



# **Civic Leadership Review**

**A review of civic leadership across St Edmundsbury  
Borough Council and Forest Heath District Council in  
preparation for the introduction of West Suffolk  
Council in April 2019**

**12 October 2018**



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# Executive Summary

The new West Suffolk Council will be the seventh largest district-tier council in England, with a population of 179,385. It will be 74.9% rural (using the 2011 Rural Urban Classification). Currently the civic leadership function for Forest Heath District Council is carried out by a Chairman and for St Edmundsbury Borough Council it is undertaken by a Mayor<sup>1</sup>. However, with the creation of the new West Suffolk Council on 1 April 2019, there is an opportunity to redefine the arrangements for civic leadership in order to support West Suffolk Council's ambitions to drive growth and prosperity in local communities. The new arrangements need to look to the future while recognising and building on the traditions of the past.

While the legal order laid down by Government is that West Suffolk Council will be a district with a chairman on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, there are various options councillors can look at as to whether the new Council will be a borough or district or have a mayor or a chair after this date. The decision to apply to the Privy Council for Borough status would require a two-thirds majority vote in favour at a specially convened Shadow Council meeting.

There are three main areas that need to be considered when defining the new role for civic leadership for West Suffolk Council, which are;

- requirements of the role,
- the priorities for the civic leader, and
- format for how the role will be delivered.

As a result of this review, a wealth of information has been gathered utilising a range of different methods to help inform decision making on these aspects. This includes information that has been obtained from; an online survey, focus groups, a review of current working practices, including a random telephone review of those that have invited the Mayor/Chairman to events over the last 12 months, a review of regional and national perspectives and a media review. All of these different elements should be given equal weight when considering the issue, rather than relying on one aspect alone.

An overview of the key findings are as follows;

## National and legislative context

- The branding for the new West Suffolk Council will not change whichever decision is made regarding borough or district Status.
- A mayor and chairman have the same powers and they are both apolitical roles. There are many similarities in the core roles/purpose of the civic leader, particularly in terms of the ceremonial and ambassadorial functions, regardless of whether this is undertaken by a mayor/chairman.
- Borough and district have exactly the same powers e.g. in relation to issuing Freedoms.

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<sup>1</sup> The current titles for the civic leaders, as outlined in the current council constitutions are used throughout this document. It is recognised that these may be reviewed in the future.

- Since 2000, only seven councils nationally have applied to change from a district council to a borough council and only four have done this since 2009.
- In general, district councils have a higher percentage of rural residents and there is a perception that boroughs are more town/urban related (west Suffolk would become the new highest rural borough if this was agreed). There is, also, a perception that boroughs have a higher status, carrying more weight. Indeed, other parts of the country that have more recently adopted borough status, e.g. Basildon and West Lancashire specifically make reference to this point as to why they decided to apply for borough status.
- Only boroughs can have a mayor, but you can have a borough with a chairman. However, research shows that all authorities that are boroughs do have a mayor.
- Comparisons with the other districts/boroughs shows that, in general, where a civic leader is a mayor, they tend to attend more events, which ranges between 200-550 events, compared to 50-200 for a Chairman, with one exception, Maldon (275). Where there are mayors, the costs of civic leadership is almost always higher, reflecting the higher number of events and support required to undertake the bigger role.
- There is no option to separate out the chairing of council meetings from the wider civic functions of a mayor/chairman. This specific role is mandated in the Local Government Act 1972.

## **Local context**

- Events attended by St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor are mainly in Bury St Edmunds and likewise the Forest Heath District Council Chairman, also, attends a number of events in Bury St Edmunds, as they are often invited to attend too.
- Education and local growth are currently the least frequent events that are supported by either civic leader.
- There is not a strong correlation between events that the current civic leaders attend and the council's priorities, particularly in relation to growth and housing.
- Having town mayors as well as a St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor can result in duplication of event coverage. Also, this can cause confusion for residents over what civic leadership is and how the different civic roles work together.
- Across west Suffolk, there are different arrangements across the town councils. Two towns in west Suffolk currently have mayors, with others considering adopting the role. These are undertaken in different ways. For example, the Haverhill Mayor wears robes and a chain and the Newmarket Mayor only wears a chain. The costs associated with this function in the towns are similar, in the region of £5,800-£6,450.
- It has been suggested, through both focus groups and the online survey, that there is the potential to further promote local arrangements to support civic

leadership and for greater co-ordination between the local authority and towns with regards to the management of, and attendance at, civic functions in the future. This view was supported for a number of reasons; promoting local delegation and empowerment, avoiding duplication and confusion and making the roles manageable and effective, while ensuring there is good support for communities.

- There are occasions when both civic leaders and ward councillors/cabinet members attend events together, which may be desirable on some occasions. However, it is difficult to specify exactly to what extent this occurs and any benefits from joint attendance.
- Predominately Bury St Edmunds residents do not want to lose the historic aspect and tradition and ceremony attached to mayor in Bury St Edmunds. They have expressed the importance of the ceremonial aspects of this role and good press coverage/PR/profile raising that can be achieved.
- The review of written press coverage, and the telephone survey suggests that St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor currently attracts more coverage. However, the attendance of St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor or Forest Heath District Council Chairman at events was equally appreciated by communities.
- The current budgets for St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor/Forest Heath District Council Chairman are not directly comparable for a number of reasons. However, it is recognised that the budget will reflect the form of the future civic leader. At this stage, it is considered that the likely fixed costs of a future civic leadership function is in the region of £71,500, with variable costs being in the region of £47,500, which will depend on the size of role and how it is undertaken.

Considering all of the above, regardless of title, what is required in the future is a professional, progressive and accessible civic leader, well-connected to the aims of the Council. The ambassadorial function remains a central part of the new role; championing and supporting local communities/businesses, as well as promoting west Suffolk. Some of the key considerations for the new role are:

- The need for a revised approach to how the civic leader carries out the role owing to; a) the geographic size of the new Council which means consideration has to be given to making sure that the role is deliverable by one person, in terms of numbers of commitments and distances to be travelled b) the need to ensure that the civic leader supports the priorities of the new West Suffolk Council, rather than the agenda being individualised and changed every year.
- The need for more involvement of, and closer consultation with, town and parish councils, with a focus on considering how the civic leader of the Council can complement and support the work of Towns and Parishes better and, also, to consider how some functions could be undertaken differently.
- Better communications and a team approach across the Council with ward members and portfolio holders jointly supporting the civic leader to champion and promote west Suffolk.

- Rewarding and recognising the contributions of citizens, including, for example, thanking people by attending events, hosting receptions for community groups and volunteers, granting Freedom awards and, also, by making best use of the advertising/promotion opportunities.

In terms of deciding the format for the new civic leader, there is a need for a staged approach to decide how the role should be undertaken in the future. The Shadow Council initially needs to decide whether to apply to the Privy Council for borough status. Once the outcome of this is known, further consideration can then be given to deciding whether the civic leader will be a mayor/chairman, if and as required. It is important to highlight that interim arrangements will be required for the first year of the new West Suffolk Council should borough Status and mayor be the preferred option (i.e. a chairman) because of the timing of the decision and the need to maintain a civic function.

Analysing all the information from this extensive review, councillors must decide upon the best way forward for the new West Suffolk Council with regards to civic leadership. Bearing all of this in mind, the recommendations are as follows:

- 1) To agree to the proposed requirements and priorities for the role of the future civic leader, as set out in section 18.2 and 18.3, and to delegate the writing of a new protocol encompassing these elements to the Assistant Director (HR, Legal and Democratic Services).
- 2) To work more closely with town and parish councils by;
  - 2a) Engaging with all town and parish councils to seek further ways of supporting them with civic leadership at a local level.
  - 2b) Exploring with Bury Town Council possible options for them to lead on town centred ceremonial duties.
- 3) To take a vote on whether the Shadow Council should convene a special meeting for the purpose of deciding whether to apply for borough status and to suspend paragraph 13.1 of the Council Procedure Rules for this vote, so that it may only be passed should 2/3 majority of those present and voting at the meeting wish the Shadow Council to apply for borough status.

# Introduction

Civic leadership is defined as "...any individual or group activity done with the intent to advocate on behalf of the public."<sup>2</sup> It is demonstrated by those who are recognised as figureheads within their local communities and who volunteer their time, skills, knowledge and enthusiasm to engage with and have a positive impact on individuals, communities and organisations as outlined below:

"Citizens acting alone or together to protect public values or make a change or difference in the community are common types of civic engagement... The goal of civic engagement is to address public concerns and promote the quality of the community."<sup>3</sup>

All councillors demonstrate civic leadership as part of their role. However, the 'civic leader' role at a district or borough council is mainly the responsibility of a chairman or mayor. All councils must have a chairman. For some councils, who have a borough charter, this role can be taken by a mayor, if they choose to do so. Therefore, if West Suffolk Council successfully applied for a borough charter, it could have either a mayor or chairman as its civic figurehead<sup>4</sup>.

One of the elements of this review is to identify and highlight how the civic leadership of West Suffolk Council could operate in conjunction with other civic leaders, including mayors and chairmen of parish and town councils, because they, also, help to champion local communities. However, while there are opportunities to share feedback ascertained through this review, there will not be any specific recommendations to changes to the leadership roles of parish and town councils across the area, it is purely focused on defining the civic function for the new West Suffolk Council.

In determining the future role for the civic leader of West Suffolk Council, it is important to acknowledge that they will be a figurehead for the new, bigger geographical area of West Suffolk Council, representing the council at important events, championing local communities and businesses. Therefore, the role of the civic leader needs to be redefined given the greater scale and new dynamics of the council. This review is therefore concerned with:

- The role and priorities of civic leadership, namely, how residents engage with and understand the council and how the council demonstrates support for its communities, encourages civic pride in its area and promotes local democracy, and;
- How civic leadership supports the aims and ambitions of West Suffolk Council.

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<sup>2</sup> Delli, Michael. "Civic Engagement". APA.Org. American Psychological Association, 25 Apr. 2016

<sup>3</sup> "The Definition of Civic Engagement". The New York Times. 2003-07-07. ISSN 0362-4331.

