	
<b>Alternative Fuel Payment Scheme – Alternative Fuel Grant</b>	<b>Outline scope:</b> assurance relating to the administration of energy bills support scheme payments. <b>Audit opinion categories:</b> internal control, financial control <b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> WS9 - failure to deliver families and communities agenda <b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> resilient families and communities	1
<b>West Stow Anglo Saxon Village Trust Annual Accounts</b>	<b>Outline scope:</b> Independent Examiners' report on the 2022 to 2023 accounts to provide assurance on the charity trustees' preparation of the accounts. <b>Audit opinion categories:</b> not applicable <b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> not applicable <b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> not applicable	2
<b>Data analytics and continuous auditing</b>	<b>Outline scope:</b> work to explore further use of data analytics in our audit work. <b>Audit opinion categories:</b> internal control, financial control <b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> all risks <b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> all	2
<b>Review of Internal Audit Charter</b>	<b>Outline scope:</b> review and update of internal audit charter, including taking into account any related recommendations and suggestions raised as part of the March 2023 external assessment of internal audit's compliance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. <b>Audit opinion categories:</b> all <b>Links to strategic risk register:</b> all <b>Links to strategic priorities:</b> all	2

Management

Rough approximation of expected staff resource allocation: 11 per cent

<b>Managing the internal audit service</b>	<p>Audit resource is also spent on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reporting to and attendance at Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, including drafting of reports and development of the annual audit opinion</li><li>• Annual audit planning process, including meetings with the services and relevant managers, and risk assessment of potential areas to include in the draft annual audit plan</li><li>• Regular internal audit team meetings and 1:1s with team members to discuss and monitor workloads and other team related issues</li><li>• Senior management meetings</li><li>• Training, including both audit related training and corporate training</li></ul>
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# Health and Safety Summary Report 2022- 2023

<b>Report number:</b>	<b>PAS/WS/23/010</b>	
<b>Report to and date(s):</b>	<b>Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee</b>	1 June 2023
<b>Cabinet member:</b>	To be confirmed at Annual Council on 23 May 2023 Tel: Email:	
<b>Lead officer:</b>	<p>Richard King Health and Safety Manager Tel: 01284 757010 Email: <a href="mailto:richard.king@westsuffolk.gov.uk">richard.king@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Wendy Canham Service Manager (HR, Payroll, Learning and Development and Health and Safety) Tel: 01284 757006 Email: <a href="mailto:wendy.canham@westsuffolk.gov.uk">wendy.canham@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a></p>	

<b>Decisions Plan:</b>	<b>This item is not required to be included in the Decisions Plan</b>
<b>Wards impacted:</b>	<b>Not applicable.</b>
<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>It is recommended that the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee note the contents of the Health and Safety Summary Report 2022-2023</b>

## **1. Context to this report**

- 1.1 The Health and Safety Summary Report has been produced to identify and document West Suffolk Council's health and safety performance and work carried out during the year, to ensure legal compliance.

## **2. Proposals within this report**

- 2.1 None

## **3. Alternative options that have been considered**

- 3.1 No alternative options were considered

## **4. Consultation and engagement undertaken**

- 4.1 Consultation with employees, Health and Safety representatives, members of the Health and Safety Group and Health and Safety Sub-Committee occurs throughout the financial year. This report summarises health and safety activities throughout 2022-2023.

## **5. Risks associated with the proposals**

- 5.1 None

## **6. Implications arising from the proposals**

- 6.1 None

## **7. Appendices referenced in this report**

- 7.1 Appendix A - Health and Safety Summary Report 2021-2022

## **8. Background documents associated with this report**

- 8.1 Health and Safety Group minutes
- 8.2 Health and Safety Sub Committee minutes

## Health and Safety Summary Report 2023-24

**Chair of Sub Committee;** Ian Houlder

**Portfolio Holder;** Carol Bull

**Lead Officer;** Richard King, Health and Safety Manager / Wendy Canham,  
Service Manager

**Director Responsible for Health and Safety;** Jill Korwin

**Directorate;** HR, Legal and Governance; Jen Eves

This is a summary report for Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee outlining the information that has been discussed and shared with the Health and Safety Sub Committee over the last year with regards to the work of the Health and Safety Team.

