

Cabinet



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	Report of the West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group: 31 October 2017	
Report No:	CAB/FH/17/058	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	12 December 2017
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Lance Stanbury Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth Tel: 07970 947704 Email: lance.stanbury@forest-heath.gov.uk	
Chairman of the Steering Group:	Councillor Alaric Pugh Chairman of the West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group Tel: 07930 460899 Email: alaric.pugh@stedsb.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Julie Baird Assistant Director (Growth) Tel: 01284 757613 Email: Julie.baird@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	On 31 October 2017, the West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group considered the following items: (1) DCLG Consultation: 'Planning for the Right Homes in the Right Places' (2) Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Masterplan (3) Work Programme 2017/2018 (4) Future Housing Delivery Options	
Recommendation:	The Cabinet is requested to <u>NOTE</u> the contents of Report No: CAB/FH/17/058, being the report of the West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group.	
Key Decision: (Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)	<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"/>	

Consultation:		See Reports listed under background papers below	
Alternative option(s):		See Reports listed under background papers below	
Implications:			
Are there any financial implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> See Reports listed under background papers below	
Are there any staffing implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> See Reports listed under background papers below	
Are there any ICT implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> See Reports listed under background papers below	
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> See Reports listed under background papers below	
Are there any equality implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> See Reports listed under background papers below	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
See Reports listed under background papers below			
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		Please see background papers, which are listed at the end of the report	
Documents attached:		None	

1.1 **DCLG Consultation: 'Planning for the Right Homes in the Right Places'**

- 1.1.1 The Service Manager (Strategic Housing) presented Report No: JGG/JT/17/006 which provided Members with an update on the key proposals contained in the consultation paper 'Planning for the Right Homes in the Right Places', which was announced as part of the recent Housing White Paper.
- 1.1.2 The Steering Group were asked to consider the potential implications of the proposals upon West Suffolk and were invited to make any further comments which would then be included within West Suffolk's response to the consultation.
- 1.1.3 The Steering Group made the following comments on the consultation paper:
- In relation to the proposals for a standard method for calculating local housing need with the aim of making it simpler, quicker and more transparent, Members queried as to why one of the components being proposed was a cap to limit any increase when formula/ratio calculations were also being proposed for the calculation of housing numbers.
 - In relation to the proposals for improving the use of Section 106 Agreements, Members were keen to ensure that local people, Parish Councils and other relevant organisations etc. became involved in the process at an early enough stage.
 - In relation to the seeking of further views on how homes could be built out more quickly, Members wished recognition to be given that meeting housing need should not be entirely reliant upon building new homes, as across the country there were large numbers of empty homes which could be directed at being brought back into use.
- 1.1.4 The Officer confirmed that the comments, as set out in paragraph 1.1.3 above, would be included within the West Suffolk response to the consultation paper. The final response would be signed off by the SEBC/FHDC Portfolio Holders for Planning and Growth and for Housing, for submission by the deadline of 9 November 2017. The Steering Group and Cabinet Members would be provided with the West Suffolk response, once submitted. It was also noted that a Suffolk-wide response and a Cambridge Sub-Region response were also being prepared for submission by the required deadline.

1.2 **Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Masterplan**

- 1.2.1 The Principal Growth Officer provided a presentation to the Steering Group which on the development of the Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Masterplan (MAP), including the findings from the recent consultation and engagement exercise.
- 1.2.2 The draft Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Masterplan (MAP) set out the aspirations for the town centre, based on the options put forward by the

public, that aimed to address the issues identified through research, analysis and consultation. The overall aim was to set out a coordinated plan to provide for the needs of existing and new communities and support economic development in Bury St Edmunds, as set out in the Vision 2031. The draft MAP:-

- proposed a range of measures that would improve the way people moved around the town centre, with a particular focus on more sustainable forms of transport.
- proposed a number of opportunities for supporting and increasing the range of uses that take place in the town centre.
- provided a structure for the town centre drawing together existing streets, spaces, uses and areas of activity that took place and celebrating the historic character and identity of Bury St Edmunds.

1.2.3 The draft MAP identified nine Character Areas across the town centre, these being:

1. Cornhill, Buttermarket and The Arc.
2. The Northern Gateway
3. St Andrews Quarter
4. Churchgate
5. Ram Meadow
6. Parkway
7. Kings Road and Robert Boby Way
8. Lark and Linnet Riverside
9. Across the Town Centre

1.2.4 Character Areas were specific locations defined by their appearance, historical interest or the uses that take place there. They were also places where change could be made to improve the town centre making sure that it offered something for everyone and was a safe, welcoming and attractive place to spend time in. All changes needed to recognise and respond to the particular characteristics of each identified area.

1.2.5 The MAP sets out aspirations that aimed to address the issues and options identified as part of the research, analysis and consultation. Aspirations were not restricted to those areas identified on the MAP. Others would be considered on their own merits having regard to the MAP objectives, deliverability and how they contributed to the identity, function and structure of the town centre character areas as proposed within the MAP. For each, key priorities were included relating to the themes of movement, activity and place. Aspirations were also listed together with project leads from the many partners involved. In addition, each character area was assessed against the MAP objectives to ensure that they contributed towards delivering positive change for the town centre and the communities who use it, as agreed by those communities.