## **Part 1 – Approach to review**

### **1. Overview**

#### **1.1 Background**

- 1.1.1 Currently, the civic leadership function for Forest Heath District Council is carried out by a chairman and for St Edmundsbury Borough Council it is undertaken by a mayor.
- 1.1.2 With the creation of the new West Suffolk Council on 1 April 2019, there is a unique opportunity to change and redefine the arrangements for civic leadership, considering what the functions will be in the future and how these will be carried out. In so doing, it is important to highlight that the new West Suffolk Council will be the seventh largest district-tier council in England, with a population of 179,385 and it will be 74.9% rural (using the 2011 Rural Urban Classification).

#### **1.2 Purpose**

- 1.2.1 The purpose of this review is to understand and reflect on the current approaches to civic leadership across both councils and in other places, with a view to, outlining the role of civic leadership, as well as what the best model of civic leadership would be for the new West Suffolk Council which will be formally created on 1 April 2019.

### **2. Terms of reference**

#### **2.1 Objectives**

- 2.1.1 The objectives of the review were as follows:
- To determine how the civic leader will collaboratively work with local members, establishing those areas of activity and the role local members will play to complement the civic leader's role.
  - To determine the role of civic leadership when assessing the objectives in the Single Council business plan, and how civic leadership should support the aims and ambitions of West Suffolk Council.
  - To identify how the civic leadership should operate in conjunction with other civic leaders and dignitaries across west Suffolk, including the High Sheriff and Lord Lieutenant and mayors and chairmen of parish and town councils.
  - To establish and identify the priorities for the civic leader's commitments, identifying where the civic leadership offers greatest value representing west Suffolk – for example supporting businesses, supporting community events, supporting arts and cultural events, charity fundraising, campaign work and promoting local democracy.

- To advise West Suffolk Council on how it might most effectively recognise the contributions of local citizens, groups and businesses.
- To advise West Suffolk Shadow Council on whether, given the role and function of the civic leadership, and the relative arguments, West Suffolk Council should have a Mayor, which would require the council to apply for borough status.

### **3. Approach**

#### **3.1 Review process**

- 3.1.1 To oversee and lead the review, the West Suffolk Shadow Council (a separate organisation with responsibility for making sure everything is ready for the new council on 1 April 2019) established a working group of councillors who were supported by officers.
- 3.1.2 The working group was responsible for overseeing the approach to the review and endorsing the outcomes and recommendations on behalf of the Shadow Council.
- 3.1.3 The public engagement activity took place between the following dates 9 July 2018 until 2 September 2018 (a total of eight weeks).

#### **3.2 Summary of research methods**

- 3.2.1 The primary aim of the engagement work was to collate views and opinions, to draw on people's experiences and to find out what the value of a civic function means to local communities to help inform decisions taken by the Shadow Council. To determine the role of a civic leader within West Suffolk Council, the following work was undertaken during July and August 2018:
  - Review of the current position with regards to civic leadership in Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council, considering the similarities and differences in how the roles are carried out and the financial context.
  - Review of the role of ward councillors and cabinet members, in terms of supporting local events, considering their current position and how this could be developed in the future.
  - Review of all events attended by the civic leaders and their deputies in both councils over the last two years.
  - A random-sample telephone survey of those organisations that have invited St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor/Forest Heath District Council Chairman to events over the last year.
  - Engagement with schools, businesses, community groups, councillors and dignitaries, town and parish councils and the wider community through the use of focus groups, one-to-one meetings and an online survey.



- Review of media coverage relating to St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor and Forest Heath District Council Chairman over the last three months.
- Review of national/regional approaches to civic leadership.

### **3.3 Methodology for surveys/focus groups**

3.3.1 The information provided below outlines the approach to the main survey methods:

#### **Online survey**

- An online survey was posted on West Suffolk Councils' website, and the link disseminated widely (see media tools below). The survey was built using survey software, so that users were taken through a series of screens asking them to give their views on the issues covered in the scope of the review. Participants were asked for their priorities for civic leadership, so as to inform the thinking of the Shadow Council in reaching a decision. They were, also, asked to comment on the advantages and disadvantages of the different options for civic leadership. The full set of questions is attached at Appendix 1.
- The survey sample was not representative of the population of west Suffolk, as completing the survey was purely voluntary, and no random or stratified sampling framework was used. Instead, it allowed interested parties to give their views on the key elements of the review. Participants were asked to give their location (by postcode zone) and some key equality monitoring information, but their responses remained anonymous. This monitoring information allowed officers to assess how the characteristics of the sub-population of respondents compared to the characteristics of the overall population of west Suffolk.

#### **Focus groups**

- The focus group questions were split into two parts; the first group of questions focused on defining the role of the civic leader and the second group of questions encouraged participants to consider the benefits/concerns of being a borough and the benefits/concerns of having a mayor. The questions asked during the focus groups are available in Appendix 2.
- Six schools/academies agreed to hold focus groups. Young people participating came from across school years 9-13 (aged 13-18 years). The schools that participated were, IES Breckland (Brandon), Newmarket Academy, King Edward VI School (Bury St Edmunds), County Upper School (Bury St Edmunds), Sybil Andrews (Bury St Edmunds) and Castle Manor Academy (Haverhill). There was, also, a focus group with the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Champions. In order to maximise participation, the format of these sessions were an introductory structured discussion before facilitating the young people to undertake the online survey.

- In total four town councils took part in a focus group: Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill, Clare and Newmarket; and one parish council, also, contributed: Mildenhall. Unfortunately, it was not possible to arrange a meeting in Brandon in the timescale. All other parish councils were encouraged to complete the online survey.
- Two focus groups were held with community groups; the Bury Assembly of Associations and Mildenhall Disability Forum (numerous other requests were made but it was not possible to make arrangements to attend).
- All councillors were offered the opportunity to attend a focus group and previous Mayors/Chairmen over the last three years were offered the opportunity to attend an individual discussion. Five focus groups were held with councillors and there were six one-to-one sessions. Out of 72 members across west Suffolk, a total of 25 councillors attended either the focus group or one-to-one meeting. Nineteen of these were St Edmundsbury Borough Council members and six were Forest Heath District Council. It is recognised that some members attended their town council meeting instead of coming to a separate focus group.
- The working group, also, held a separate meeting open to all councillors to discuss the review.

### **Telephone survey**

- A telephone survey of events attended by both St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor and Forest Heath District Council Chairman during 2017/2018 was undertaken. The questions are available in Appendix 3.
- With regards to St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor, in total, there were 270 organisations that could have been contacted (having removed duplicate events, or events linked to council business, events attended out of the area and so on). Thirty-nine organisations/events were selected at random and 24 responded.
- With regards to Forest Heath District Council Chairman, in total, there were 36 organisations that could have been contacted (having removed duplicate events, or events linked to council business, events attended out of the area and so on). Nine organisations/events were selected at random and six responded.

## **3.4 Media tools**

3.4.1 A wide range of media materials were prepared for raising awareness and encouraging engagement in communities including:

- numerous news releases,
- use of social media tools including posting into more than 40 local groups and pages,

- a Facebook Live session (chaired by the local press) which was made public across the wider social media network and which received in excess of 6,800 views,
- written materials, including advertisements, posters and template news releases (these were, also, sent to town and parish councils and members for use in local publications),
- providing materials at West Suffolk Council customer access points, namely, West Suffolk House, Forest Heath District Council Offices, Newmarket and Haverhill, as well as the Apex, West Stow Country Park and Moyses Hall, and
- engagement with partners through the Suffolk Communications Network, (this includes health organisations and Suffolk County Council) who were asked to promote the review in doctor's surgeries and libraries, where possible.

## Part 2 – The review in context

### 4. Civic leadership approaches in West Suffolk

#### 4.1 Overview of St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor/Forest Heath District Council Chairman roles

- 4.1.1 As already outlined in section 1, at present, the civic leader for Forest Heath District Council is the Chairman, and for St Edmundsbury Borough Council, the Mayor.
- 4.1.2 There is no difference in powers and responsibilities between a chairman and a mayor. The chairman or mayor can be any councillor and they are voted in annually by full Council.
- 4.1.3 There is a Deputy Chairman appointed at Forest Heath District Council and a Deputy Mayor appointed at St Edmundsbury Borough Council. The deputy supports Forest Heath District Council Chairman/St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor and often uses the opportunity to learn the role, normally then being appointed as Forest Heath District Council Chairman/St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor the following year. They will also support Forest Heath District Council Chairman or St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor at civic events and substitute for them when they are unavailable for commitments.
- 4.1.4 The civic leader will, also, appoint a consort to assist them during their term of office. This role does not need to be fulfilled by a councillor.
- 4.1.5 One of the primary roles of the chairman or mayor is to preside over council meetings as confirmed by s.5 of Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972: *"At a meeting of a principal council the chairman, if present, shall preside."*
- 4.1.6 While still a ward councillor, the civic leader, when acting in their capacity as mayor or chairman, is primarily concerned with the council's ceremonial and community role. It is a non-political role. The types of things a civic leader might do include representing the council at social, charitable and civic events such as Remembrance Day services and religious events, hosting other events and parades and supporting local businesses, voluntary, youth or charity groups. However, they cannot make decisions about the council's business except when casting votes at Council meetings or spending their locality budget.
- 4.1.7 It is the Leaders of the Councils who have political control. They select members of Cabinet, chair the cabinet meetings and has responsibility for taking decisions on matters relating to overall policy and strategy collectively with their Cabinet.
- 4.1.8 St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor/Forest Heath District Council Chairman is seen as the First Citizen, giving precedence only to the Royal family and the Queen's representative (Lord Lieutenant); "The chairman of a district council shall have precedence in the district, but not so as prejudicially to affect Her Majesty's royal prerogative." (Local Government Act, Section 3 (4)). As First Citizen, St Edmundsbury

Borough Council Mayor/Forest Heath District Council Chairman acts as a focal point, having precedence in their area and 'leading' the community in times of crisis, celebration or tragedy. However, First Citizen is not a legal or formal title and has no real status (National Association of Civic Offices).