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Health and Safety team works to ensure that our staff work in a safe and healthy environment supporting the delivery of the corporate priorities. It is important that the Council continues to review, monitor and improve, wherever practical, its arrangements and practices. Members will be aware that the Authority provides a varied range of services, some with inherently higher-risk activities and in challenging and changing environments.
- 1.2 This summary report has been produced to identify and document key aspects of West Suffolk Council's health and safety performance over the last year (1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023).
- 1.3 West Suffolk Council is committed to maintaining a healthy and safe place of work for all its employees, as well as taking all reasonable steps to ensure that the public and the environment (which may be affected by its work) are exposed to the lowest practicable level of risk. This is also extended to contractors and members of the public who visit or access our services. We achieve this through the following:
  - Providing Health and safety advice and guidance both internally and to some external third parties.
  - Audits/Inspections which includes the review/advice on risk assessments, safe systems of work, use of equipment, to ensure we meet legal requirements as a minimum, although we aim to be in the top end of best practice.
  - Undertaking Fire Risk assessment on corporate buildings.
  - Managing or arrange health and safety training, including first aid, IOSH management training.
  - Managing the occupational health service.

- Together with the Principal HR Business partners, lead/organise wellbeing events.
- Leading on drug and alcohol testing.
- Recording accidents, incidents and near misses, including violence at work, and carry out subsequent investigations as and if necessary.
- Ensuring that both internal and third-party events held on our land have suitable event safety plans.

1.4 We also work as an integral part of the organisation on all major projects.

1.5 This report demonstrates that the Council's health and safety performance continues to be very good during the last year. Key areas for focus for next year are:

- Encouraging completion of mandatory annual training, including iLearn online training modules
- Continuing work with the health and safety management system
- Continuing to embed a proactive culture around accidents/near misses and embedding learning to help reduce the likelihood of accidents occurring.

## **2. Incidents and Near Misses Summary Analysis 2022/2023**

2.1 Staff incidents have risen over the last year, but remain comparable to 2020/2021 levels;

- 91 in 2022/2023
- 75 in 2021/2022
- 99 in 2020/2021

2.2 Out of the 91 work incidents, 5 were reportable under Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) and 1 incident involving a member of public was reported.

Work related -

- Whilst emptying operative pulled a bin and he felt his right shoulder pop out and then back in again, resulting in 19 days off.

Action taken – On return to work, retrained on task.

- Overreached when planting causing a strained back resulting in 25 days off.

Action taken – On return to work, retrained on task.

- Whilst exiting the vehicle operatives right foot slipped on the road surface causing his right ankle to twist resulting in 22 days lost.

Action taken – Return to work interview to remind operative to be more cautious when getting in/out of vehicles.

- Whilst working in a restricted space between a hedge and a wall operative turned to manoeuvre and their hand slipped off the handle towards cutter bar and cut through the glove taking off the tip of their right thumb resulting in 11 days off.

Action taken – review of risk assessment.

- Operative pulled calf muscle whilst carrying waste collection resulting in 15 days off.

Action taken – None pulled muscle.

Member of the Public-

- Lady tripped whilst walking down the left side stairs in the Apex.

Action taken – First aid administered for head wound, ambulance called, and the casualty was taken to hospital. Stair well was checked for defect/hazard, but nothing was found. Health and Safety attended and assessed the stairs, no defects were found.

2.3 Again, we have seen an increase of days lost due to incidents compared to previous year, but slightly less than 2 years ago.

- 90 days lost in 2022/2023
- 60 days lost in 2021/2022
- 115 days lost in 2020/2021

2.4 We had 10 Near Miss/Non-Reportable Dangerous Occurrence's. Near miss incidents often precede loss-producing events but may be overlooked, as there was no harm (no injury, damage or loss). Thus, many opportunities to prevent future incidents are lost. We encourage the reporting of near misses to gain an opportunity to help identify potential unplanned events preventing injuries and damage, although the reporting is still low. Therefore, in February 2022, a project was launched within Operations to promote the reporting of near misses and safety suggestions. This has been successful, and staff have been contributing to this internally at the depots. (Please note, these near misses and suggestions are localised to Operations, if required management will add these onto the Council reporting system).

### **3 Drugs and Alcohol**

3.1 The Council has been testing employees for drugs and alcohol for over 10 years; as many will know there are 4 occasions when we carry out testing:

- Pre-employment testing
- Post Incident/For Cause testing
- Employee Compliance testing
- Random testing

3.2 During the past twelve months, we have tested, 1 for cause, 14 random and 25 pre-employment drug and alcohol tests, all of which were found to be negative.

## **4 Occupational health**

4.1 During the past 12 months, there have been:

- 70 Occupational Health appointments (slightly more than the previous year) these appointments are confidential and linked to both personal and work-related issues, but when reviewing the reasons for referrals, we do not have a trend across the organisation or in a particular directorate that would cause any concerns.
- 68 Annual health surveillance appointments where employees are checked for (similar to previous years):
  - Symptoms of Hand Arm Vibration (HAV)
  - Lung function
  - Hearing loss
  - Skin infection

## **5 Wellbeing**

5.1 The welfare of our staff remained a priority post the COVID-19 response, especially as staff continued to work in a range of agile ways. This has been co-ordinated with the help of HR business partners, Health and Safety, Wellbeing Champions, Domestic abuse champions and Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA's).