1.2.6 The draft MAP alone could not deliver the vision in the local plan. A delivery strategy would be produced and which set out project leads, timescales, known issues, potential areas of funding and investment, related projects and areas of further work. It would test, as far as possible, whether the proposed aspirations were possible, viable and deliverable:

- Project leads and partners (the 'who') - Although the MAP would form part of the Council's official planning guidance, the delivery of the priorities and aspirations within it would be led by a range of partners. The roles of these organisations would be to assess each aspiration to ensure it could be delivered and work together to progress individual projects.
- Funding and investment (the 'what') - Each aspiration had to be fully assessed and costed to ensure it could be delivered before being taken forward.
- Influencing and doing (the 'how') - St Edmundsbury Borough Council would undertake some projects where land was owned by a public body, funding was available and the legal powers of the Council allowed this. The majority of projects would, however, be done in partnership with other organisations. Going forward the MAP would inform and be supported by additional studies that would be prepared in parallel. The studies would look at a range of issues including economic growth, housing density, as well as transport and movement in the town centre.
- The MAP in context – the 'where' - The MAP was not a stand-alone document, rather it was set within and was informed by, a range of studies, policies and work taking place and due to take place, in the town centre.
- Timescales – the 'when' - It would take a number of years to put some of the significant changes in place, as the MAP covered the period up to 2031. The delivery strategy would set out short, medium and long term targets for delivery and would be responsive to different rates of growth.

1.2.7 The key consultation findings showed:

- A strong positive response when asked '*is the proposed structure for the town centre clear and helpful in understanding the different areas and uses?*'
- A high proportion of respondents considered the Character Areas helpful in setting out where and why changes were proposed.
- A significant number of people had felt that the right Character Areas had been identified.
- Under half of the respondents considered the aspirations for St Andrews Quarter had addressed the issues. In response to all other Character Areas, a majority of responses considered the aspirations proposed, addressed the issues.

1.2.8 Following this consultation, further actions would be taken, prior to the final MAP being presented to the St Edmundsbury Borough Cabinet and Council meetings in December 2017 for adoption:-

- The updating of the aspirations, taking into account the comments received.
- The amendment of the factual Character Area overviews and priorities where necessary.
- Refining and populating of the delivery strategy.

1.2.9 There being no decision required, the Steering Group **noted** the presentation and subsequent actions, for the adoption of the Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Masterplan in December 2017.

1.3 **Work Programme 2017/2018**

1.3.1 The Assistant Director (Growth) reported that the following proposed growth topics had been received from Members for future consideration by the Group, which broadly centred around the areas of:

- *Housing* (supply; demand; suitability)
- *Economy* (commercialism; tourism; rural communities)
- *Technology* (mobile phone/internet usage)
- *Political* (impact of Brexit on local communities/businesses)
- *Influencing/Enabling* (inspiration; promotion of opportunities)
- *Infrastructure* (integrated transport; internal tourism)
- *Resources* (recognition of successful employees)

1.3.2 Members also recognised that when considering these items, appropriate criteria would also need to be set to allow for the Group to be able to identify appropriate outcomes/actions.

1.3.3 With there being no decision required, the Steering Group **noted** the future topics for consideration, as set out in paragraph 1.3.1 above.

1.3.4 The Chairman also advised the Steering Group that a draft Masterplan had been prepared in respect of the proposed tourist and leisure facilities at St Genevieve Lakes near Ingham. Due to the tight time constraints, it had not been possible to bring a report to the Steering Group in time for the Masterplan to be considered for adoption. Therefore, it had been agreed that the details of the Masterplan would be circulated to the Members of the Steering Group, prior to consideration of the proposal by the St Edmundsbury Borough Council Cabinet and Council, with the opportunity for any observations by Members to be reported.

1.4 **Future Housing Delivery Options** (Confidential Item)

1.4.1 New Housing Development and Eastbourne Housing Investment Company

Ian Fitzpatrick, Director, Eastbourne Borough Council/Lewes District Council was in attendance for this item and provided the Steering Group with a presentation which explained how the Council was delivering a mixed programme of directly delivered new housing and regeneration, with a focus on a priority electoral Ward (Devonshire).

1.4.2 Whilst discussing this item, the Steering Group asked questions of the Officer, which centred around:

- The percentage levels which the Councils had set for the provision of affordable housing.
- The structure and governance framework for the Eastbourne Housing Investment Company.
- Striking a balance between risk, returns and yield.

1.4.3 There being no decision required, the Steering Group **noted** the presentation.

1.4.4 Graven Hill Village Development, Bicester

The Assistant Director (Growth), on behalf of Karen Curtin, Managing Director, Graven Hill Village Development Company, provided the Steering Group with a presentation which outlined the merits of this development, including the provision of up to 1,900 homes (including kit homes and self-build) on the former Ministry of Defence site in Graven Hill, Bicester.

1.4.5 Whilst presenting this item, the Assistant Director (Growth) also informed the Steering Group that an invitation had been extended to the Group (and other Members who may be interested) to visit this development.

1.4.6 There being no decision required, the Steering Group **noted** the presentation and also **confirmed** that they would wish to accept the invitation for the Group (and other interested Members) to visit the Graven Hill Village Development in Bicester.

2. Background Papers

2.1.1 DCLG Consultation: 'Planning for the Right Homes in the Right Places' ([Report No: JGG/JT/17/006](#))

2.1.2 Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Masterplan (https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/Planning_Policies/BSEmasterplan/index.cfm)