

## Appendix A: West Suffolk Housing Strategy 2015 – 18

### Progress against Housing Strategy Objectives, Actions and Targets – December 2015

Objective	Key action to meet objective	Target deadline / ongoing work	Update at December 2015
<b>Planning</b>			
Continue to adopt planning policies to support the delivery of new homes, including the Core Strategy Single Issue Review (housing) and site allocations for Forest Heath which will be available for consultation early 2015 and Vision 2031	Contribute to Single Issue Review of Forest Heath Core Strategy	Assist and advise in line with Single Issue Review deadlines	<b>ON SCHEDULE</b> Housing submitted detailed comments as part of the first stage of the statutory consultation by the deadline of 6 October 2015
Review and update West Suffolk's Joint Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document during 2015, to maximise opportunities to secure additional affordable housing	Contribute to update of West Suffolk's Joint Affordable Housing Supplementary Document	March 2016	<b>ON SCHEDULE</b> In work programme for 2015/16, work underway
Ensure we continue to robustly apply existing planning policy to achieve 30% affordable housing	Business as usual	On-going	Continue to negotiate with developers. Recent outcomes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>on a small scheme in Ixworth, negotiation over affordable tenures resulted in 31% affordable homes rather than just 13% as proposed by the developer</li> <li>on the latest phase at Moreton Hall, flexibility over the size mix of the affordable homes has yielded 30% affordable housing when earlier negotiations suggested only 20%-25%</li> </ul>

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<b>Rural Housing</b>			
Use the evidence gathered about rural areas to inform future planning policies and decisions about housing in West Suffolk's rural locations Support the development of rural schemes that meet a locally identified housing need	Site-by-site liaison with parish councillors and residents 'Rural enabling conference'	Ongoing  Summer 2016	More in-depth analysis has been conducted on information held on the Housing Register when a rural scheme is proposed Recent successes include an 11 unit scheme of affordable houses, bungalows and flats in Clare opened in summer 2015 Housing is exploring the benefits of running a 'rural enabling conference' with parish councils in the summer/autumn 2016 to cover how the council can assist local people address affordable housing need in their localities
Look to explore the option of maximising the delivery of affordable housing on rural exception sites by permitting an element of open market housing to facilitate the delivery of the affordable housing dwellings	Devise new Exceptions Sites policy with Planning	August 2015	<b>ACHIEVED</b> Approved by Cabinet
<b>Developers and Providers</b>			
We will engage with developers to understand the full costs of building and encourage developers to build new developments to sustainable and Lifetime Homes standards	Establish and maintain a 'library' of local building and related construction costs to enable robust challenge of developers' viability assessments	Establish and annual update a 'library' of local costs and information – September 2015	<b>ACHIEVED</b> Work commenced in June 2015. Information gained from local housing associations on average amounts paid for affordable rented property and shared ownership properties
Work with registered provider partners to maximise the delivery of affordable homes that meet the needs of West Suffolk through the 2015 –	Deliver 145 homes in 2015/16 Set annual target by 31 March in preceding year	March 2016  March 2016 annually onwards	A total 147 homes delivered in first three quarters of 2015/16 The total of 97 homes includes six housing association-led schemes delivering 100% affordable housing:

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<p>2018 Affordable Homes Programme</p> <p>Work with developers and registered provider partners to help unlock stalled sites to enable housing to be brought forward</p> <p>Liaise with registered provider partners to ensure sufficient affordable accommodation is available that does not exceed the Local Housing Allowance</p> <p>Continue to ensure new development contributes to infrastructure provision through our use of Community Infrastructure Levy and/or S106 planning obligations</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• four Havebury schemes in Haverhill, Bury St Edmunds and Red Lodge yielding 40 affordable homes</li> <li>• one Hastoe scheme in Clare yielding 11 affordable homes</li> <li>• one Icenis scheme in Great Barton yielding 10 homes</li> </ul> <p>The remaining 36 homes have been provided on s106 sites in Barningham, Bury St Edmunds, Clare, Exning and Haverhill. The average percentage of affordable homes achieved across these sites was 25%. This is lower than the targeted 30% due to completion this year of two sites negotiated with lower percentages during the downturn following 2008 market collapse</p> <p><b>ON SCHEDULE</b> it is projected that the target of 145 will be surpassed by year end, with 180 affordable homes delivered by March 2016</p>
<b>Private Sector Housing</b>			
<p>Implement the actions set out in the West Suffolk Empty Homes Strategy to bring empty properties back into use</p>	<p>Prioritise bringing empty homes back into use through officer interventions</p>	<p>Ongoing target of three properties brought back into use into per quarter KPI on BSC</p>	<p><b>ON SCHEDULE</b> – 7 properties brought back into use so far in 2015/16</p> <p>Have established a fit-for-purpose database and working arrangements with ARP (Anglian Revenue Partnership) to maximise new homes bonus</p> <p>Officers using toolkit including grant and enforcement</p>
	<p>Establish single guidance, standards and fees and ensure consistent approach to</p>	<p>March 2015</p>	<p><b>ACHIEVED</b></p> <p>Aligned the two Councils' documents into one and approved through Cabinet-implementation</p>

