

Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury councils

West Suffolk
working together

West Suffolk Strategic Framework

2018-20

Contents

Foreword from the Leaders of the Councils	3
West Suffolk Councils' role in transforming local places	4
About West Suffolk: current challenges and opportunities	5
Vision and strategic priorities	10
Ways of working	11
Our plans for 2018-2020	12
Measuring our progress	21

Foreword from the Leaders of the Councils

This is West Suffolk Councils' second strategic plan, cementing our place nationally as transformational councils. Since the last plan we have concentrated our efforts on delivering high quality services while investing in growth and working alongside businesses, residents and partners to create opportunities, jobs and prosperity. We have pioneered new ways of working with communities, aiding local solutions and opportunities to be created by residents to meet their aspirations.

This new framework sets out our vision and aims that the councils and the new West Suffolk Council¹ will be working with others to achieve over the next two years, as follows:

Supporting and investing in our west Suffolk communities and businesses to encourage and manage ambitious growth in prosperity and quality of life for all.

West Suffolk is a national success story – a place people love to live and support their families and businesses to grow. With unique countryside, good quality of life and part of the UK economic engine bound together by communities, good neighbours and local groups that look out for one another.

We have been at the forefront nationally of changing the way local government works for its communities and economy. We are making sure our area can meet the challenges such as reduced funding, pressures on housing, increasing demand on health services and the need to attract investment, while being in a better position to bring jobs and prosperity and still deliver vital services. We are also mindful the needs and opportunities for our rural villages and areas as well as supporting our market towns.

To make sure West Suffolk continues its success story onto the next chapter we will focus our energies on three main strategic priorities.

We believe our communities want to see:

- Growth in West Suffolk's economy for the benefit of all our residents and UK plc.
- Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active
- Increased and improved provision of appropriate housing in West Suffolk in both our towns and rural areas.

It is truly an exciting and ambitious time in West Suffolk with the creation of a new single council giving us a louder voice to champion our area; better ability to take advantage of commercial opportunities but being the right size to concentrate locally on place and communities, supporting both our rural and urban residents and businesses.

This framework document is likely to also cover the creation of the West Suffolk Council between 2018 and 2020. Our priorities flow from what we have achieved so far and our approach will see us behaving more commercially while supporting our families and communities and delivering inclusive growth. We will be using data to give us a greater focus on place to help achieve these aims with our communities and partners.

But we cannot achieve these aims alone. That is why we have pioneered new ways of working with communities, partners, businesses and local groups to achieve these ambitions together. We will continue to work in this innovative way to ensure the people and businesses of West Suffolk continue to thrive and champion our communities locally, nationally and internationally.



Councillor James Waters
Leader, St Edmundsbury
Borough Council



Councillor John Griffiths
Leader, Forest Heath
District Council

¹NB To avoid undue complexity, the document refers throughout to West Suffolk Councils. In the event of a new West Suffolk Council being formed in May 2019, all references would then refer to West Suffolk Council.

West Suffolk Councils' role in transforming local places

West Suffolk Councils – Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council – are uniquely placed to support our local places as they seek to grow and prepare for the next decade, and to improve quality of life for all.

As district councils, we play a central part in shaping the future in west Suffolk, alongside residents, businesses, the third sector and other public sector partners.

Our role includes the following:

Role of West Suffolk Councils		
invest	enable	influence
partner	regulate	prevent
deliver	communicate	fund
support	lobby	protect

Using evidence and insight (see following section) the councils have identified the most significant challenges and opportunities that are facing West Suffolk's towns, villages and other rural areas over the next few years. Based on this, and on our vision for what we believe a future West Suffolk should look like, we have identified those areas of West Suffolk Councils' responsibility where we can have the greatest impact and make the biggest difference in our local areas, using the resources that have been entrusted to us. In doing so, we have been mindful of the role of other partners and their plans and strategies, for example, Suffolk County Council, the two Local Enterprise Partnerships covering West Suffolk, parish and town councils, the third sector, community and representative groups and other public sector partners.

This document describes this strategic framework which will shape our resourcing and decision-making over the period 2018-2020.