## **4.2 Exploring the role of St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor**

- 4.2.1 St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor is the First Citizen of the Borough, whose primary role is to chair meetings of the Council and to support the Council's local community by attending a vast array of community, voluntary, charitable, business, educational, entertainment and sporting events.
- 4.2.2 At present, St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor has a set protocol, which outlines the Mayor may be required to attend up to 250 events in a year. In practice, they often attend far more than this (see Appendix 4 - Mayor Protocol). As outlined within the protocol, the motive for undertaking an engagement must be the consideration of promoting and rewarding the work and achievements of the people and Borough of St Edmundsbury, and, therefore, local engagements are considered a priority.
- 4.2.3 St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor's Secretary liaises with the Mayor as to which engagements should be accepted and these are usually considered in the following order:
- a. royal visits
  - b. freedom events
  - c. prestigious events which will promote the borough
  - d. prestigious events involving the Lord-Lieutenant
  - e. significant local events
  - f. attendance at Royal Garden Parties
  - g. borough council events
  - h. cathedral events
  - i. invitations from the military
  - j. charity fundraising
  - k. minor local events such as openings, fund raising events and social events (accepted in the order in which they are received)
  - l. events arranged by nearby local authorities (with the consent of the mayor or chairman of that borough or district), and
  - m. other events outside of the borough (with the consent of the mayor or chairman of that borough or district).
- 4.2.4 They host a number of local events, such as a civic service, a civic dinner, the Jankyn Smith Memorial (an event to recognise the role of charitable fundraising within Bury St Edmunds), as well as hosting some events on behalf of the county, such as the remembrance parade and the harvest festival.
- 4.2.5 St Edmundsbury has official twinning links with Kevelaer in Germany and Compiègne in France. It is party to a Charter of Friendship with Huy in Belgium, and has friendly links with Ehringhausen in Germany. The

Borough, also, has links with a number of organisations who have been awarded Freedom of the Borough status (see section 5.4) and have the right to parade through the town centre, including local military forces, HMS Vengeance and the TS St Edmund (Mayors' Own) Sea Cadets.

- 4.2.6 St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor wears a robe of office, together with a chain and badge of office, on all formal ceremonial occasions. If the ceremony is out of doors, the Mayor wears a hat, which in the case of a man, is a black cocked hat and for a lady, a black tricorn hat. For normal day to day civic occasions, the Mayor wears only the chain and badge of office with formal clothing suited to the occasion. St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor is expected to wear the robe and chain of office for council meetings and their consort, also, is provided with a badge of office to be worn, as appropriate.
- 4.2.7 St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor selects at least one charity for the year and organises several events to raise money for their chosen charities. The choice of who they support is left to their discretion, although it tends to be a locally based charity. Alternatively, it could be the local branch of a national charity, if their aims and objectives are consistent with St Edmundsbury Borough Council's policy framework, or if they are carrying out a particular project to the benefit of the borough.

### **4.3 Exploring the role of Forest Heath District Council Chairman**

- 4.3.1 Forest Heath District Council Chairman is the First Citizen of the District, whose primary role is to chair meetings of the Council, and support the Council's local community by attending a range of community events.
- 4.3.2 Forest Heath District Council Chairman does not have a separate protocol, but as outlined in Appendix 5, the role is defined within the Constitution of the Council (Article 5). Forest Heath District Council Chairman, also, attends civic events, and acts as the civic representative of the Council, as outlined in the extract from the Constitution below:

#### **Civic and ceremonial role**

The Chairman is the ceremonial head of the council and will be its representative at civic and ceremonial events. He/she maintains an apolitical stance, especially when chairing full Council meetings. This part of the role includes:

- a. representing and promoting the whole district during his/her term of office
- b. enhancing the image of the district
- c. encouraging understanding of the council's role, priorities and partnerships
- d. promoting public involvement in the council's activities.

- 4.3.3 The civic and ceremonial role, as outlined above is defined in similar circumstances to the Mayoral Protocol. The number of civic events that Forest Heath District Council Chairman attends is usually less, in part reflecting the considerably smaller size of the district.

- 4.3.4 Forest Heath District Council Chairman supports community causes, for example, by attending local community groups and fetes and they are a key part of the liaison team with the airbases, as well as representing the authority during royal visits.
- 4.3.5 Forest Heath District Council Chairman organises events related to their civic role, rather than the wider community role – for example, civic carol service and the Chairman’s reception. The number of these events is smaller than in St Edmundsbury.
- 4.3.6 Forest Heath District Council Chairman wears the chain of office with formal clothing to suit the occasion and their consort has a badge of office to be worn, as appropriate.
- 4.3.7 Forest Heath District Council Chairman can support charities during their term should they choose to do so, and most will, however, fundraising/donations usually takes place at existing civic events, rather than scheduling events specifically to raise funds for charity.

#### **4.4 Financial overview of St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor and Forest Heath District Council Chairman roles**

- 4.4.1 Both St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor and Forest Heath District Council Chairman have an allowance/budget available for use to reimburse expenses incurred during their year in office. This is utilised/applied for throughout the year, as needed.
- 4.4.2 While it is down to the individual civic leaders how this allowance is used, the types of expenditure the allowance can cover includes:
  - a. formal clothing, as required by attendance at formal events
  - b. consort’s clothing and expenses
  - c. travel (except when the civic car is used for authorised engagements)
  - d. telephone calls and postage undertaken outside St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor’s office
  - e. tickets to events hosted by other councils
  - f. expenses associated with St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor’s own charity events and all expenses associated with twinning
  - g. St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor’s tickets to his/her own charity events and the Mayor’s Charity Ball
  - h. donations, raffle tickets and prizes, and so on
  - i. civic Christmas cards
  - j. sending flowers, and
  - k. personal hospitality.
- 4.4.3 The table below shows the allowances for St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor and Forest Heath District Council Chairman over the last five years:

**Table 1 – St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor and Forest Heath District Council Chairman’s allowance 2014-2018**

<b>Mayor</b>	<b>£4,300.00</b>
<b>Deputy Mayor</b>	<b>No set allowance (utilises Mayor’s allowance as required)</b>
<b>Chairman</b>	<b>£4,795.00</b>
<b>Vice Chairman</b>	<b>£1,210.00</b>

- 4.4.4 As well as receiving the allowance above, the Forest Heath District Council Chairman gets a special responsibility allowance (SRA) of £2,792.70. Likewise, the vice-chairman gets an SRA amounting to £1,396.35. There is no SRA for St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor/St Edmundsbury Borough Council Deputy Mayor.
- 4.4.5 In addition to the budget/allowance for expenses shown in Table 1, St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor, Forest Heath District Council Chairman, St Edmundsbury Borough Council Deputy Mayor and Forest Heath District Council Deputy Chairman all continue to receive their member’s allowances, as part of the wider remuneration of councillors.
- 4.4.6 Both the SRA and the members allowance/budget are not direct costs budgeted against the role of chairman/mayor, they are costed against the wider members allowance budgets. Therefore, they are not shown in the budgets provided in this report.
- 4.4.7 The Shadow Council is in the process of appointing an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to undertake a review of their allowances and expenses, which falls outside the scope of the current review.
- 4.4.8 The financial costs associated with St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor/Forest Heath District Council Chairman are predominantly based on what the figurehead role does, rather than the type of role. The actual spend against St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor’s budget over the last financial year (2017/2018) was £114,876.48 (including internal recharges which reflect the actual cost of administering the civic office) compared to Forest Heath District Council Chairman’s budget for the same year, which was £6,538.11. Table 2 on the next page (page 22) shows the breakdown of expenditure over the last five years.
- 4.4.9 There is a significant difference in the funding that is used to support civic functions, such as costs associated with events such as, Jankyn Smyth, Battle of Britain Commemorations, the County Harvest Festival, Remembrance, and so on. While the costs associated with these events fluctuate each year, this is budgeted on average at £25k per annum (combining both Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council budgets). As an indication of the current spend on civic functions, for 2017/2018 the total costs of these was in the region of £23k; £20.5k St Edmundsbury Borough Council and £2,200 Forest Heath District Council.
- 4.4.10 Whilst interpreting the costs associated with the roles, it is important to note that all of the salary costs are currently reflected only in St



Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor's budget. While there are some specific resources linked to St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor, such as the Mayor's Officer (driver) and the Macebearers (which totals around £18k), St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor's Secretary supports both the Forest Heath District Council Chairman and the Mayor of St Edmundsbury Borough Council and is, therefore, a cost associated with both civic leaders (accepting the demands of supporting St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor do take a greater proportion of the officer's time currently owing to the volume of events). Likewise, the wider council recharges linked to support services and building costs are all predominantly reflected against St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor's budget.

- 4.4.11 It is important to bear in mind that the new civic leader will require resourcing support to undertake their role, and there will be wider council costs charged to the budget (building and service recharges), thus regardless of whether the civic leader is a mayor or a chairman, the minimum costs of these aspects alone are likely to be circa £71,500, without taking into consideration financial support required for civic events, and so on. Therefore, the distinction between the two budgets cannot be taken on face value when considering the financial costs of a mayor compared to a chairman. The budget for the future civic leader will depend on a range of factors, as well as how the role is undertaken. (See section 18.4 for further discussion around the future budget for the civic leader).