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	HMOs		
	Housing Regulatory Policy reviewed to allow consistent, effective, timely & proportionate use of housing powers to bring properties up to standard in the private rented sector	October 2015	<b>ACHIEVED</b> Reviewed the two councils' enforcement policies to establish single West Suffolk guidelines Have aligned two procedures into one housing inspection procedure
Increase the number of households housed in the private rented sector through discharging out homelessness duty Work with West Suffolk Lettings Partnership, WSLP, landlords to increase the supply of housing in the private sector in West Suffolk and improve the standard of homes to rent privately	Increase number housed in this way  Review WSLP and, if feasible, propose amended approach in order to increase supply	Ongoing	This is proving difficult due to local private rents typically being above Local Housing Allowance, thus posing significant affordability difficulties for households on benefits The West Suffolk Lettings Partnership is being reviewed to better understand whether incentives, including extended rent guarantees, could increase supply. This review is due to report to the Housing Management Team in February 2016
Liaise with USAFE to review the impact their personnel have upon the local private rented market	Better understand impact of USAFE personnel on local rented market and incorporate into Housing Company planning and work of WSLP review	Ongoing	Letting agent review completed in summer 2015 – higher levels of renting to USAFE employees in Mildenhall area (as expected) Housing participating in the consultant-led study into the impact of closure of RAF Mildenhall

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<p>Work with landlords to encourage better management and practice and good quality accommodation</p> <p>Develop a system to ensure that landlords and properties within the West Suffolk Lettings Partnership meet the required standards</p>	<p>Ensure that homes being utilised through the WSLP are safe and up to standard</p> <p>Ensure that landlords are fit &amp; proper</p>	<p>October 2015</p>	<p><b>ACHIEVED</b></p> <p>Officer responsible for the operation of the WSLP working closely with Housing Standards Team. An initial assessment of both landlord and property is made; if there are concerns, for example, a serious hazard is found, then a joint decision is made on the suitability for the tenant/scheme</p>
<p>Target the most hazardous properties and non-compliant landlords through effective preventative and enforcement action</p>	<p>More effective use of resource to protect more tenants in the private sector</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p><b>ON SCHEDULE</b> – target of 10 properties per quarter is being met in 2015/16</p>
<p><b>Adaptations and Improvements</b></p>			
<p>Work with partners to review the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) contract, ensuring performance and value for money for council tax payers</p>	<p>New HIA contract in place</p>	<p>2015/16</p>	<p><b>ACHIEVED</b></p> <p>New Suffolk-wide contract and service commenced in December 2015 after some initial delay due to first selected contractor withdrawing. New model of working has a greater emphasis on efficiency and performance</p>
<p>Work with registered providers to make sure the best use is made of adapted stock</p>	<p>With Occupational Therapists (OTs) identify need and put in place plans to increase new supply and better use of housing association stock</p>	<p>Written plan in place – January 2016</p>	<p><b>ON SCHEDULE</b></p> <p>Database of OT clients who require adapted housing being drawn up</p> <p>Initial work being carried out to establish a database of OT clients who require adapted housing, assess needs of disabled people against adapted stock available and determine</p>

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	Development of a special needs 'register'		what type of new build is required Group established in West Suffolk, chaired by Suffolk County Council OTs, to action and monitor this issue, RPs represented
Develop a multi-agency approach to the delivery of DFGs, including joint-working with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Adult Social Care (Suffolk County Council)	<p>Assess potential impact of inclusion of DFG grant in Better Care Fund</p> <p>Maximise use of the Better Care Fund (BCF) and other resource through new services/systems</p>	2015/16	<p><b>ACHIEVED</b></p> <p>New service/system developed with HIA and partners and commenced on 1 December 2015 after initial delay. Specification requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• engagement and integration with CCG</li> <li>• provision of OTs through HIA</li> <li>• greater efficiency and value for money.</li> </ul> <p>Currently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• designing system between Housing, Suffolk County Council and CCG to allow more residents to remain living independently in their homes</li> <li>• exploring closer working with CCG to encourage more referrals from GPs, hospital and the like to help vulnerable residents adapt and repair their homes</li> <li>• helping to prevent hospital admissions, delays in hospital discharge and maintain health through better housing.</li> </ul> <p>The Better Care Fund was increased in 2015-16, partly because Housing is delivering DFGs through a Suffolk-wide HIA and partnership approach</p>
Develop a West Suffolk policy on housing assistance targeting grants to improve the quality and availability of private sector accommodation	West Suffolk housing assistance policy (HAP) in place	January 2016	<p><b>ACHIEVED</b></p> <p>Revised policy approved by Cabinet in November 2015</p> <p>The new policy has been simplified into single grant to simplify uptake. At the same time,</p>