About West Suffolk: current challenges and opportunities

West Suffolk Councils are committed to making decisions about the future based on evidence and insight. The priorities described in this document are therefore based on analysis that has been carried out to determine what are the most significant challenges and opportunities facing the area. Our approach has drawn on:

- published national data sources
- data from public sector partners
- internal operational data
- insight from local communities, residents, councillors and staff

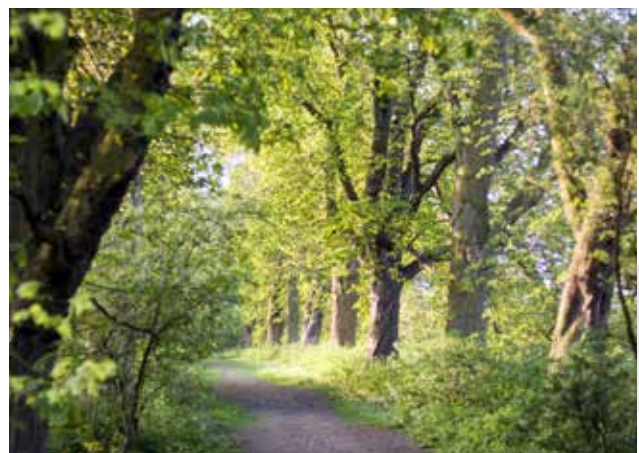
About West Suffolk

The area of West Suffolk comprises the council areas of Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury, two predominantly rural districts in the heart of East Anglia. Well-connected with London, the rest of East Anglia and the Midlands, West Suffolk is a safe and comparatively prosperous place in which to live. West Suffolk has a thriving and diverse economy, embracing a



number of business sectors, including several that support the two major US Air Force bases at RAF Mildenhall and Lakenheath. It also has some beautiful and accessible countryside areas, including grassland, heath and forest. At the same time, some areas of West Suffolk are facing challenges such as rural isolation, a lack of skills or qualifications, an ageing population in need of more specialist housing or care, poverty, ill-health or deprivation.

The charts and graphs on the following pages summarise some of the attributes of West Suffolk, and the challenges and opportunities faced by residents, businesses, the councils and other partners. To see more statistics about life in West Suffolk, please visit: www.suffolkobservatory.info



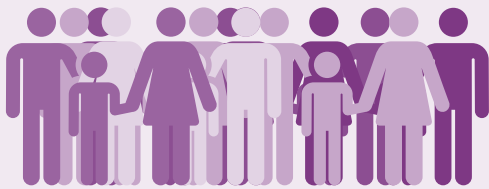
POPULATION

West Suffolk's population is set to grow significantly in the future, and to become older. This poses challenges for the councils in ensuring the right kinds of housing, jobs and infrastructure for our growing population in both urban and rural areas.

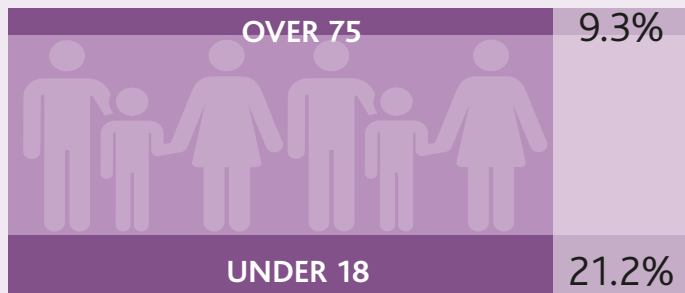
Population

In 2016, the total population of West Suffolk was

177,385



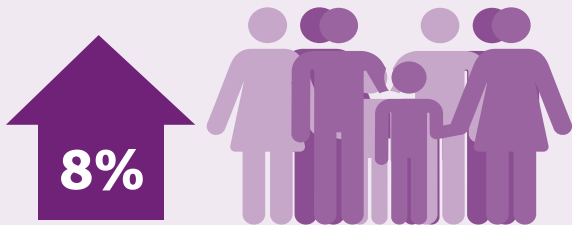
Source: ONS 2016 Mid Year population estimates



21.2% of West Suffolk's population was under 18 (compared to 21.3% of England's population).

9.3% of West Suffolk's population was over 75 (compared to 8.1% of England's population).

Population growth



Between 2017 and 2030, the population of West Suffolk is predicted to grow by 8% (compared to 9% in England as a whole).



The under 18 population is predicted to grow by 5% (England – 7%)



And the over 75s population is predicted to grow by 55% (England – 47%)

Source: ONS 2014-based Sub-national population projections

Number of households

By 2039, the number of households in West Suffolk is predicted to have increased by 20% compared to 2014 figures



Source: www.gov.uk. 2014-based Household projections for England and Local Authorities

Rural / urban balance

Approximately 40% of the population of West Suffolk live in rural locations



Source: Defra Rural/urban classification 2011

ECONOMY

West Suffolk's workforce is growing faster than surrounding areas and the country as a whole, and employment among young people in particular is healthy. However, wage levels remain below the national average, leading to a renewed focus by West Suffolk councils on attracting high quality employment to the area, supported by training and skills development.