5.2 Various wellbeing events have also been delivered, this included:

- Mini health checks - Haverhill Depot.
- 3 separate days of NHS health checks.
- Men's health events, with various stalls and health checks – in person at Haverhill and WSOH.
- Men's health webinar.
- Atrial Fibrillation testing in WSH.
- We had 70 staff take up our Flu voucher offer.
- Intranet articles – how to stay on budget with rising costs, national walking month, overcoming social anxiety, world mental health day, how to cope with stress and avoid burnout etc.
- Organizational engagement sessions – reframing, balancing emotional needs.
- Get the best out of you for home and work – facilitated by our external counsellor/life coach, including dealing with change, communicating, how the brain works, perception and living life.
- Webinars on Menopause, Sleep, Women's and Men's health.
- Following the Menopause webinar there was a check in and chat and now a support group.
- Financial wellbeing – managers guide – circulated to staff.
- Cost of living support booklet – located in depots.
- CPR training provided by SARS.
- Wellbeing Suffolk free webinars.
- Mental Health awareness week.
- Making Every Contact Count training.
- Understanding our new normal life.
- Parent and Carer Support Group.
- Home and working alone support group.



- Counselling.
- Domestic Abuse Champions.
- Physiotherapy.
- Staff awards.
- Employee assistance program.

## **6 Health and Safety Training (including E-Learning)**

- 6.1 There has been some specific health and safety training courses provided to relevant staff in the past year. These were:
- IOSH Managing Safely course – This course is for managers and supervisors equipping them with the knowledge to manage health and safety within their teams.
  - Drug and alcohol collector training – This training enables staff to take drug and alcohol samples following strict chain of custody procedures, enabling us as an authority to keep our drug and alcohol testing in house.
- 6.2 E- Learning modules – Below is the data of staff completing the Health and Safety E-Learning modules for 2022/2023:
- Display Screen Equipment Awareness Training 65%
  - Display Screen Equipment Risk Assessment - 67%
  - Manual Handling Awareness Training - 79%
  - General Health, Safety and Environmental Awareness Training - 76%
  - Fire Safety Awareness Training - 74%
  - Driver Safety Awareness Training - 76%
  - Stress Management Awareness Training - 62%
- 6.3 Health and Safety online training has now been incorporated into the Learning and Development training platform, iLearn, bringing all online learning into once place and supported by a reporting function to ensure completion of mandatory training.

## **7 Inspections, Audits and Fire Risk Assessments**

- 7.1 The Health and Safety Team continuously undertake informal/formal inspections as well as formal audits and fire risk assessments. During the past 12 months we have completed all the programmed work (27 audits and Fire Risk Assessments (FRA's)).
- 7.2 Having a structured audit and fire risk assessment process ensures a consistent approach is taken across the Council. Once complete the Managers of the relevant areas receive a full and detailed report of the findings, along with an action plan with a time scale for completion.

## **8 Projects/Events**

- 8.1 We continued to give advice on various projects across the Council which includes continued support to Mildenhall Hub, Western Way Development (WWD).
- 8.2 Having an overview of all events both internal and external, we gave event safety advice as and when required which included event safety advice at the Safety Advisory Group.

## **9 Forward Planning**

- 9.1 The immediate priorities will continue to be within Operations looking at:
- Risk Assessments – ensuring they are up to date and fit for purpose and followed by employees.
  - Safe Systems of Work - ensuring they are fit for purpose and followed by employees.
  - Hand Arm Vibration monitoring and equipment monitoring compliance.
  - Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment compliance.
  - Health and Safety audits and fire risk assessments – ensuring actions are followed up by staff and reported back.
- 9.2 As well as the reactive health and safety work, we will be reviewing our policies and completing a full programme of FRA's and Audits (programme available on request).
- 9.3 With the departure of the Health and Safety Senior Advisor (Feb 23) and retirement of the Service Manager Health and Safety (Apr 23) a restructure has taken place and health and safety has been merged with and reports to the Service Manager, Human Resources, Payroll, and Learning and Development. Prior to the merger close working and synergies existed in the delivery of the provision of health and wellbeing to our staff.