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			there are more safeguards to ensure repayment of grant monies if the property is sold/transferred
<b>Community</b>			
<p>Work with and respond positively to local communities who want to use community rights, develop neighbourhood plans or innovative approaches to deliver housing in their communities</p> <p>Work with communities to provide support and enable local people to achieve their ambitions in terms of the creation of sustainable and thriving communities</p>	Provide data and information when required	Ongoing	<p>Recent work includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>providing supporting commentary in October 2015 on Hargrave Parish Council's application to become a Neighbourhood Area with a view to developing a Neighbourhood Plan</li> <li>working with Stanningfield Parish Council on a proposal to develop affordable housing on a rural exception site in the village</li> </ul> <p>Planning a 'Rural Enabling Conference' for summer/autumn 2016</p>
<b>Energy Efficiency</b>			
Target vulnerable households to help improve energy efficiency and the household's circumstances	Participate and promote the Warm Homes Healthy People Fuel Poverty Programme Winter 2015/16	April 2016	<p><b>ON SCHEDULE</b></p> <p>Energy survey training undertaken in September 2015. County-wide Warm Homes Healthy People programme launched in October 2015 and being promoted to vulnerable households across West Suffolk.</p> <p>New scheme has been launched to provide new central heating systems to low income households across Suffolk. £2 million is available to Suffolk residents and work has just begun on promoting this scheme. The scheme will run until March 2017.</p>
Use Energy Company Obligation funding to support or other	Secure external wall insulation of 25 park	December 2015	<p><b>ON SCHEDULE</b></p> <p>Surveys undertaken to establish total cost and</p>

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financing options to assist home energy improvement	homes through third party funding		<p>householder contribution. Households signed up and solid wall insulation underway for completion by March 2016.</p> <p>134 properties in West Suffolk have received insulation measures through Suffolk Energy Action partnership initiative by the end of November 2015.</p> <p>24 park homes in Stanton are currently having external wall insulation installed onto the properties. The works are almost complete, with suitable weather conditions required before applying the final top coat</p>
Work with registered provider partners and private landlords to secure energy improvement of their property	Support solid wall insulation through the Green Deal Communities Fund	April 2016	<p><b>ON SCHEDULE</b></p> <p>So far in 2015/16, an average of 15 homes a quarter have been insulated</p>
Provide home energy advice and support to residents and community groups on the benefits of energy efficiency and renewable energy	Run events in key communities across West Suffolk	April 2016	<p><b>ON SCHEDULE</b></p> <p>So far in 2015/16, six events have been run by the Council's partner organisation Suffolk Climate Change Partnership and one by SEBC. Over 300 residents have attended</p>
<b>Land and Resources</b>			
Work with other public sector bodies to maximise the use of public sector land assets for housing	Work with Suffolk County Council to bring forward sites through the proposed Housing Development Company Participation in Open Public Estate scheme	<p>First start-on site summer 2016</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p><b>ON SCHEDULE</b></p> <p>First potential sites for Housing Development Company identified</p> <p>Feasibility study of first site due to complete February 2016</p> <p>Company's first Annual Business and Delivery Plan due to put to members in April/May 2016</p> <p>West Suffolk / Suffolk County Council application to OPE 3 approved in December 2015</p>



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Seek to use brownfield sites and existing infrastructure where practicable to do so	Business as usual	Ongoing	Housing submitted sites for inclusion in Forest Heath's and St Edmundsbury's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
By April 2015 we will identify and deliver new funding proposals for delivering open market, private rented and affordable housing	Draw up paper for member consideration	March 2016	<b>ON SCHEDULE</b> Cabinet and Council have approved Housing Development Company option Detailed needs analysis completed for inclusion in paper to members on wider range of options for developing affordable housing with housing associations and developers due in March 2016
<b>Homelessness</b>			
By April 2015 have developed and implemented a new homelessness strategy, in line with statutory requirements	New homelessness strategy approved by members	April 2015	<b>ACHIEVED</b> Adopted by the Councils in February 2015 this is the first joint West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy. Previously Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council have had their own
By March 2015 have increased by fifteen units the amount of temporary accommodation available for individuals and families in crisis housing need, to reduce the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation	Increase TA units by 15	Revised timescale – March 2016	<b>ON SCHEDULE</b> Five units at Lake Avenue became available in June 2015 In process of purchasing an additional property in Bury St Edmunds that will provide a further seven units by April 2016
Continue to engage with partners on specific multi-agency homeless prevention projects to improve the support given to young people across West Suffolk	Young Person Housing Action Group to be reformed to drive forward and monitor outcomes actions from Housing and Health Charter for Suffolk	Ongoing	<b>ON SCHEDULE</b> Terms of Reference for the group agreed – primary objective to develop a joined up approach to preventing homelessness for young people and families, including appropriate interventions for relationship breakdown