Main economic sectors

In 2016 workers in West Suffolk were employed in the 5 following main sectors:



Business admin & support services



Manufacturing



Health



Retail



Accommodation & food services

	Business admin & support services	Manufacturing	Health	Retail	Accommodation & food services
West Suffolk	15.6%	11.9%	11.9%	9.7%	7.4%
England & Wales	9%	8.2%	12.9%	9.5%	7.4%

Source: Business Register and Employment Survey

These figures exclude farm agriculture (SIC subclass 01000)

Income levels

Weekly median pay (gross) for full time workers





Year	Forest Heath	St Edmundsbury	England
2007	£376.60	£413.60	£464.00
2017	£506.70	£536.40	£555.30

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings

Employment

% increase in the number of people in employment 2015 - 2016

West Suffolk	3.98	 
Cambridge City	0.97	
East Suffolk	0.76	
Mid Suffolk and Babergh	1.91	
Ipswich	2.62	
Suffok	2.32	
Cambridgeshire	3.81	
United Kingdom	3.12	

Source: Business Register and Employment Survey

Young people not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

In April 2017, 4% of the 16-18 year old population in West Suffolk were not in Education, Employment or Training (England: 8.4%)

4%

Source: Labour Force Survey

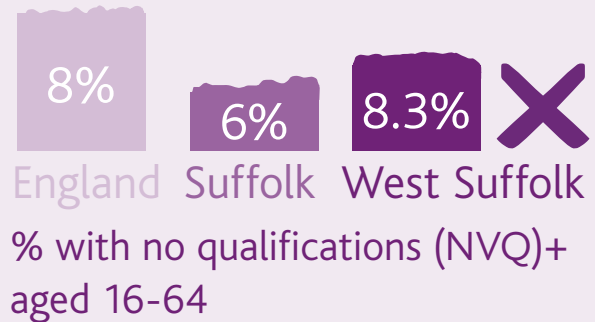
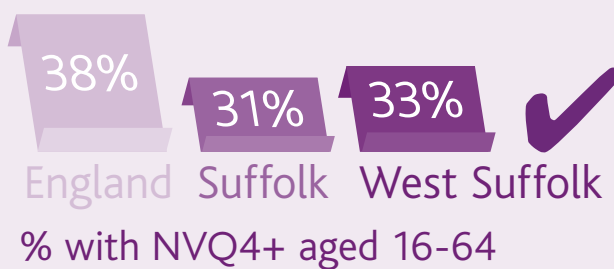
EDUCATION, SKILLS AND TRAINING

West Suffolk faces challenges with increasing skills and attainment levels for our residents, in order to ensure businesses can continue to make the area their home and take hold of new opportunities to expand and innovate.

Qualifications

Reference period
Jan - Dec 16

The proportion of 16-64 year olds with no qualifications is higher than the national average. Meanwhile, the proportion of 16-64 year olds with NVQ level 4+ is lower than the national average.

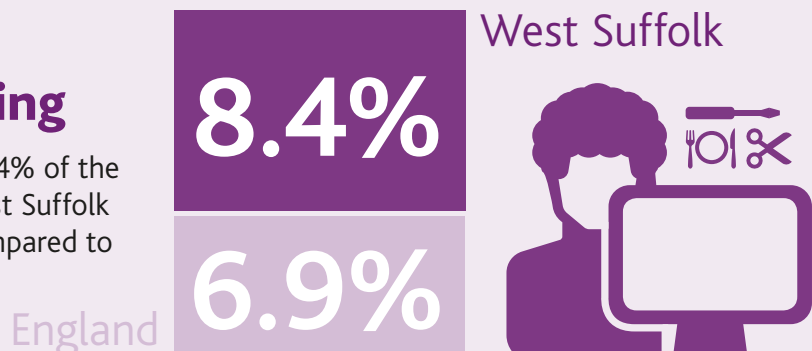


Source: Annual population Survey

Young people in work-based learning

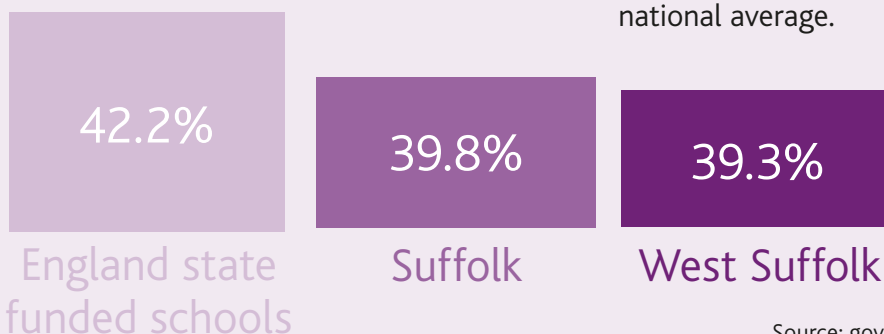
At the end of December 2016, 8.4% of the 16-18 year old population in West Suffolk were in work-based learning, compared to 6.9% for England as a whole.

