

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee



*St Edmundsbury*  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Bury St Edmunds Bus Station Information Building – Background Information</b>	
<b>Report No:</b>	<b>OAS/SE/17/003</b>	
<b>Report to and date:</b>	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	11 January 2017
<b>Portfolio holder:</b>	Cllr Robert Everitt Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities <b>Tel:</b> 01284 769000 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:robert.everitt@stedsbc.gov.uk">robert.everitt@stedsbc.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Lead officer:</b>	Davina Howes Head of Families and Communities <b>Tel:</b> 01284 757070 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:davina.howes@westsuffolk.gov.uk">davina.howes@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To provide background to the capital investment to reconfigure the Bury St Edmunds bus station information building to achieve revenue savings and additional income.  The Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities will attend to answer questions regarding the project.	
<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>Members are asked to <u>note</u> the report.</b>	
<b>Key Decision:</b>  <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that <b>do not</b> apply.)</i>	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i>  No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

<p><b>Consultation:</b></p>	<p>Prior to the Cabinet decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St Edmundsbury staff employed at the Bury St Edmunds bus station building.</li> <li>• Suffolk County Council as the transport authority and provider of real time technology.</li> <li>• Consultation with bus station users and public was carried out in 2014 as part of the budget setting consultation.</li> <li>• Liaison with Suffolk Libraries regarding alternative provision of the shopmobility scooters</li> </ul> <p>After the Cabinet decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further engagement with bus station and shopmobility users to ensure minimum disruption from the works to reconfigure the building</li> <li>• Formal consultation with staff employed at the bus station</li> </ul>
<p><b>Alternative option(s):</b></p>	<p>The following alternative options were considered as part of the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letting the whole building to a third party - a market engagement exercise was carried out in 2014 to establish interest in the letting of the entire building. However, no viable arrangement was identified.</li> <li>• Retain the current layout and staffing arrangements – this would not release revenue savings. In addition, staff would have been employed to provide information which was available through electronic screens or online.</li> <li>• Close the bus station information building – This would achieve the most significant savings. However, this was not felt to be a suitable option given the importance that bus station customers place on the availability of public toilets and a sheltered waiting area.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Implications:</b></p>	
<p><i>Are there any <b>financial</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An investment of £39,500 was committed to reconfiguring the building to provide a more flexible space and increase opportunities for income.</li> </ul>

<p>Are there any <b>staffing</b> implications? If yes, please give details</p>		<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following the reconfiguration of the building, St Edmundsbury staff were no longer required to be present on site (although note Facilities Management staff continue regular visits to inspect the building and clean the public toilets).</li> </ul>	
<p>Are there any <b>ICT</b> implications? If yes, please give details</p>		<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	
<p>Are there any <b>legal and/or policy</b> implications? If yes, please give details</p>		<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Are there any <b>equality</b> implications? If yes, please give details</p>		<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some shopmobility scooters were hired from the bus station. As part of the changes to the bus station the scooters were relocated to the Bury St Edmunds Library. The bookings for the scooters continue to be taken by the apex as per the existing arrangements.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Risk/opportunity assessment:</b> Risks initially identified as part of the report to Cabinet in October 2015 (paper <b>CAB/SE/15/063</b> refers)</p>		<p><i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i></p>	
<b>Risk area</b>	<b>Inherent level of risk</b> (before controls)	<b>Controls</b>	<b>Residual risk</b> (after controls)
Income not generated in the lettable space as anticipated.	Medium	Savings still achieved even with zero income. Modifying the building allowed the council to continue to provide a waiting area for customers whilst increasing potential income.	Low

