

# Cabinet



Forest Heath  
District Council

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Report of the West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group: 6 June 2017</b>	
<b>Report No:</b>	<b>CAB/FH/17/029</b>	
<b>Report to and date:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	20 June 2017
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<b>Purpose of report:</b>	On 6 June 2017, the West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group considered the following items:  (1) Rail and Rail Infrastructure and Transport Infrastructure for West Suffolk.  (2) Presentation from the Assistant Director (Growth) on Futures Issues and Challenges.  (3) Destination Management Organisation (DMO).  (4) West Suffolk Community Energy Plan – Update.  (5) Work Programme 2017/2018 and Revised Terms of Reference.  (6) Dates of Future Meetings	

<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>The Cabinet is requested to <u>NOTE</u> the contents of Report No: CAB/FH/17/029, being the report of the West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group.</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> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  <i>(Report for information only)</i>		
<b>Consultation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Reports listed under background papers below</li> </ul>		
<b>Alternative option(s):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Reports listed under background papers below</li> </ul>		
<b>Implications:</b>			
<i>Are there any <b>financial</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Reports listed under background papers below</li> </ul>	
<i>Are there any <b>staffing</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Reports listed under background papers below</li> </ul>	
<i>Are there any <b>ICT</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Reports listed under background papers below</li> </ul>	
<i>Are there any <b>legal and/or policy</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Reports listed under background papers below</li> </ul>	
<i>Are there any <b>equality</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Reports listed under background papers below</li> </ul>	
<b>Risk/opportunity assessment:</b>		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
<b>Risk area</b>	<b>Inherent level of risk</b> (before controls)	<b>Controls</b>	<b>Residual risk</b> (after controls)
See Reports listed under background papers below			
<b>Wards affected:</b>		All Wards	
<b>Background papers:</b>		Please see background papers, which are listed at the end of the report.	
<b>Documents attached:</b>		None	

## 1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation

### 1.1 Road and Rail Infrastructure and Transport Infrastructure for West Suffolk (Presentation)

1.1.1 Peter Grimm, Strategic Traffic Manager, Suffolk County Council was also in attendance for this item, where the Steering Group was provided with an update on the following:

- Projects which had been included in Suffolk County Council's Road Investment Strategy 2 (RIS2) funding bid for the period 2020 to 2025, this being:
  - A14/A142 Junction 37 (Exning)
  - A14 Junctions 43 (St Saviours) and 44 (Moreton Hall), Bury St Edmunds
  - A11 Mildenhall (Fiveways Grade Separation; Tuddenham Road at Grade Crossing; Herringswell Road at Grade Crossing)
- The activity which was underway for projects which were linked to the strategic road network, but which were not in the scope for RIS2 (A14/A11 Junction 38, A1307).
- A review of rail priorities from a West Suffolk perspective, including the rail network infrastructure; the key rail service improvements; West Suffolk rail issues and the East/West rail route.

1.1.2 Whilst discussing this item, Members also identified the following proposed **actions**:

- (a) Whether there was also a plan for the improvement/upgrade of railway stations. Officers replied that the railway stations were separate to the rail track and rail service network, but would consider as to whether this could be accommodated within the development of the new West Suffolk Local Plan.
- (b) An item be presented to a future meeting of the Steering Group on how public transport integrated together. It was also considered that the Steering Group could also act as a Forum to bring all forms of public transport together which could be held as a Rural Transport Summit. It was also suggested that further discussions should also be held with the private rail/bus operators and with Highways England on their future transport planning processes.
- (c) A further item be provided to the next meeting of the Steering Group on how the FHDC/SEBC Cabinets could be best supported when lobbying for road/rail infrastructure improvements.

1.1.6 There being no decision required, the Steering Group **noted** the presentation, along with the proposed actions.

## 1.2 **Presentation from the Assistant Director (Growth) on Future Issues and Challenges (Presentation)**

1.2.1 The new Assistant Director (Growth) provided a presentation to the Steering Group which set out the future issues and challenges for growth. Members were provided with background information on population, skills and wages and housing choices and affordability.