**Table 2 – St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor and Forest Heath District Council Chairman’s outline budgets 2014-2018**

<b>Mayoralty &amp; Civic Functions - SEBC Spend</b>					
Description	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	Comments
	Actuals	Actuals	Actuals	Actuals	
Salaries	61,537.09	54,649.20	54,670.98	52,254.87	Salaries include Secretary, 3 Macebearers and Mayor's Officer (driver)
Buildings	4,862.72	5,441.00	4,775.77	9,830.83	Recharge of the yearly running of the building
Mayors Vehicle Cost	2,117.02	3,119.63	2,394.82	2,891.02	Total yearly running costs of Mayors Car
Catering	13,576.34	9,044.33	14,527.15	17,475.86	E.g. Civic Dinner, Remembrance Parade, Carol Service etc.
Public/Civic Functions	6,995.99	7,632.58	5,043.44	7,638.98	E.g. Civic Dinner, Remembrance Parade, Harvest Festival, Carol Service etc.
Civic Regalia & Insignia	1,058.17	1,420.20	52.17	2,425.00	Upkeep of mayors chains/items
Mayor's/Chairman's Allowance	4,300.00	4,300.00	4,300.00	4,300.00	Mayors Allowance
Support Services	21,682.92	20,344.05	20,481.61	21,975.00	Charges from various support services across the Council such as finance, ICT (this charge is factored into all Council budgets)
Depreciation	1,925.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	Depreciation on Mayors Car
Income	-3,864.88	-6,445.76	-7,336.95	-6,457.91	Income from ticket sales for certain events
<b>Totals</b>	<b>114,876.48</b>	<b>100,380.40</b>	<b>102,647.78</b>	<b>117,274.25</b>	
<b>Mayoralty &amp; Civic Functions - FHDC Spend</b>					
Description	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	Comments
	Actuals	Actuals	Actuals	Actuals	
Insurance - Premises	888.96	814.89	754.73	0.00	
Public/Civic Functions	2,171.25	2,631.94	0.00	4,914.69	Breakdown in Event Summary
Civic Regalia & Insignia	0.00	143.24	0.00	0.00	
Mayor's/Chairman's Allowance	2,936.53	5,795.37	4,641.04	0.00	Chairman Allowance
Support Services	941.37	802.44	851.37	729.00	Charges from various support services across the Council such as finance, ICT (this charge is factored into all Council budgets)
Income	-980.00	-750.00	0.00	0.00	income from ticket sales for certain events
Reserve Funding	0.00	0.00	0.00	-3,000.00	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5,958.11</b>	<b>9,437.88</b>	<b>6,247.14</b>	<b>2,643.69</b>	

\*The depreciation figure shown under the SEBC budget relates to the mayor's car, which was bought new in 2017/2018. \*

\*The reserve funding in the FHDC budget equates to the use of reserves to increase the event budget for the role. \*

\*Building costs relate to the yearly running of the building and this includes the storage costs for the Mayor's car. \*

## 4.5 Charity support

4.5.1 As outlined in sections 4.27 and 4.37, St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor and Forest Heath District Council Chairman can choose to support a charity. However, there is a different approach to this currently.

4.5.2 In Forest Heath District Council, the Chairman has a chosen charity and makes a donation, but they do not host events to raise money. There is only information relating to this for the past three years, which is shown in the table below:

**Table 3 – Forest Heath District Council Chairman’s charity donations 2015-2019**

Year	Donations/money raised
2015-2016	£750
2016-2017	£750
2017-2018	£764

4.5.3 In St Edmundsbury Borough Council, a number of charity fundraising events are held, such as wine tastings, dinners, golf days and parties, as well as hosting raffles at events, and the table below summarises the number of events that have been hosted and the total sum of money donated to charities:

**Table 4 – St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor’s charity donations 2014-2019**

Year	Number of events hosted	Donations/money raised
2014-2015	5	£14,412.65
2015-2016	8	£24,943.91
2016-2017	12	£11,907.95
2017-2018	11	£7,486.17

\*Note the money raised is the total sum donated to charity once the costs of hosting and running the events have been removed. \*

4.5.4 However, it is important to note that, what is not reflected within these figures, and cannot easily be costed, is the officer time that is taken to organise and support the events being held. This is one of the reasons that beyond the budgeted St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor’s Secretary, additional administrative support is provided from the wider democratic services team, to support the civic leaders. Should there be a desire to continue with this approach in the future, this needs to be factored into the resourcing that is required for the civic leader function.

## **5. District/borough status**

### **5.1 Local context**

- 5.1.1 In 1974, there was a comprehensive revision made to the Local Government Structure and the county councils of west and east Suffolk were merged, to create Suffolk County Council. This led to a realignment of district boundaries within west Suffolk, which saw the division of the Liberty, creating Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury District Council. However, in December 1973, St Edmundsbury District Council petitioned Her Majesty to be granted borough status. They requested to be called the "Rural Borough of St Edmundsbury". Once the petition, once accepted (shortly before the council took responsibility for functions in April 1974), the council was officially called the 'Borough of St Edmundsbury'.
- 5.1.2 Therefore, currently St Edmundsbury is a Borough Council and Forest Heath is a District Council.
- 5.1.3 The new branding for West Suffolk Council makes no reference to whether the authority is a district or a borough.

### **5.2 Exploring requirements for borough status**

- 5.2.1 The new West Suffolk Council will legally be a district council. However, the new council will have the option of applying for a borough charter, to be a borough council. The charter would cover the whole of the area of the new council – that is, the area previously covered by Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council.
- 5.2.2 The Local Government Act 1972 provides Her Majesty in Council with the power to confer borough status on petitioning district councils, through the grant of a borough charter. The conferring of borough status is purely honorific, and the council remains a district council in legal, financial and all other senses. If borough status is granted then the district council becomes a borough council and as a result they can choose to have a mayor and deputy mayor. The change in status has no impact on the functions or responsibilities of the local authority.
- 5.2.3 There are no particular qualifications to become a borough. The chairman of a borough is entitled to be a mayor (and usually is), but this is not compulsory.
- 5.2.4 A borough charter can only be granted to local government districts or equivalent in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, not to town or parish councils.

- 5.2.5 In order to apply for borough status, a consultation exercise is needed to allow a council to give due consideration to the issues arising out of the consultation. Following this, should the decision be taken that a council would like to apply for borough status, then a resolution needs to be passed at a meeting convened by the Council especially to consider this matter, who have to agree by the required 2/3 majority of those voting, as stated in Section 245(2) of the Local Government Act 1972, in order to petition Her Majesty for the grant of a borough charter. This decision can either be made by the West Suffolk Shadow Council (before 1 April 2019) or West Suffolk Council (after 1 April 2019).
- 5.2.6 The basic one-off costs associated with borough status are £2,200, which covers the costs of the Privy Council Office to proof the text of the charter, as well as printing it on vellum and sealing it.
- 5.2.7 There is, also, an option to consider Royal Borough Status, which is a rare honour. Further information is provided in Appendix 6.

### 5.3 National overview of borough councils

- 5.3.1 Appendix 7 provides an overview of the national context of borough status, including all borough charters granted since 1974.
- 5.3.2 Post 1974, there have been 30 applications from local councils (non-unitary) to apply for borough status. Of these, 12 were done within four years of the Local Government Act 1974. Since 2000, only seven councils have applied to change from a district council to a borough council and four have done this since 2009. The table below shows all those councils who, post 1974, have decided to apply for borough status (with details of the population and rural urban classification of the new West Suffolk Council, for comparison purposes:

**Table 5 - Borough charters granted under section 245 of the Local Government Act 1972 post 1974 (excluding unitary authorities)**

	District	Population (ONS, 2017)	Rural urban classification (2011)	Year of charter
	<b>New West Suffolk Council</b>	<b>179,385</b>	<b>74.9%</b>	
1	Basildon	184,500	0.5%	26 October 2010
2	Cheshire East	378,800	39.2%	April 2009
3	Cheshire West and Chester	338,000	26.2%	2009

4	West Lancashire	113,900	38.3%	2009
5	Wokingham	165,000	17.5%	2007
6	Welwyn Hatfield	122,300	11.8%	2006
7	Telford and Wrekin	175,800	14.4%	2002
8	North Lincolnshire	171,300	45.6%	1996
9	Brentwood	76,600	28.1%	10 March 1993
10	Corby	69,500	7.3%	28 October 1992
11	Allerdale	97,200	100%	4 June 1992
12	East Staffordshire	117,600	34.6%	11 May 1992
13	Castle Point	89,800	0%	1992
14	Amber Valley	125,900	19.2%	17 May 1989
15	Dacorum	153,000	36.5%	10 October 1984
16	Waverley	125,000	64.6%	21 February 1984
17	Tonbridge and Malling	128,900	34.8%	12 December 1983
18	Redditch	85,200	3.1%	15 May 1980
19	Swale	146,700	63.7%	20 January 1978
20	Runnymede	86,900	2%	20 January 1978
21	Basingstoke and Deane	175,300	35.9%	20 January 1978
22	Chelmsford	176,200	19.7%	10 November 1977
23	Broxtowe	112,700	0.4%	10 November 1977
24	Dartford	107,500	11.5%	22 April 1977
25	Hertsmere	104,000	15%	15 April 1977
26	Test Valley	124,000	36.5%	22 October 1976
27	Pendle	90,700	25.7%	15 September 1976
28	Taunton Deane	117,400	41.4%	1975
29	Sefton	274,600	1.5%	1975
30	Erewash	115,300	1.8%	1975

### 5.3.3

In order to provide some further context, around whether the new West Suffolk Council should apply for borough status, the two case studies below are the two most recent authorities to apply, which provides a more detailed consideration of their reasons for wanting to change than outlined in table 5:

#### **Basildon Council (changed to borough status in 2010)**

Basildon Council has a population of 114,500 and is classified as 0.5% rural. In October 2010, Basildon Council was granted borough status and the position of Chairman was replaced by the role of Mayor. The reason for applying for borough status was related to their desire to have a Mayor. An article from the Basildon Echo, in October 2010, also outlined that the council leaders felt switching from a district to a borough would bring benefits to the community:

“Although the way we work hasn’t changed there are some added benefits that come with borough status. It will assist in raising our status and attracting new investment to the area. Many people are not familiar with the workings of local government, but having a mayor can help people understand what we do and how they are a part of a borough on the up.”

Toby Ball (Leader of Council at time of change)

The costs associated from changing from district to borough were minimised as the council’s logo did not change and any signs were only replaced when needed. The first Mayor of the borough decided not to purchase any mayoral robes or mayoral accessories due to the ‘economic climate’. However, the council confirmed in August 2018, that they have recently sourced and purchased mayoral robes.

#### **West Lancashire Borough Council (changed to borough status in 2009)**

West Lancashire has a population of 113,900 and is classified as 38.3% rural. In October 2008, at an extraordinary meeting, the district council considered a report recommending a petition to grant borough status.

The reasons for the application were that:

- Past chairmen had expressed views that the status of chairman had not always been regarded the same as mayor. The report gave the example of the chairman’s visits to schools which they said had to be accompanied with explanations about why the chairman is ‘really like the

mayor'. They also felt that public and private sector bodies sometimes regarded the chairman's status as inferior to the Mayor of another authority.