Source: gov.uk/government/collection/statistics - neet



Educational attainment

The percentage of year 11 students in West Suffolk achieving Grade 5 or above in England and Maths GCSE in 2017 was below the national average.



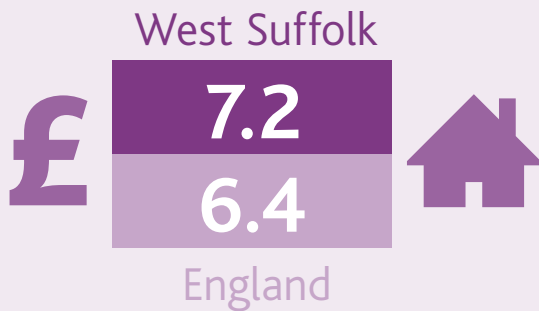
Source: gov.uk - compare-school-performance

HOUSING

Buying or renting a home in West Suffolk is challenging, given average prices and local wage levels. Like the rest of the UK, increasing homelessness poses challenges to families, communities and West Suffolk Councils and its partners. We have invested significant resources in addressing these issues, but the overall housing challenge continues.

Affordability

The estimated ratio of average earnings to average property price in West Suffolk in 2017 was 7.2, compared to a ratio of 6.4 for England as a whole.

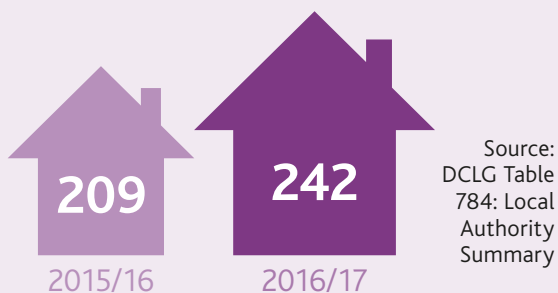


(Ratio of average earnings (full time workers' mean gross annual pay) : Mean semi-detached property price)).

Source: Wage levels - Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings. House prices - Gov.uk - UK House Price Index: data downloads Aug 2017

Homelessness

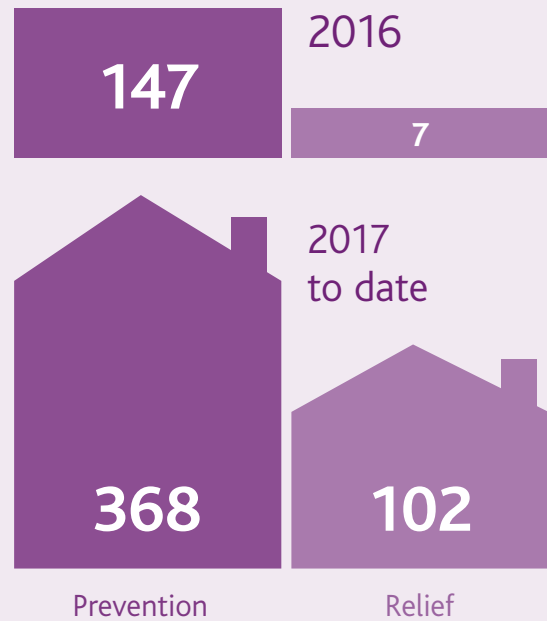
The number of people accepted as homeless (i.e. in priority need and not intentionally homeless) in West Suffolk in 2016-17 increased significantly from 2015-16 levels.



Source: DCLG Table 784: Local Authority Summary

Homelessness prevention and relief

The number of cases of homelessness prevention and relief dealt with by West Suffolk Councils increased significantly between 2016 and 2017.



Homelessness prevention involves providing people with the ways and means to address their housing and other needs to avoid homelessness. This is done by either assisting them to obtain alternative accommodation or enabling them to remain in their existing home.

Homelessness relief occurs when an authority has been unable to prevent homelessness but helps someone to secure accommodation even though the authority is under no statutory obligation to do so.

Vision and strategic priorities

From 2018-2020, Councillors and staff across West Suffolk Councils are committed to:

Supporting and investing in our west Suffolk communities and businesses to encourage and manage ambitious growth in prosperity and quality of life for all.