# Performance and Audit Work Programme 2023 to 2024

<b>Report number:</b>	<b>PAS/WS/23/012</b>	
<b>Report to and date(s):</b>	<b>Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee</b>	1 June 2023
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	To be confirmed at Annual Council on 23 May 2023. Telephone: Email:	
<b>Chair of the Committee:</b>	To be confirmed at Annual Council on 23 May 2023. Telephone: Email:	
<b>Lead officer:</b>	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) Telephone: 01638 719245 Email: <a href="mailto:Rachael.mann@westsuffolk.gov.uk">Rachael.mann@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	

**Decisions Plan:** This item is not included in the decisions plan.

**Wards impacted:** Not applicable.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee:

- 1. Notes the current status of its Work Programme for 2023 to 2024, attached at Appendix 1 to this report.**

## **1. Context to this report**

### **1.1 Performance and Audit Scrutiny Work Programme**

- 1.1.1 The committee's work programme for 2023 to 2024 is attached at **Appendix 1** to this report.

## **2. Proposals within this report**

- 2.1 The committee is asked to note the current status of its work programme, for 2023 to 2024.

## **3. Alternative options that have been considered**

- 3.1 None.

## **4. Consultation and engagement undertaken**

- 4.1 None.

## **5. Risks associated with the proposals**

- 5.1 None.

## **6. Appendices referenced in this report**

- 6.1 Appendix 1 – Performance and Audit Work Programme 2023 to 2024

## **7. Background documents associated with this report**

- 7.1 None

**(West Suffolk Council)**

**Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee  
Work Programme (2023 to 2024)**

<b>Description</b>		<b>Lead Officer</b>
<b>27 July 2023 (Time: 5.00pm)</b>		
<b>Venue: Council Chamber, West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds</b>		
Ernst and Young – Auditors Annual Report 2021 to 2022		Director (Resources and Property)
2023 to 2024 Performance Report (Quarter 1)		Service Manager (Policy, Projects and Performance)
Annual Financial Resilience Management Report 2022 to 2023		Service Manager (Finance and Procurement)
Treasury Management Report (June 2023)		Service Manager (Finance and Procurement)
Work Programme Update 2023 to 2024		Director (Resources and Property)
<b>28 September 2023 (Time: 5.00pm)</b>		
<b>Venue: Council Chamber, West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds</b>		
Ernst and Young – External Audit Plan and Fees 2022 to 2023		Director (Resources and Property)
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Report		Monitoring Officer
Annual RIPA Report		Monitoring Officer
Approach to Delivering a Sustainable Budget 2024 to 2025		Director (Resources and Property)
Work Programme Update – 2023 to 2024		Director (Resources and Property)
<b>23 November 2023 (Time: 5.00pm)</b>		
<b>Venue: Council Chamber, West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds</b>		
Ernst and Young – Auditors Annual Report 2022 to 2023		Director (Resources and Property)
Internal Audit Mid-Year Progress Report 2023 to 2024		Service Manager (Internal Audit)
2023 to 2024 Performance Report (Quarter 2)		Service Manager (Policy, Projects and Performance)
Delivering a Sustainable Budget 2024 to 2025		Director (Resources and Property)
Treasury Management Report (September 2023)		Service Manager (Finance and Procurement)
Work Programme Update 2024		Director (Resources and Property)
<b>25 January 2024 (Time: 5.00pm)</b>		
<b>Venue: Council Chamber, West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds</b>		
Ernst and Young – External Audit Plan and Fees 2023 to 2024		Director (Resources and Property)
2023 to 2024 Performance Report (Quarter 3)		Service Manager (Policy, Projects and Performance)

## APPENDIX 1

Treasury Management Report – December 2023	Service Manager (Finance and Procurement)
Annual Financial Resilience Management Statement and Investment Strategy Statements (2024 to 2025)	Service Manager (Finance and Procurement)
Delivering a Sustainable Budget 2024 to 2025	Director (Resources and Property)
Work Programme Update 2024	Director (Resources and Property)
<b>30 May 2024 (Time: 5.00pm)</b> <b>Venue: Council Chamber, West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds</b>	
Internal Audit Annual Report (2023 to 2024)	Service Manager (Internal Audit)
Outline Internal Audit Plan (2024 to 2025)	Service Manager (Internal Audit)
2023 to 2024 Performance Report (Quarter 4)	Service Manager (Policy, Projects and Performance)
Annual Report from the Health and Safety Sub-Committee	Service Manager (Health and Safety)
Annual Re-Appointments to the Financial Resilience Sub-Committee and the Health and Safety Sub-Committee	Business Partner (Governance)
Work Programme Update – 2024 to 2025	Director (Resources and Property)

### **Awaiting confirmation from EY of the Audit Planning for 2022-2023**

Ernst and Young – 2022 to 2023 Annual Results Report to those charged with Governance	Director (Resources and Property)
West Suffolk Annual Governance Statement 2022 to 2023	Director (Resources and Property)
2022 to 2023 Statement of Accounts	Director (Resources and Property)

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

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