- Historically, there had been a perception that the status of chairman is inferior to the mayor of another authority and the town mayor.
- Other mayors in Lancashire had commented on how their role had given them access to all sections of the community and changed the way they saw their subsequent work as a councillor.

The council concluded that the symbolism and prestige associated with the Mayor is deemed as 'special' by the community, but more importantly "...the Mayor's role could be seen as vital in selling the locality to industrialists and tourists". Borough status, it was argued would give the authority added 'Civic Dignity' and enhance the esteem of the role of the first citizen amongst the community.

The current budget for their Mayor is £55,730 which includes the chauffeur's salary (£26,500), the mayor's allowance (£9,000) and the Deputy Mayor's allowance (£1,780). The mayor attends approximately 250 events per year ranging from charity balls, Local Democracy Week, switching on Christmas lights in the borough and Christmas visits to the local Royal Mail sorting offices.

A BBC article from October 2008 cited the council's leader as saying he hoped applying for borough status would promote the area and increase tourism. The article also highlighted how West Lancashire was the only district in the county at the time to not have borough status. The leader was quoted as saying:

"I'm proud that the council has made this decision as it will help boost the image of West Lancashire and raise its profile. It will mean that West Lancashire will have a mayor instead of a chairman and this will also help promote the area to industrialists, potential investors and tourists. We've always punched above our weight in the local government arena and having borough status will give us that extra dose of civic prestige and dignity that we deserve."

## **5.4 Freedom of the Borough**

- 5.4.1 Freedom of the Borough is a mark of distinction given to a person and is the highest honour which a borough/district council can bestow. The Freedom carries no privilege, but is a recognition of significant and valuable services to the borough. The awarding of the Freedom of the Borough to service units entitles the unit 'to march through the streets of the borough with bayonets fixed, drums beating and Colours flying'.



- 5.4.2 District councils can, also, award Freedom of the District. At present, Forest Heath District Council has not awarded any such freedoms.
- 5.4.3 The West Suffolk Shadow Council is liaising with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MGCLG), so that any existing honorary statuses, including the title of 'Freeman' or 'Freewoman' is transferred to the new West Suffolk Council.

## **6. Contributions of ward councillors and cabinet members/portfolio holders**

### **6.1 Role of ward councillors**

- 6.1.1 Ward councillors have an important role in community leadership and strategic decision making, representing the electors (voting residents) of their ward, championing causes that relate to the interests of the community, campaigning for improvements and using local knowledge gained through listening to the needs of local people when considering policy proposals and decision making. In so doing, councillors balance the needs and interests of their local area, residents and voters, community groups, local businesses and political party (if they belong to one) and the council.
- 6.1.2 Some of the key functions of a ward councillor are outlined below:
- **Elected representative:** the ability to connect with all parts of the community and represent everyone fairly, balancing local concerns with their elected manifesto and the priorities of the council.
  - **Community advocate:** be a skilled advocate for people from different backgrounds, cultures, and values; have the confidence to speak freely and challenge the executive.
  - **Community leader:** exercise community development skills – support local projects and initiatives, and educate people about local participation; be a good communicator – explain what political decisions and structures mean to constituents and community organisations; be sensitive to difference and issues of diversity and equality; have knowledge and skills to engage people in a variety of ways (not just meetings); be a conflict broker.
  - **Service transformer:** understand the complex business of local government and services provided both by the council and others; have the confidence and ability to hold service providers to account; be able to work in partnership with a range of agencies and interests; ability to understand local problems and use this knowledge locally and strategically in

local action planning; setting and monitoring service standards.

- **Place shaper:** being a local figurehead/role-model that people feel they can turn to; be able to shape the very local environment – ability to identify priorities, work with officers and service providers to address public realm problems, manage delegated locality budgets.
- **Knowledge champion:** be the primary source of local intelligence flowing between the community and the council; have the skills to collect and analyse local information and use it to benefit the community.

(<https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/ward-councillors-and-community-leadership-future-perspective>)

- 6.1.3 With the exception of the 'political representative' element to the role, it is apparent that there are ways that the role supports/overlaps with the civic leader, particularly around communities and place and transforming services.

## **6.2 Role of cabinet members/portfolio holders**

- 6.2.1 Each cabinet member is responsible for a different area of the council's work, 'a portfolio' and they have authority to make key decisions about policies and services within their portfolios. The portfolio holders act as spokespersons for their service areas, promoting the interests of residents, businesses, other organisations and stakeholders and in so doing, help to contribute to the council's priorities. They have a key role in community leadership, involving the development of good and effective links and partnerships with all sectors and will often attend openings of new facilities that relate to their area of responsibility, for example new road/industrial unit for Growth; new community project for Families and Communities, which can be done in conjunction with the civic leader. They are, also, focused on communicating priorities clearly and consulting and maintaining a dialogue with residents and service users, taking responsibility for making change happen with their expert knowledge in their subject. This is where there is some join up with the civic leader and how council business and community development are collectively supported.

- 6.2.2 Further detail about both roles (ward councillors and portfolio holders) are available in the following extract from the constitution: <http://svr-mgov-01:9070/documents/s12196/Part%203%20-%20Functions%20and%20Responsibilities%20-%20Section%205%20-%20Member%20Job%20Descriptions.pdf>

## **7. Town and parish councils**

### **7.1 Overview of town and parish councils**

7.1.1 Town and parish councils are the most localised tier of civic leadership for communities. There is no legal difference between a parish and a town council; they both have the same powers and functions. However, Section 245 (6) of the Local Government Act 1972, gave parish councils the power by resolution to give themselves the title of town council. The chairman of a town council is entitled to the title of 'town mayor'. Parish councils are led by a chairman. However, a town mayor has the same rights and duties as a parish council chairman or a town council chairman.

7.1.2 Town mayors/chairmen are official representatives of their town and they act as an ambassador for the town council and can make official visits to their twin towns. They are responsible for promoting the town, networking and taking an interest in all aspects of the local community. The mayor/chairman chairs the meetings of the town council, with political neutrality, as well as having an important role communicating the council's messages and themes in the community.

7.1.3 The current town councils across Forest Heath District and St Edmundsbury Borough areas are shown below, including how they carry out their leadership:

**Table 6 - Current approaches to town council leadership in west Suffolk**

<b>Town</b>	<b>Mayor/Chair</b>
Brandon	Chair
Haverhill	Mayor
Bury St Edmunds	Chair
Clare	Chair
Newmarket	Mayor

7.1.4 Appendix 8 provides a detailed overview of Haverhill and Newmarket Town Councils, who currently operate with a mayor (funded by each town council), to give an overview of how this is undertaken.

7.1.5 There are some interesting findings about the current connections between town councils and the current civic leaders provided through the focus group feedback (see section 15).

## 8. National perspectives

### 8.1 Comparisons of largest boroughs/districts

- 8.1.1 Comparisons have been drawn with the current largest boroughs/districts nationally to find out how the civic leadership is undertaken and to look at budgets assigned to their civic functions.
- 8.1.2 Eight of the biggest authorities have been reviewed and the detailed results are shown in Appendix 9. It is important to note that the budgetary information provided varies, and this could be a result of how this is recorded by individual councils, rather than representing the total spend. The research has shown that this is captured differently in each area, making direct comparisons difficult. Likewise, because the support that is provided to the civic leader varies, it is hard to conclusively determine the resourcing support for each authority.
- 8.1.3 The table below summarises some of the key statistical information obtained from these comparisons:

**Table 7 - Overview of approaches to civic leadership in the top eight largest authorities in England**

Council	Population ONS	Rural Urban Classification	Form of Leadership	Nos of Engagements	Budget
New West Suffolk Council	179,385	74.9%	TBC	TBC	TBC
Northampton Borough Council	225,700	0.5%	Mayor	450	£123,191
Aylesbury Vale District Council	196,000	57.1%	Chairman	100	£38,6000
Colchester Borough Council	190,100	57.1%	Mayor	500	£112,200
Basildon Borough Council	184,500	0.5%	Mayor	200	£19,173
Charnwood Borough Council	180,400	14.4%	Mayor	450	£101,900
New Forest District Council	179,600	45.3%	Chairman	140	£20,670

Huntingdon District Council	177,000	80.8%	Chairman	200	£8,031
Wycombe District Council	174,800	29.2 %	Chairman	112	£25,498

8.1.4 The following points are, also, of note from the information obtained:

- All of the borough councils have decided to appoint a mayor.
- In general, where a civic leader is a mayor, they tend to attend more events, which ranges between 200-500 events, compared to 100-200 for a chairman.
- Looking at the average number of events, there are only three boroughs/districts that attend in excess of 200 events.
- There are a variety of different approaches to support provided to the civic leader, such as having a chauffeur, and this is not exclusive to whether the civic leader is a mayor/chairman. For example, Aylesbury Vale have a chairman as their civic leader and appoint a driver to support them.
- There is a mixed approach to supporting charities. Five of the authorities specify it as common practice for their civic leader, whereas Charnwood Borough Council and Wycombe District Council have this as an option for their civic leaders to consider. Interestingly, it was not possible to confirm whether the Chairman of Huntingdonshire District Council supports charities, but it is worth noting that the council's website specifically mentions the role of the Town Mayor in supporting charities.
- There are a variety of support provided for the civic offices, with some specifically mentioning having dedicated officers, such as Colchester Borough Council and Charnwood Borough Council.
- There are many similarities in the core roles/purpose of the civic leader, particularly in terms of the ceremonial and ambassadorial functions regardless of whether this is undertaken by a mayor/chairman.
- Wycombe District Council specifically mentioned the need for prudence in all areas of civic spending owing to financial pressures.

## 8.2 Civic leadership in towns in national boroughs/districts

8.2.1 Some research was conducted to look at whether there was any consistent approach between the civic leadership functions of

borough and district councils and town and parish councils. The research carried out suggested that there is no direct comparators that can be drawn between:

- District councils who have a chairman and whether town councils in these areas have mayors; nor
- Borough councils who have a mayor and whether in these areas, town mayors wear chains or wear robes.