In practice, this will mean continuing to focus our energies and resources on the following strategic priorities:

Growth in West Suffolk's economy for the benefit of all our residents and UK plc.	Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active.	Increased and improved provision of appropriate housing in West Suffolk in both our towns and rural areas.
<p>We will use our influence, investment, partnerships and regulatory powers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lobby for a better connected West Suffolk, in terms of transport and digital connectivity • promote West Suffolk as a place to do business, so as to attract investment and innovation that increases salary levels and encourages the right mix of jobs to grow our economy • invest in and promote our local places by building on their unique qualities through specific local strategies, projects and environmental services • develop our current and future local workforce through education, training and opportunities for all. 	<p>We will use our leadership, local connections, commissioning role and assets to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • foster supportive networks to improve and sustain the lives of individuals, families and communities • use our community, leisure, open space and heritage assets to support wellbeing and education • work with and influence partners including the voluntary sector in our shared endeavour of improving the health, wellbeing and safety of families and communities. 	<p>We will use our roles as a local housing and planning authority, a regulator, an investor and local influencer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan for housing to meet the needs of current and future generations throughout their lifetimes, that is properly supported by infrastructure, facilities and community networks • improve the quality of housing and the local environment for our residents • enable people to access suitable and sustainable housing.

Ways of working

In carrying out our work, West Suffolk councillors and staff are committed to a number of ‘ways of working’ that, when taken altogether, represent a set of distinctives of our organisation. These ways of working govern the way in which we carry out our business and choose those opportunities that are important to pursue. They are based on the values that drive our approach, coupled with the circumstances facing local government in the 21st century.

"The West Suffolk Way"	Empowering families and communities to create positive and healthy futures. Working in a way which helps to create safe places, recognises individuals and their needs and strengths, understands relationships and connects people. Finding out what communities care about and supporting them to achieve their goals.
Place focus and subsidiarity	Distinctively local, not generic solutions, that are shaped and delivered locally and reflect the different challenges and opportunities of West Suffolk’s towns, villages and countryside areas.
Collaboration and integration	Ambitious and comprehensive cross-system partnerships that join up resources around communities and individuals
Inclusive growth	Encouraging and investing in ambitious growth and good quality housing that all can access and benefit from, and that is good for local people and the environment
Financial self-sufficiency	A shift from reliance on grants to self-generated income, returns on investment, and business rates growth
Behaving more commercially	Taking a business approach to our operations, within our public service remit
Digitally enabled	Maximising the potential of data and technology to transform decisions and transactions

In everything we do, we will be guided by our commitment to promoting equality and diversity by seeking to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimization, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different groups of people through all aspects of our work across West Suffolk. Where appropriate, we will assess the impact of our policies and projects as they develop, in order to ensure they support our commitment to equality and diversity. We have also identified some particular areas within the priorities on p x where focused action is needed to improve equality of opportunity for people in West Suffolk. These are shown below:

Equality objectives

- develop our current and future local workforce through education, training and opportunities
- work in partnership with, and influence, other organisations including the third sector to support families and communities in improving their health, wellbeing and safety.
- enable people to access suitable and sustainable housing.

The following pages of this document explain in more detail the actions and projects we will undertake in relation to our vision and priorities over the next two years.

Our plans for 2018-2020

Growth in West Suffolk's economy for the benefit of all our residents and UK plc

We will use our influence, investment, partnerships and regulatory powers to:

- lobby for a better connected West Suffolk, in terms of transport and digital connectivity
- promote West Suffolk as a place to do business, so as to attract investment and innovation that increases salary levels and encourages the right mix of jobs to grow our economy
- invest in and promote our local places by building on their unique qualities through specific local strategies, projects and environmental services
- develop our current and future local workforce through education, training and opportunities for all

Why is this a priority?

Without 'good growth' in West Suffolk, our residents, families and communities have little prospect of achieving the goals they want to achieve. A strong economy that is capable of growing, sits at the heart of this growth, and West Suffolk Councils hold a number of key levers in driving forward economic change.

West Suffolk Councils need to use our resources to foster good growth in West Suffolk because there are areas where the potential of our places and people is not being maximised and where more could be achieved. For example, we need to direct our energies towards projects and activities that will help bolster productivity, improve educational attainment and increase wages, which are currently lagging behind national trends. We also need to work with others to improve infrastructure, which is so critical in rural areas such as ours.

As we look towards the next decade and the significant social and economic change that we are likely to experience, West Suffolk Councils need to be leading the way in ensuring that our local economies are resilient and growing in an inclusive way.

During 2018-2020, we will:

1. Ensure an up-to-date strategic planning framework is in place across West Suffolk, including an Infrastructure Development Plan. Our work will include the preparation of a joint local plan timetable, supported by supplementary planning documents; a review of the Statement of Community