1.2.2 Discussion was held on where the specific focus should be for West Suffolk and based on what was known in relation to:-

- the location of West Suffolk and its existing places.
- the people who live here, or want to live here, their history, culture and aspirations.
- the national resources we have
- the challenges and opportunities we face

the Steering Group were asked for their initial ideas/topics about what should be the 'right kind of growth' for West Suffolk.

1.2.3 The initial ideas/topics from the Group centred around:

- the provision of improved housing for Brandon
- the provision of better designed industrial units in Brandon
- promoting potential tourism in Brandon
- strengthening of the rural economy/tourism
- increased usage of mobile phones/internet
- any potential impact of Brexit on the local area (ie migration)
- quick solutions to the housing shortage (ie self build)
- continued sustainability of smaller settlements/communities, recognising the contribution which they make to the area

1.2.4 To allow Members further opportunity to consider this, they were asked to inform the Assistant Director (Growth) outside of the meeting, of any further ideas/topics.

1.2.5 The Group also agreed that it would be useful for the Assistant Director (Growth) to be able to provide an update on these issues/challenges at each meeting of the Steering Group.

1.2.6 There being no decision required, the Steering Group **noted** the presentation, along with the initial ideas/topics on the 'right kind of growth' for West Suffolk.

## 1.3 **Destination Management Organisation (DMO) (Presentation)**

1.3.1 The Group received a presentation on the Bury St Edmunds Destination Management Organisation (DMO). A DMO was a coalition of local businesses and organisations which represented a particular destination. A DMO drives and co-ordinates tourism activities, bringing together resources and expertise within the destination and provides a long-term strategic direction.

1.3.2 The Group were provided with the background to the development of the Bury St Edmunds DMO, of which its overall aim was to increase the economic

impact of tourism to the local economy by encouraging visitors encouraged to increase the duration of their stay.

1.3.3 In 2015, AECOM had been commissioned by St Edmundsbury Borough Council, Bury St Edmunds Town Council, Bury St Edmunds Town Council and OurBuryStEdmunds BID, to produce a Visitor Destination Plan for Bury St Edmunds. This report was produced by partnership with Ipswich Central BID and Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils.

1.3.4 The report produced an action plan focussing on the following key target outcomes:

- A stronger core offer of Bury St Edmunds as a destination
- More visitors to the town who also engage with different elements of Suffolk's countryside and vice versa
- Attracting different market audiences to the town, including younger groups and family groups
- Encouraging visitors to stay longer within the town and, therefore, maximise the contribution of all types of visitors to the local economy

1.3.5 In early 2017, a Brand and Marketing Manager had also been recruited, whose role was to develop the brand of the new Bury St Edmunds DMO entitled 'Visiting Bury St Edmunds and Beyond', which was hoped to be completed by September 2017.

1.3.6 Whilst discussing this item, Members also identified the following proposed **actions:**

- The newly appointed Brand and Marketing Manager of the Bury St Edmunds DMO, be invited to attend a future meeting of the Steering Group, to have a wider debate on the role of tourism in West Suffolk.
- During the presentation, Members were provided with information (as at 2015) on the current trends on day/overnight trips for Bury St Edmunds. Officers explained that this trend information was also available for Brandon, Claire, Haverhill, Mildenhall and Newmarket. Members requested for this trend information to be circulated to them, as they would find this useful as background information. Officers also confirmed that the trend information for 2016, would be available in September 2017 and this would also be made available to Members accordingly.

1.3.7 There being no decision required, the Steering Group **noted** the presentation, along with the proposed actions.

1.4 **West Suffolk Community Energy Plan – Update (Report No: JGG/JT/17/002)**

1.4.1 This report (which was also supported by a presentation) provided an update to the Steering Group on progress, both strategically and operationally, towards delivering the West Suffolk Community Energy Plan, as approved by the West Suffolk Councils in December 2014 (and as amended in Spring 2016).