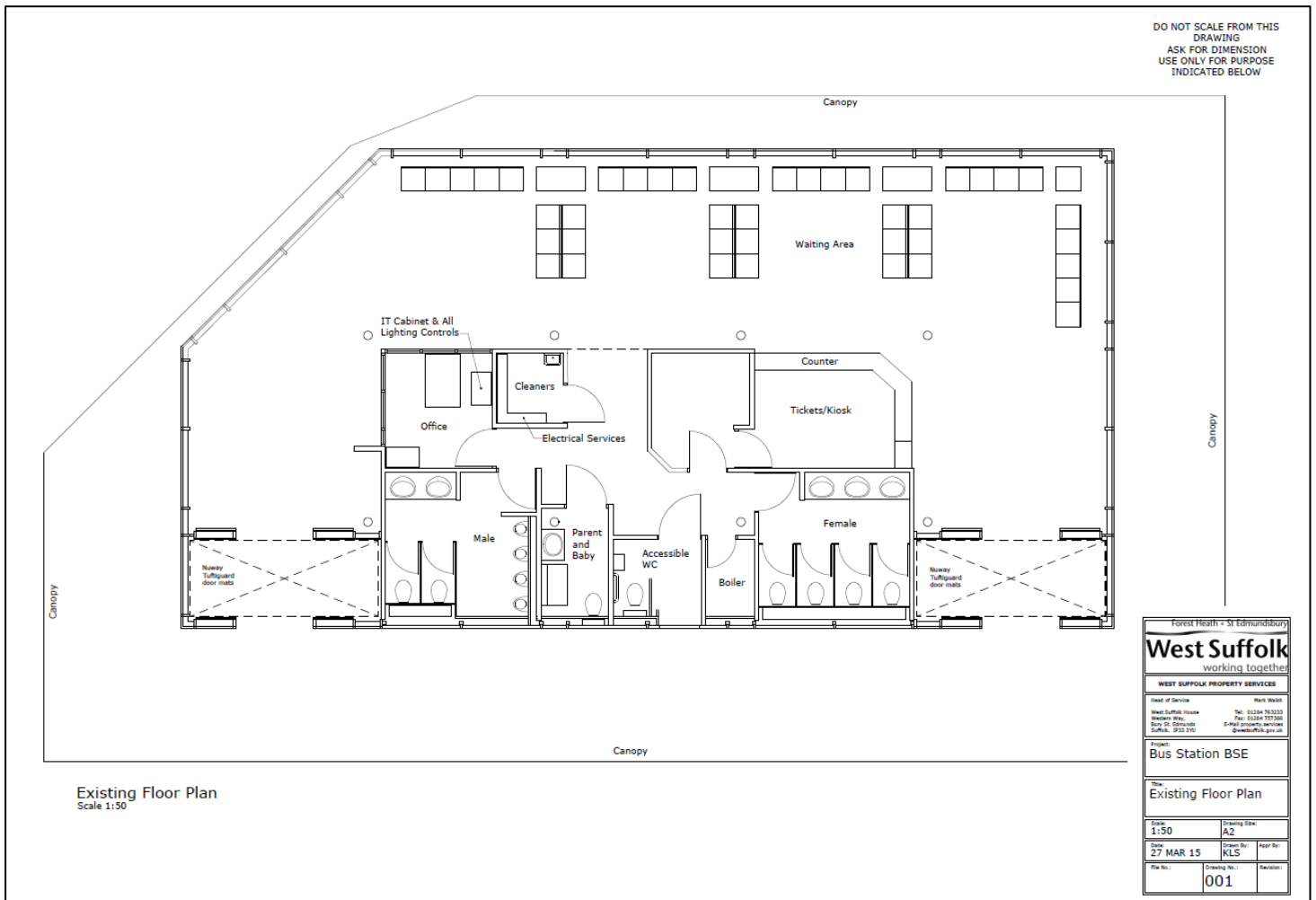
Increased possibility of anti-social behaviour due to no council staff being on site.	High	Improved CCTV system and monitoring including four new digital cameras and external monitoring. Regular checks undertaken by Facilities Management staff as per current arrangement. Responsible person available on site when lettable space occupied.	Medium
Loss of existing income from sale of National Express and other coach tickets	Medium	Tickets sold by other organisations near to the bus station building. Ticket income is immaterial compared to the savings delivered by the changes.	Low
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	All wards		
<b>Background papers:</b> <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>	St Edmundsbury Cabinet meeting – 20 October 2015 (CAB/SE/15/063). <a href="https://democracy.westsuffolk.gov.uk/ieList/Documents.aspx?CIId=131&amp;MIId=2843">https://democracy.westsuffolk.gov.uk/ieList/Documents.aspx?CIId=131&amp;MIId=2843</a>		
<b>Documents attached:</b>	None		