- Involvement; and work with parish and town councils on neighbourhood plans.
2. Give West Suffolk a louder voice in the growth agenda at the national and regional levels, in particular through the Local Enterprise Partnerships, Suffolk Growth Programme Board, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and wider networks covering the East and South East of England. This will include ensuring West Suffolk gets a fair share of available funding to support growth.
3. Make opportunities for growth available through land, premises and Enterprise Zones, for example, the development of the Cambridge – Norwich tech corridor, Suffolk Business Park, Haverhill Research Park and Epicentre. We will also continue to work with central government on the future of the RAF Mildenhall site in anticipation of the United States Air Force leaving the site in 2024 (at the earliest).
4. Work with partners and developers to secure, improve and increase infrastructure provision to enable West Suffolk to continue to flourish. In particular, the A1307 corridor, A11, A14, Ipswich to Cambridge rail services (including East-West rail, Eastern Section), a potential light rail link between Haverhill and Cambridge, and broadband provision.
5. Develop insight-based bespoke strategies for investment and other activities in our local places. Our approach in each of our places will promote inclusive growth, which enables residents, families and communities to improve their quality of life, while also growing the economy and safeguarding and enhancing the natural and built heritage and environment.
6. Drive forward improvements in our town centres, including improving markets provision. We will continue to implement the Haverhill masterplan and to finalise the masterplan for Bury St Edmunds as well as work on masterplanning in Newmarket and Mildenhall.
7. Understand our local businesses and provide them with targeted support to enable them to expand and flourish, for example, through small grants or loans and signposting to support agencies. This will include working with Chambers of Commerce, the New Anglia Growth Hub, Business Improvement Districts and others such as West Suffolk College.



8. Provide focused support for our key growth sectors of advanced manufacturing; digital and creative; biotech; tourism; film; and food, drink and agritech. Our support will include encouraging businesses to implement environmental improvements and to adopt a culture which nurtures employee health and wellbeing as well as their talents, ambitions and innovation.
9. Promote West Suffolk's brand through inward investment activities and events, for example the West Suffolk Business Festival, and by raising our local profile through the Destination Management Organisation. We will use these opportunities to retain and attract talented people, especially young people, to choose to live and work in West Suffolk.
10. Develop an Asset Management Plan to ensure the operational and other assets owned by West Suffolk are used for maximum public benefit, including our office buildings, waste facilities, car parks, investment properties and energy assets such as Toggam Solar Farm. This will include joint initiatives such as the delivery of the West Suffolk Operational Hub and Mildenhall Hub, as part of the One Public Estate programme



11. Support the development of higher level skills in West Suffolk so as to support individuals in achieving their goals and attract higher paid jobs to the area. We will do this by working with employers, the county council, West Suffolk College and other local training providers to promote training opportunities and apprenticeships, including in-house.

Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active

We will use our leadership, local connections, commissioning role and assets to:

- foster supportive networks to improve and sustain the lives of individuals, families and communities
- use our community, leisure, open space and heritage assets to support wellbeing and education
- work with and influence partners including the voluntary sector in our shared endeavour of improving the health, wellbeing and safety of families and communities.

Why is this a priority?

Many of the difficulties experienced by West Suffolk residents could be prevented or tackled



early if support and potential solutions were available close to home, for example, from within family, neighbourhood or community networks. This would then result in a different role for public services, namely being an option of last resort, rather than the first port of call.

We are already developing the foundations of a more preventative approach, working across groups and organisations, listening to and working within and with our communities. Crucial to this approach is encouraging them to explore their strengths and assets, and tailoring our support and responses accordingly. Traditionally we think of assets as being buildings or places but in this approach references to assets also means local people who care enough about an issue in their community that they are prepared to do something about it.

Each locality's social, economic and demographic make-up is different, as well as the challenges faced, and understanding these will be fundamental to the success of our work. This is particularly true as we see long-term trends in demographics, families, the make-up of communities and priorities changing across Suffolk. For example, a third of newborns will live to 100 years of age². Increasingly, those approaching retirement age are still caring for their parents, which has an impact on housing choices, where people decide to live and work, and their lifestyles.

In practical terms this means rethinking what public services do. Prioritising the role of families and communities in society will mean that West Suffolk councils will advocate, empower and enable people to spot, prevent and address emerging problems, rather than waiting until they become serious and manifest themselves as worklessness, anti-social behaviour or poor health.

² ONS Period and cohort life tables, 2012 release (Dec 2013)

During 2018-2020, we will:

1. Continue the direction set in 2011, updating our strategy where appropriate
2. Work closely with councillors to identify groups, community connectors and other individuals able to provide support within their communities, such as lunch clubs and pre-school provision.
3. Continue to strengthen our relationships with parish and town councils through Town and Parish cluster meetings, Forum and the West Suffolk conference.
4. Support groups and organisations to build capacity by making the best use of community grants and locality budgets
5. Maximise the value to communities of external funding streams by monitoring and influencing the distribution of funding and ensuring the West Suffolk community grants do not duplicate other arrangements.
6. Help communities to take more ownership of community assets, for example the Guildhall transfer in Bury St Edmunds and the Newbury Community Centre transfer.
7. Review and understand our diverse cultural assets and opportunities with a view to work with partners to develop a 21st century cultural strategy. The strategy will set out how the value of the assets can be maximised in terms of, for example, celebrating and safeguarding heritage assets; tackling social isolation; promoting tourism; or generating commercial income. It will build on previous work and take account of assets such as the Home of Horseracing and the ambition for a cinema in Newmarket to provide leisure opportunities for families and communities.
8. Support the development of the Mildenhall Hub to achieve maximum benefits for local communities from the co-location of public sector services, leisure centre, school and swimming pool.
9. Build on the relationship with our strategic leisure partner to support the delivery of the Physical Activity Framework.
10. Develop the model of working with housing staff, health visitors and community nurses in discussion with agencies, building stronger



partnerships to address 'hotspots' and 'super users' of public services.