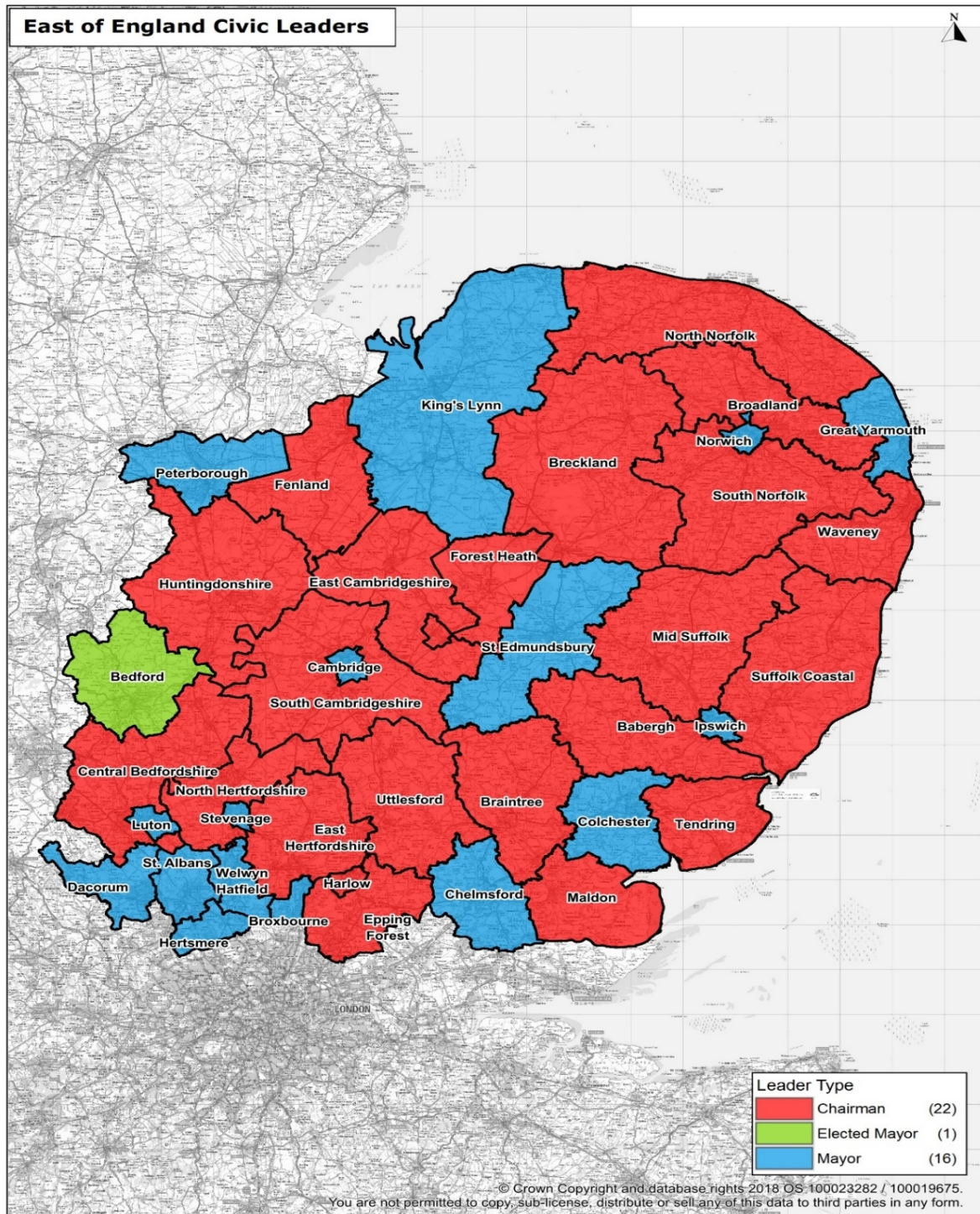
## **9. Regional perspectives**

### **9.1 Regional overview**

- 9.1.1 From a regional perspective, across East Anglia, there is a mixed approach to whether a mayor or a chairman undertakes the civic leadership function on behalf of the council, which is shown in the map on the next page.



**Map 1 - Civic leadership types across East Anglia**

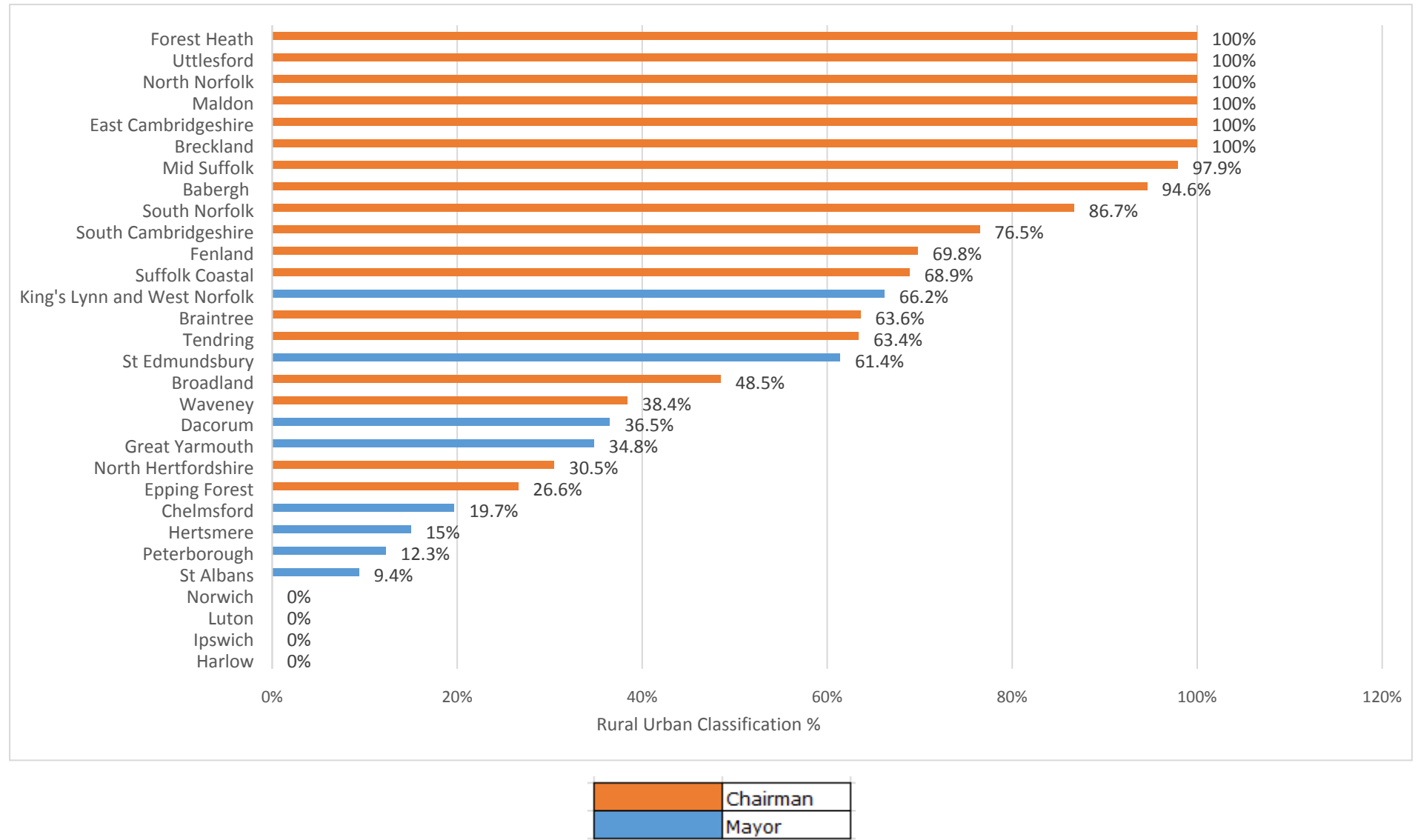


9.1.2 Further comparisons have been drawn between the councils above to compare population sizes with formats of civic leadership, number of engagements and sizes of budgets. Some caution needs to be drawn to the interpretation of the budgets for the same reasons as outlined in section 8.1.2. The full results are shown in Appendix 10.

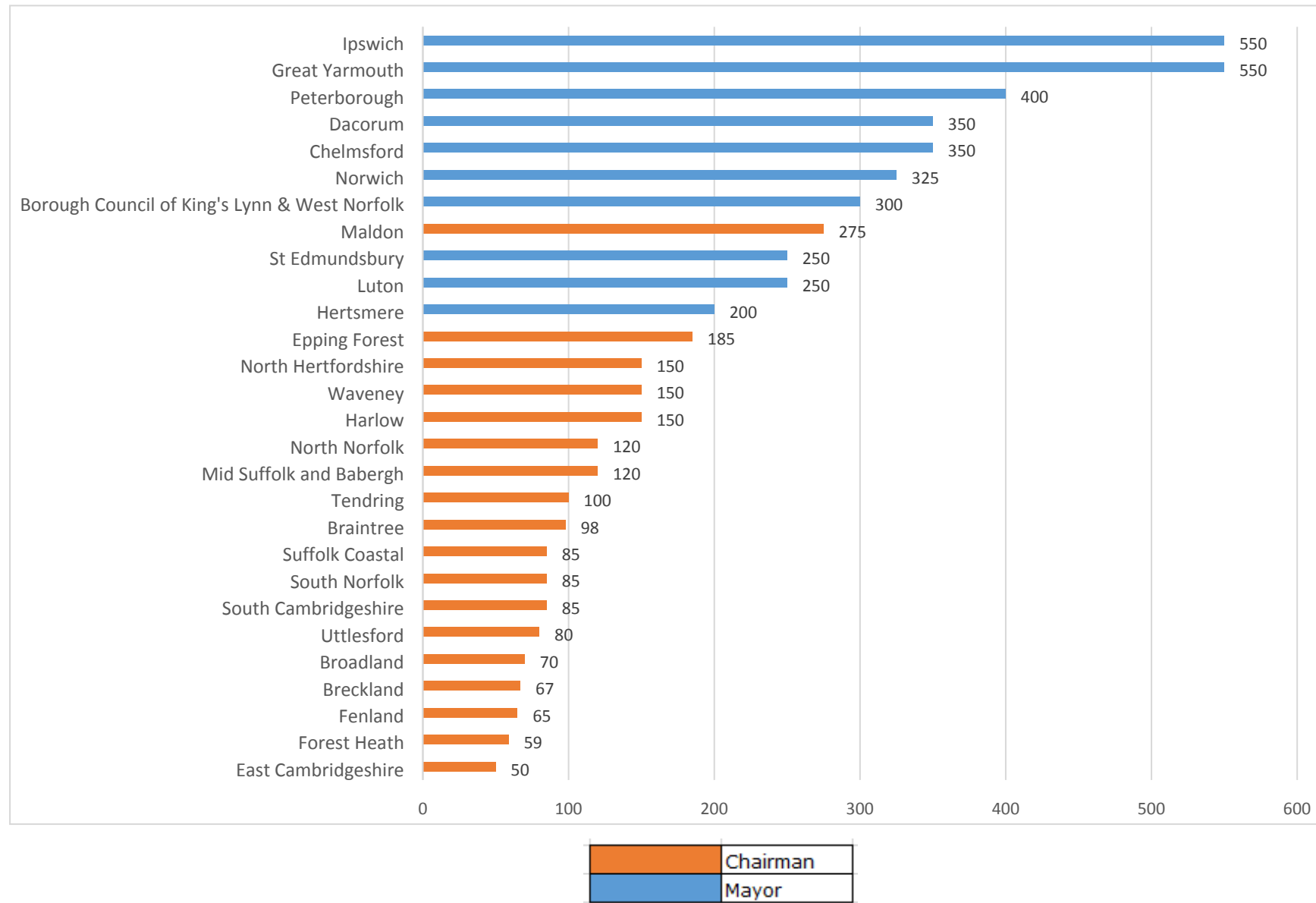
- 9.1.3 The charts on the following pages give an overview of the key comparators in terms of rural/urban classification, numbers of engagements and budgets.
- 9.1.4 There is a mixed approach to whether the civic leader has a car and the staff costs of the civic office, making any comparisons on these factors difficult.