1.4.2 The progress of the strategic delivery was set out in Section 2 of the report, as summarised below:

- Ensuring that UK Power Networks (UKPN) were part of key stakeholder discussions during strategic planning proposals and more generally, as part planning strategic growth for the long term.
- In discussion with those with an interest in energy supply, distribution and use in the area to explore opportunities where strategic growth could help to address some of the existing constraints on the grid.
- Taking into consideration emerging Central Government policy, in particular, the Housing White Paper, "Fixing the Broken Housing Market" and the consultation on the Green Paper, " Building our Industrial Strategy".
- Working to develop ambitious new facilities as part of the approach to asset management, linked to the Government's One Public Estate Programme, to rationalise and improve the public estate in West Suffolk for the benefit of local people (ie the Mildenhall Hub, Western Way Masterplan and the West Suffolk Operational Hub).
- Built relationships with both the energy regulator Ofgem and the Government department responsible for energy policy, BEIS, to be better placed to provide them with local, practical knowledge and experience about the challenge that local authorities, communities and businesses face with respect to energy pricing and local supply.

1.4.3 The progress on operational delivery was set out in Section 3 of the report, as summarised below:

- Continue to work to enable households, communities and businesses to help themselves to improve energy efficiency and develop renewable energy generation to their benefit.
- It is estimated that through the energy efficiency work, participating households, businesses and communities, are likely to save in excess of £199,000 annually off their energy bills.
- The energy generation initiatives during the year included investment in solar photovoltaics (PV) and biomass heating which generated £203,000 of income and offset 432 tonnes of the greenhouse gas, Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>).
- Toggam Solar Farm (purchased by Forest Heath District Council in July 2016) had generated around 11 million kWh, which was enough energy to power 3,000 homes and offset CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from 2,000 cars.
- The expansion of opportunities for investing in energy-related initiatives (ie electric vehicle charging infrastructure in West Suffolk and use of electric vehicles; combining solar and batter storage to increase use of power; renewable heat and power generation).

1.4.4 Whilst discussing this item, Members also identified the following proposed **actions:**

- During the presentation, reference was made with regard to delivery of the Community Energy Plan and to the lobbying of government in the securing of energy improvement. Officers were asked to produce a short lobby sheet for MPs which set out what would be needed to achieve this.
- Within the development of the new West Suffolk Local Plan, consideration be given to the emphasis on the use of energy efficiencies in local developments.

1.4.3 There being no decision required, the Steering Group **noted** the report and presentation, along with the proposed actions.

#### 1.5 **Work Programme 2017/2018 and Revised Terms of Reference (Report No: JGG/JT/17/003)**

1.5.1 The Steering Group received the current version of the Work Programme for 2017/2018. Also circulated with the agenda papers was a revised Terms of Reference for the Steering Group, which had subsequently been approved by FHDC Cabinet on 16 May 2017 and by the SEBC Cabinet on 31 May 2017.

1.5.2 The Chairman explained that it was considered that further development work was required with both the Work Programme and the Terms of Reference and that this would be undertaken by the new Assistant Director (Growth), in consultation with both the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Steering Group. Once completed, this would be brought back to the Steering Group and both Cabinets for further consideration.

1.5.3 There being no decision required, the Steering Group **noted** the current status and future development of the Work Programme for 2017/2018 and of the Terms of Reference.

#### 1.6 **Dates of Future Meetings**

1.6.1 Following on from the discussions which had been held on the future development of the Work Programme and of the Terms of Reference of the Steering Group, it was **noted** that future meetings of the Group would also need to be reviewed accordingly, in line with this.

## 2. **Background Papers**

2.1.1 Road and Rail Infrastructure and Transport Infrastructure for West Suffolk ([Presentation](#))

2.1.2 West Suffolk Community Energy Plan – Update ([Report No: JGG/JT/17/002](#))

2.1.3 Work Programme 2017/2018 and Revised Terms of Reference ([Report No: JGG/JT/17/003](#); & [Revised Terms of Reference](#))