11. Work closely with statutory and voluntary sector partners and communities, including ONE Haverhill, to identify key areas and causes of demand on public services and enable community-based solutions
12. Work alongside partners to implement a multi-agency team in West Suffolk to support communities to become more resilient and sustainable.
13. Utilise and build on the specialist skills and knowledge in the West Suffolk officer team, including community safety, anti-social behavior, health, arts and culture, vulnerable groups, children and young people and community grants, using a variety of approaches
14. Work with our partners to identify the cost/benefit of the West Suffolk approach and develop measures to monitor progress and outcomes.

The West Suffolk Way

The West Suffolk approach sets out the five key elements we believe are the building blocks for resilient and thriving communities.

Element 1: **A Safe Place** – is about working in a way which increases the safety of a place and people’s sense of the place in which they live, work or visit. It can apply to emotional safety as well as physical.

Element 2: **Recognising Individuals** – is about working in a way which recognises people’s individuality, that differences matter and that each person has different needs and strengths. It applies to the development of, and respect for important concepts such as self-identity, self-esteem and self-worth. It embraces culture and values.

Element 3: **Understanding relationships** – is about working in a way which recognises the context of relationships and the connections that exist between people, in spite of difference, be they transactional, nurturing, emotional, practical etc.

Element 4: **Encouraging agency** – is about working in a way which encourages people to help themselves, validating their own ability, recognising that taking action is an important step to change, development and improvement. At a personal level, this increases people’s ability and capacity to demonstrate power, influence and control over their lives.

Element 5: **Developing vision** - is about working in a way which builds positive goals and an understanding of what is being worked towards.



Increased and improved provision of appropriate housing in west Suffolk in both our towns and rural areas.

We will use our roles as a local housing and planning authority, a regulator, an investor and local influencer to:

- plan for housing to meet the needs of current and future generations throughout their lifetimes, that is properly supported by infrastructure, facilities and community networks
- improve the quality of housing and the local environment for our residents
- enable people to access suitable and sustainable housing.

Why is this a priority?

We know that good housing can play an important role in improving the health and wellbeing of people in our area, and it is vital to realising our ambitions for economic growth. Without suitable and affordable housing, West Suffolk's residents will not be able to

achieve their ambitions, whether for family life, career development, a fulfilling retirement or other goals. The local conditions in West Suffolk makes housing particularly difficult to afford, given relatively high house prices and low wages. The councils therefore have an important role to play in seeking to address this situation, and also to ensure housing is suitable for the increasingly ageing population. At the same time, the councils continue to work to improve the quality of housing, so as to ensure it supports the health and wellbeing of residents, families and communities, both in our towns and in our rural areas. In recent years, as well as focusing on increasing the supply of appropriate housing, the councils have also responded to rising homelessness in West Suffolk by investing resources in preventing homelessness and securing suitable accommodation for those in crisis.



During 2018-2020, we will:

1. Promote and facilitate the provision of new housing, supported by infrastructure, and in line with the Government's approach. We will do this by working with a range of partners including registered providers, infrastructure providers, private developers and parish councils.
2. Bring forward growth on the strategic sites at North West and North East Haverhill, North East Bury St Edmunds, Bury St Edmunds East and Bury St Edmunds West. Plus, depending on the outcome of the Forest Heath Local Plan examination North Lakenheath, North Red Lodge and West Mildenhall.
3. Ensure there is sufficient mix of housing types to meet the needs of our local communities, including delivering 30% affordable housing on any private development. We will also work with registered providers to ensure that levels of social rented homes are maintained so there are sufficient affordable homes for individuals and families on low incomes.
4. Seek to encourage developers to build homes to the national minimum space standards to promote healthy living.
5. Develop new housing for sale and rent through the delivery of Barley Homes' first five year delivery plan. Barley Homes is the councils' housing company, jointly owned by West Suffolk councils and Suffolk County Council. Income from Barley Homes will also generate revenue to support West Suffolk Councils in becoming self-sufficient.
6. Promote the development of lifetime homes which meet the needs of people throughout their lives, as well as providing specific adaptations to housing through Disabled Facilities Grants.
7. Continue to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and where appropriate allocate land to meet those needs.
8. Work with private landlords, tenants and the voluntary and community sector to ensure privately rented accommodation is up to standard. This will include provision of advice and support as well as formal inspections, particularly in Houses in Multiple Occupation. We will also implement policy changes to allow West Suffolk Councils to impose financial penalties on rogue landlords whose properties are in poor condition.
9. Support owners of empty properties to enable them to bring homes back into use.
10. Work in partnership with residents, communities, registered providers and other partner organisations to prevent homelessness and ensure families and individuals are appropriately housed. This will include implementing the new duties on placed councils by the Homelessness Reduction Act, through our Homelessness Strategy and Lettings Policy, and promoting housing related support.
11. Implement the Positive Pathway model for tackling homelessness, including identifying risks early, promoting self-help and resilience for those who are able to help themselves and proactive help for those who are too vulnerable to help themselves.
12. Explore options for the provision of more temporary accommodation, in order to house individuals and families, including those who have experienced domestic abuse.
13. Use dedicated support to work with rough sleepers and try to address the problems that lead to rough sleeping and being at risk of sleeping rough, including through the 'No Second Night Out' partnership.
14. Deliver excellent services for those who are homeless. Our work will recognise that some people have more than just 'the need for a roof' and will involve working in partnership to provide support and stabilisation, with the aim of breaking the cycle of homelessness.
15. Work with the Anglia Revenues Partnership, Citizens Advice Bureau and Registered Providers to support the roll out of Universal Credit
16. Continue to explore innovative ways to use good housing to promote the health and wellbeing of our families and communities, including through our role in the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board.

Further detail of our planned projects and activities is available in our specific strategy documents available on our website at www.westsuffolk.gov.uk

Resourcing our priorities

Alongside our Strategic Framework, the Councils' Medium Term Financial Strategy and annual budgets set out how our activities will be resourced. Our Medium Term Financial Strategy www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/mtfs is based on the following six themes:

1. Aligning resources to the West Suffolk strategic plan and essential services;
2. Continuation of the shared service agenda and transformation of service delivery;
3. Behaving more commercially;
4. Considering new funding models (eg acting as an investor);

5. Encouraging the use of digital forms for customer access; and
6. Taking advantage of new forms of local government finance (eg business rate retention).

Improving how we work

Supporting our ambitious agenda of enabling change in our local communities requires us to 'lead by doing' and is reliant on significant supporting infrastructure, for example around communications, policy development, information management, estate and resource management, customer access, workforce and organisational development and improving our governance and democratic arrangements.

We have a number of plans in place to drive forward change in these areas over the period 2018-2020, many of which are available to view at www.westsuffolk.gov.uk

Focus on West Suffolk Councils' workforce

A committed and effective workforce is key to the successful delivery of our strategic priorities. Our people policies support the health and wellbeing of our staff in order that they are able to achieve the ambitions set out by West Suffolk councils.

During 2018 – 2020 we will focus our workforce strategy on 5 key areas:

Skills and behaviours – train, develop and grow our workforce in multi disciplinary settings to ensure they have the skills for their role and able to work across the organisation and ensure our staff are fully engaged at all levels.

Pay, reward and recognition – develop affordable pay and reward strategies balanced with the employer of choice vision.

Recruitment and retention – recruit and retain staff with the right skills at the right time to deliver our vision

Workforce planning and data – having a workforce that reflects the right people, with the right skills, with the right potential to develop in order to deliver our vision.

Health and wellbeing – a fit and healthy workforce able to deliver the services supported through the commitment and framework of the Suffolk Workplace Wellbeing Charter.

Measuring our progress

Over the period of this framework, we will use our performance management arrangements to track our progress.

The West Suffolk Councils' performance framework uses a mix of operational, financial, staff performance, customer feedback and contextual information to build a picture of progress in achieving the vision and objectives outlined in this document. The business intelligence gathered in this way supports staff Councillors to spot risks and opportunities and to continuously improve.

In addition, in order to measure overall change and transformation in our places, we will measure progress against the following six outcomes, using our own data alongside data from our partners:



Safe and clean	Healthy and well	Inclusive
Economically vibrant	Resilient and strong	Aspirational

A range of organisations, as well as residents and businesses themselves, will determine how well local places are performing against these outcomes. And so we will also measure West Suffolk Councils' specific contribution by monitoring the specific outcomes and outputs from our activities. Our performance management framework also considers our financial performance and that of our staff.

We will report our progress through regular reporting to the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committees, as well as through our Annual Reports.

Residents, businesses and other stakeholders can access information about our performance and our use of resources through our committee reports, which are made public, and through the transparency pages of our website.





Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury councils

West Suffolk
working together