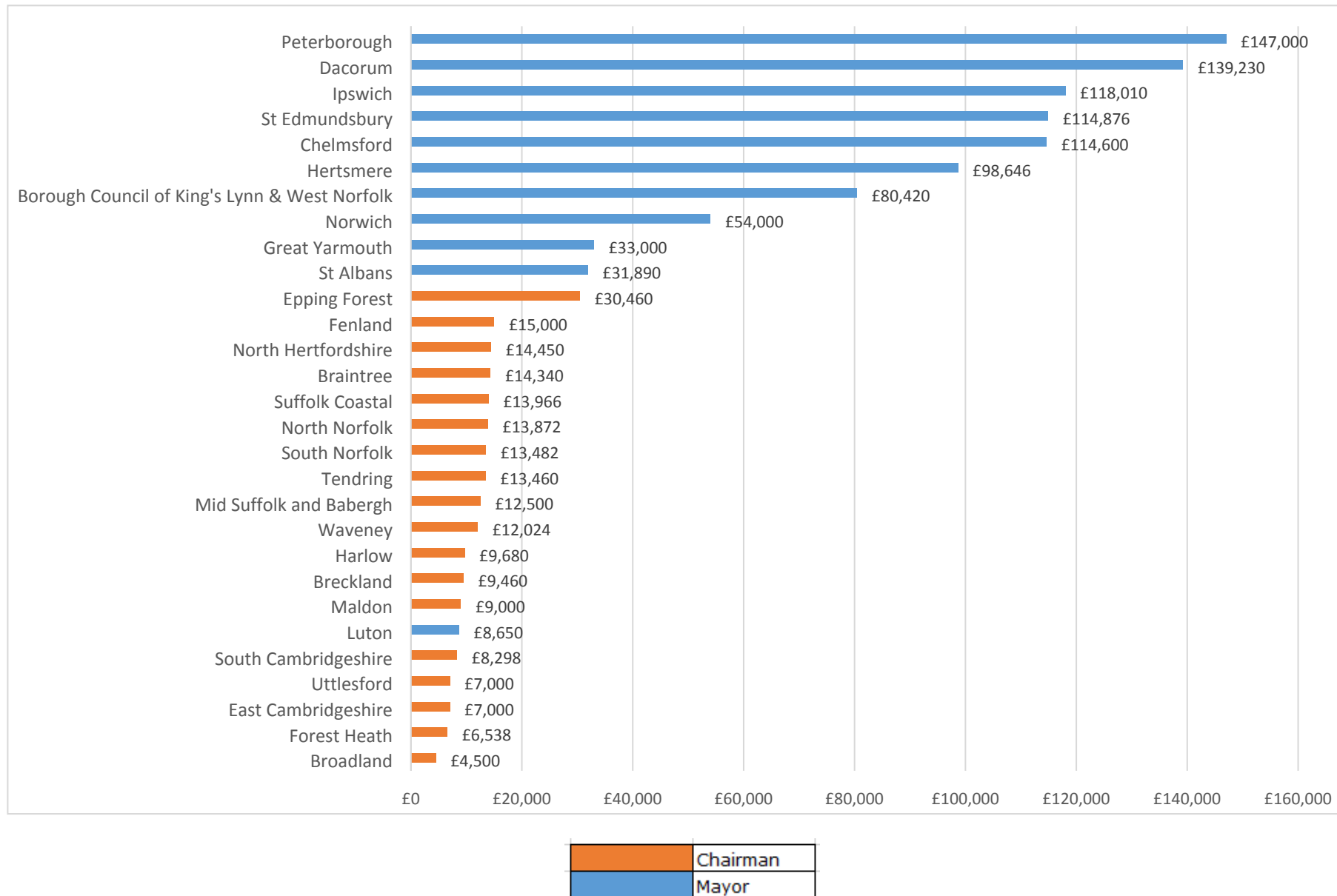
**Diagram 1 - Comparison of eastern region local authorities by rural/urban classification across the region**



**Diagram 2 - Comparison of engagements per annum for civic leaders across the region**



**Diagram 3 - Comparison of budgets per annum for civic leaders across the region**



## **10. Alternative approaches to civic leadership**

### **10.1 Overview of different approaches**

10.1.1 A number of alternative options were considered and a detailed analysis of these options is provided in Appendix 11.

10.1.2 The table below provides an overview of the key differences and considerations for these options:

**Table 8 - Overview of different approaches to civic leadership**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Brief overview</b>
Elected Mayors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 16 elected mayors nationally</li><li>• Full decision making powers</li><li>• Estimated cost of £200k to hold a referendum to appoint</li></ul>
Charter Trustees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Only apply to non-parished areas</li><li>• District councillors would usually undertake the role of the civic leader.</li></ul>
Lord Mayor/Sheriff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This is a rare honour and applies to cities. The last one was awarded in 2012 to mark the Queen's Jubilee.</li><li>• Currently 23 cities have a Lord Mayor.</li><li>• Lord Mayor's/Sheriffs are an ambassadorial role.</li><li>• Lord Mayor of Sheffield is adopting a new modernistic approach to the role (as outlined in Appendix 11)</li></ul>
People's Mayor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A non-elected councillor could undertake the civic leader function and this would separate out the roles of running council meetings from carrying out the ambassadorial functions.</li><li>• There are a number of pitfalls, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Only the mayor/chairman should wear the civic insignia and how would the individual be recognised by the community and would this cause confusion?</li><li>○ As the individual would not be a councillor, they would not have to adhere to the corporate code and this could lead to standards issues.</li><li>○ Determining a process to enable this person to be appointed.</li><li>○ Would the individual's priorities be co-terminus with the council?</li></ul></li></ul>

## Part 3 – Findings and analysis

### 11. Review of Civic Events – St Edmundsbury Borough Mayor/Forest Heath District Council Chairman

#### 11.1 Total number of events attended 2016/2017 and 2017/2018

- 11.1.1 Over the last two years, the total number of events each civic leader has attended is shown in the table below:

**Table 9 – Total number of events attended by civic leaders 2016/2017 and 2017/2018**

<b>Mayor</b>	
2016/2017	328
2017/2018	321
<b>Chairman</b>	
2016/2017	73
2017/2018	59

- 11.1.2 Across the year, there are a number of events that are attended on more than one occasion, for example, visits to particular community groups, such as Bury St Edmunds Ladies Luncheon Club and Women's Guild of Friends and Dementia Friendly Screenings at Abbeygate Cinema. There are, also, some events where both St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor and Forest Heath District Council Chairman attend together, such as, events at RAF bases and various church services. It is important to consider this when looking at the scale of influence the civic leader has had across communities because not every engagement is with a different section of the community. Thus simply looking at the number of events attended does not reflect the breadth of the engagement they undertake.

- 11.1.3 With this in mind, if the cross-overs and duplication of events attended together are removed, the total number of engagements attended over the last two years is reflected in the table below. This shows a significant drop in the number of different events and organisations visited.