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			Next steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• complete County wide Action Plan</li> <li>• build on experience of what already works and determine effective interventions aimed at assisting in times of relationship and family breakdown</li> </ul>
<b>Efficiency and Effectiveness</b>			
Review the effectiveness of our local lettings policies	Review on local lettings policies Recommendation to members, if any	April 2017	Not yet due
By March 2015 have reviewed the existing HomeLink contract and considered options available to best serve the future interests of those in housing need in West Suffolk	Retendering and letting of CBL contract	'Go live' May 2016	<b>ON SCHEDULE</b> CBL contract reviewed in March 2015 New partner selected in July 2015 New IT system to go live in May 2016
Tackle social housing fraud by raising awareness and prosecuting offenders	Joint Suffolk Housing Fraud Forum and establish protocol with ARP for investigating cases	April 2016	<b>ACHIEVED</b> Joint Suffolk Housing Fraud Forum in place Housing has established a protocol with ARP for investigating cases
<b>Care and Support</b>			
Work with the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing to implement the commitments the Housing and Health Charter for Suffolk	Implement action relevant to West Suffolk to improve joint working with Health	Dec 2016	<b>ACHIEVED</b> Charter adopted by Suffolk Health and Well-being Board in July 2015 <b>ON SCHEDULE</b> Countywide Action Plan currently being developed to implement key priorities
Develop good quality, easily	Updated web-based	Website updated -	<b>ACHIEVED &amp; ONGOING</b>

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accessible housing advice materials, including web-based material which reflect the diversity of applicants' needs and abilities	housing advice information	August 2015 & ongoing	Website information related to accessing housing updated in October 2015 Work ongoing to update and expand range of on-line information
Continue to work in partnership with other key agencies to prevent individuals and families getting into housing crisis Work with Adult Social Care (Suffolk County Council), the West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group, registered providers and private providers to develop cost effective options to address the needs of an ageing population	Business as usual	Ongoing	Current work includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design in the Public Sector – review led by Housing, involving SCC Adult and Community Services and West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group, to reduce unnecessary emergency admissions to A&amp;E and doctor call-outs to older people living in sheltered housing</li> <li>• Human Centred Design – working with East of England LGA, Suffolk County Council Adult and Community Services and West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group to (a) reduce time older, but medically fit, patients' length of stay in hospital and (b) achieve the best possible outcomes on return home</li> <li>• Housing is actively working as a member of the Sudbury Connect programme group (focusing on the Clare area) to enable early identification of need and joined-up approaches to deliver efficiencies across the health and public sectors</li> </ul>
Set up a Task and Finish Group to develop a West Suffolk model for housing chronically excluded adults	Recommendations for improved working made to Leadership Team / members	Report to LT / members by March 2016	<b>ON SCHEDULE</b> On going task-and-finish group formed
Continue to lead the county-wide partnership to develop a strategy for "move-on" of	Maximise support available for marginalised adults	By August 2015 – secure funding beyond September 2015,	<b>ACHIEVED</b> Funding for Suffolk Co-ordination Service secured from Suffolk County Council until

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marginalised adults	through the Suffolk Co-ordination Service	secure successor scheme, or manage cessation of the service	September 2016. This is a Suffolk-wide service that assesses individuals' eligible to supported housing across the county Ongoing work with Suffolk County Council regarding redesign of this service. A decision is to be made regarding whether West Suffolk wishes to bid for the new service when tendered by Suffolk County Council in spring 2016
Work with partners across Suffolk to deliver short stay accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers and to plan for longer term permanent accommodation needs	Three transit sites provided across Suffolk	Sites opened and operational December 2016	<b>ON SCHEDULE</b> Initial phase of call for sites completed, sites now being assessed and those considered suitable by Suffolk Public Sector Leaders in January 2016 will move into the second phase of consultation and assessment.
Include provision for Gypsy and Traveller sites in the Forest Heath Site Allocations Development Plan Document	Call for sites to be included the Forest Heath Site Allocations Local Plan consultation document –	Call for sites closes 6 <sup>th</sup> October 2015	No sites were submitted through the call for sites process – Local Plan preferred options due to be completed April 2016. Currently exploring the potential for sites on larger strategic sites, seeking advice from Gypsy and Traveller Advisory Service