## Key issues and reasons for recommendation

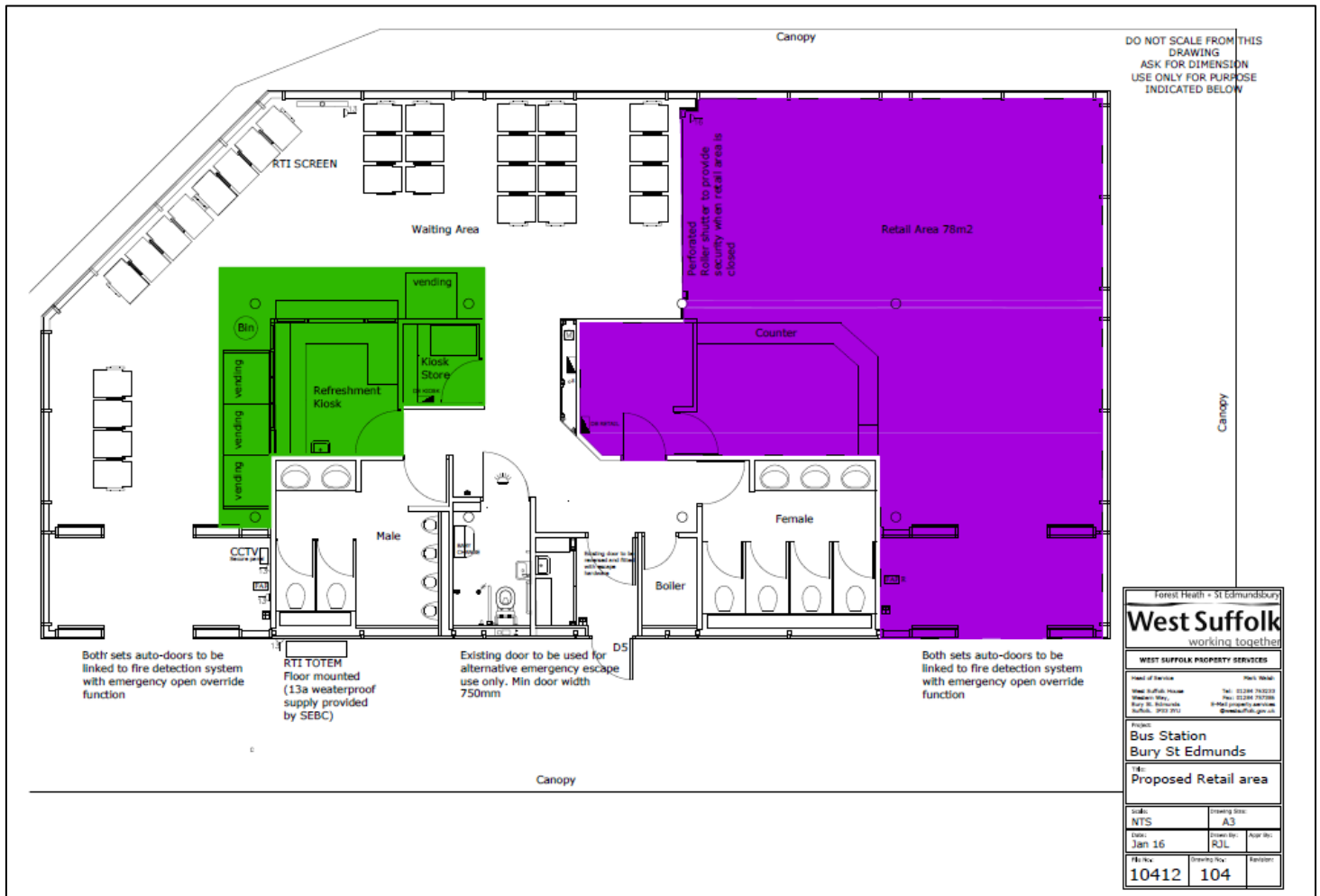
### 1. Project background

- 1.1 St Edmundsbury Borough Council was required to make savings as part of the 2016/17 budget setting process and the bus station information building in Bury St Edmunds was identified as an area where savings could be made and revenue generated.
- 1.2 Following a market engagement exercise in 2014, the situation at the Bury St Edmunds bus station was reviewed and an opportunity identified for the council to invest in building modifications and upgrades to achieve budget savings and additional income.
- 1.3 In October 2015 the St Edmundsbury Cabinet approved a business case for building works at the bus station. The £39,500 capital funding was invested in modifications to the bus station building which enabled the customer information service to be removed and the building reconfigured into two separate areas: 1) Café kiosk, waiting area and public toilets and 2) Lettable space.
- 1.4 The CCTV system was upgraded as part of the building works to allow external monitoring from the CCTV control room. In addition to the work carried out by the Council, new Real Time Information screens were installed inside the building and in the bus shelters, by Suffolk County Council as Passenger Transport Authority.

### ***Floor plan before the building works:***



## Floor plan after the building works:



1.5 The changes to the building commenced in January 2016 and were completed by April 2016. Throughout the reconfiguration, the building remained open and staff were available to support customers during the transition period. The modifications to the bus station building only impacted on the operation of the building, they did not affect the operation of bus services.

1.6 The Shopmobility scooters were relocated to the library opposite the bus station in January 2016. The apex continues to be the prime location for this service and regular users of the Shopmobility service were informed of the changes in advance.

## 2. **Invest to save**

2.1 To deliver the revenue savings, the council spent £36,670 of the committed £39,500 capital investment for internal and external modifications. £46,000 had been estimated as the cost of staff change, which included redundancy costs. However, in line with the Council's Organisation Change and Redundancy policy the Council was able to redeploy three people and one person obtained employment at another Council. Three people received a redundancy payment and the total cost of staff change was just over £17,000.

2.2 Investing in the opportunity at the bus station enabled the Council to make commercial use of an asset and achieve a new income stream whilst retaining

public access to the building. It was made clear as part of the business case that the building being open was not reliant on the lettable space or café kiosk being occupied and that they were both separate opportunities for the Council to increase income.

- **Café kiosk update**: In April 2016 the new café kiosk opened in the bus station and received positive coverage in the local press. Unfortunately, the café kiosk tenant discontinued trading from this location in July 2016 due to low sales but they continue to manage the vending machines on site.
- **Lettable space update**: An application for 'change of use' to mixed use A1 and A2 was granted by St Edmundsbury Development Control Committee on 4 May 2016. The Council has moved to marketing the lettable space together with the café kiosk area through an external letting agent. The recent marketing strategy has been effective and the Council is in negotiations with a potential tenant with an aim of full occupancy in early 2017.

2.3 Overall the bus station project was delivered within budget, saved **£118,000** a year off the building's running costs and a new income stream should be received from occupancy of the lettable space.

2.4 Verse FM services continue to visit and clean the building four times a day. The building is monitored by an extensive network of CCTV cameras (three internal and two external cameras). In addition, property and health and safety staff inspect the building as they do all of the council's operational sites.

### **3. Bus information**

3.1 As the transport authority, Suffolk County Council (SCC) is responsible for planning and publishing bus timetable information. SCC has improved the availability of bus information by replacing the old electronic timetable screens with real time information screens in the building and in the bus shelters.

3.2 Installation of the real time screens was delayed due various technology and supplier problems. The Borough Council continued to liaise with Suffolk County Council throughout the installation of the screens. An internal screen was operational when the building re-opened without staff in April and later on in the year, screens were installed and operational in the bus stands. Finally, a totem display, showing all arrivals and departures was installed outside of the building in November 2016.

3.3 From April 2016, SCC confirmed that they will no longer be printing bus timetable leaflets. Paper timetables are on display in the stands and information is available online for customers to access. SCC advise that customers who do not have internet at home should access computers at local libraries. The Borough Council displayed posters at the bus station explaining how bus timetable information can be accessed. See [www.suffolkonboard.com/buses](http://www.suffolkonboard.com/buses). The County Council's Suffolk On-board website includes details of all public transport options, including community cars and dial-a-ride services. See <http://communities.suffolkonboard.com/>.

- 3.4 In addition, customers can access bus information on the phone by contacting SCC on 0345 606 6171 or the Traveline national call centre on 0871 200 2233. Traveline is open between 7am and 10pm seven days a week (opening hours change at [Christmas and New Year](#)) and calls cost 12p per minute plus the phone company's access charge.