**Table 10 – Total number of events with duplication of events and cross-overs removed**

<b>Mayor</b>		
2016/2017	328	230
2017/2018	321	236
<b>Chairman</b>		
2016/2017	73	30
2017/2018	59	27

## 11.2 Types of events attended

11.2.1 In seeking to understand what role would be best played by the civic leader in the future, it is important to understand how the civic leaders currently undertake their functions. In order to analyse what the events were that have been attended over the last two years, the following categories were used:

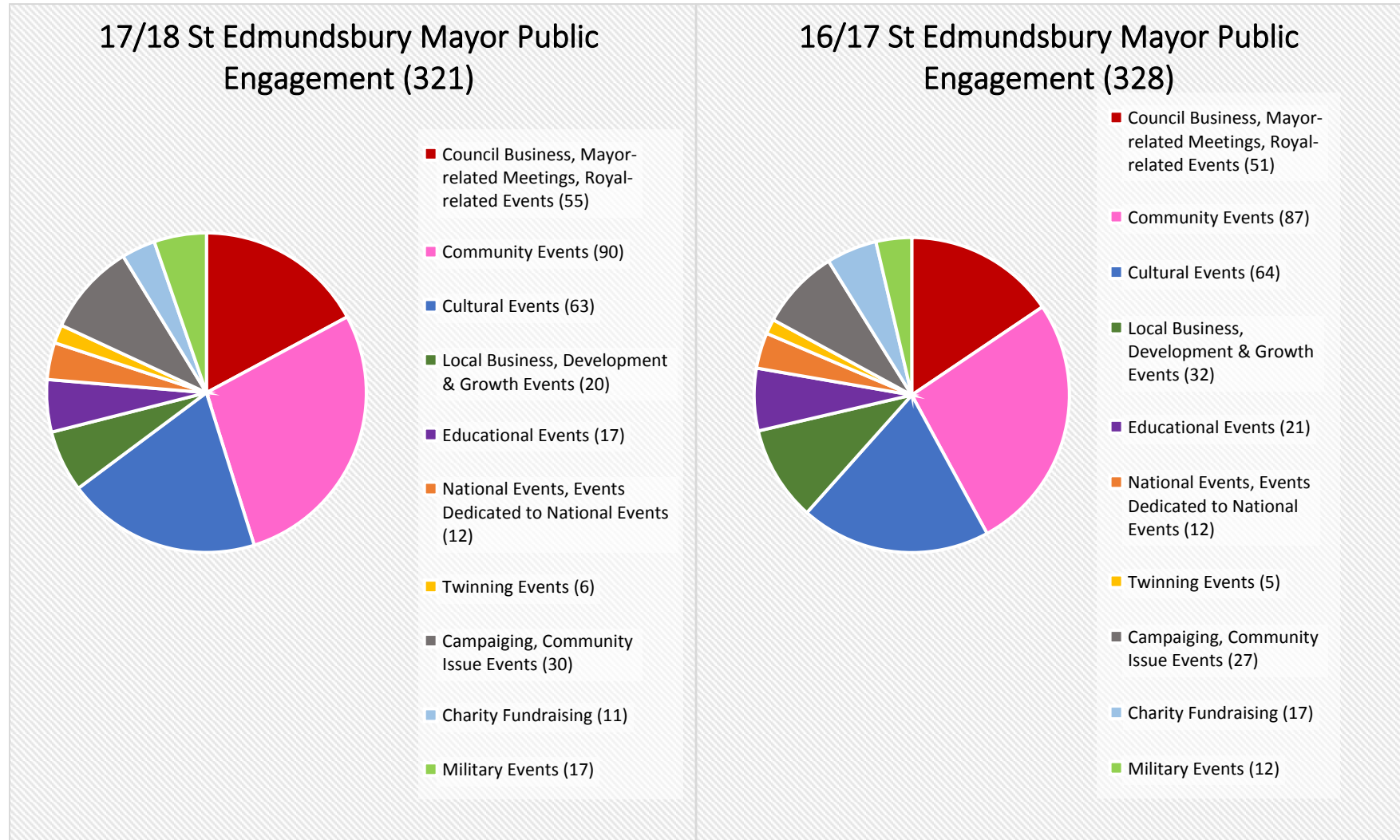
- **Council business** - This includes council meetings, civic dinners/receptions/services and other events such as photoshoots.
- **Community events** - This includes specific community groups and events, such as attending women's networks, religious events, sports days, supporting elderly groups and family fun days.
- **Cultural** - This includes events that promote local identity e.g. St Edmundsbury Day, Suffolk Day, Suffolk Show and celebrate British culture, e.g. Christmas Fayre, and, also, includes art exhibitions, theatre and music.
- **Local business, development and growth events** - This includes events such as local shop openings, refurbished openings and business events.
- **Educational/aspirational** – This category largely revolves around youth communities, including events such as graduations, presentations to pupils, university/college students, the Sea Cadets and St John's Cadets.
- **National events** - This category includes occasions such as remembrance services, royal birthdays/weddings.
- **Twinning** - This category involves the few events that promote the partnership of whatever town Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council are twinned with.
- **Campaigning/community issue events** - These are events that are designed to help tackle or make attendees more aware of issues in the community, such as dementia, loneliness, homelessness etc.
- **Charity/fundraising events** – This includes charity concerts, charity dinners and galas.
- **Military events** – This includes events such as parades, ceremonies, changes in command and receptions in the camp bases.

## **11.3 Analysis of events attended by category**

11.3.1 The charts on the following pages (Diagram 2 and Diagram 3) show the proportion of the different types of events that have been attended. Points of note with regards to the analysis of this are:

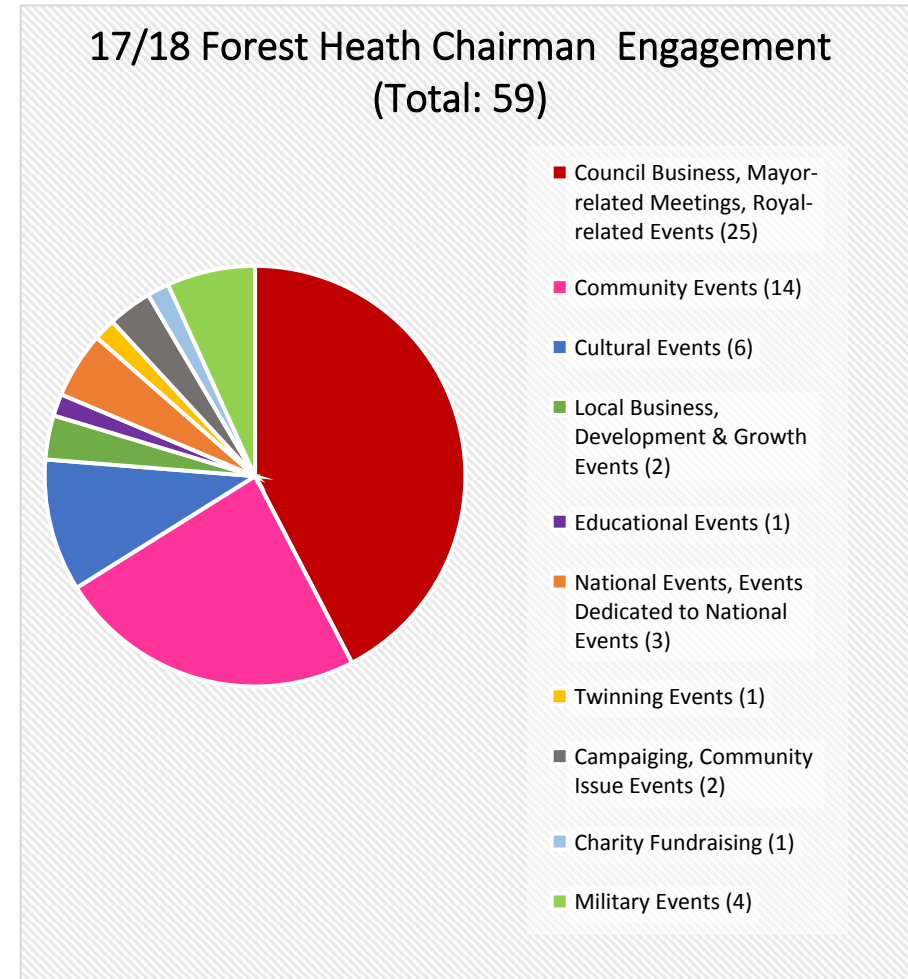
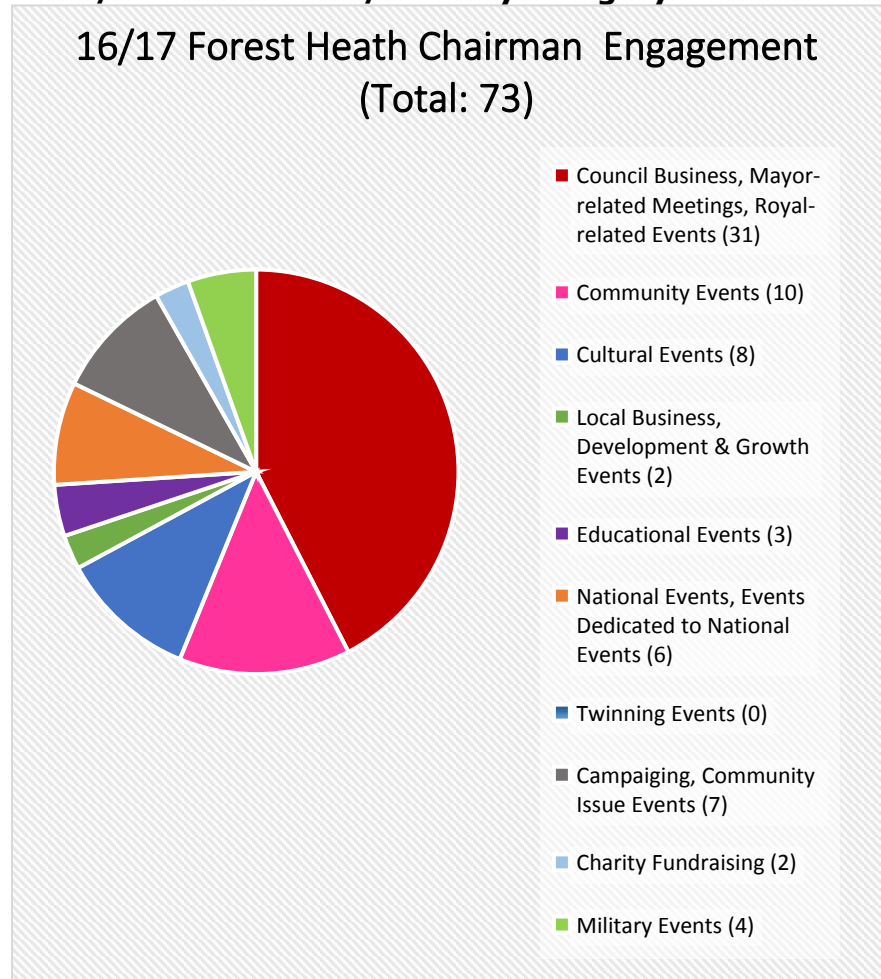
- St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor attends many cultural events, which occupy a higher proportion of events attended than campaigning, community issues, education and local growth. (It is, however, recognised that there will be some overlap in these categories).
- Despite the differences in volumes, the two largest categories of events for each civic leader are supporting council functions and community events.
- The proportion of events that relate to the civic leader supporting youth is relatively small in both areas, accepting that there will be some contact through the community events category.
- The support for local business, development and growth events is fairly small across both civic leaders.
- There does not appear to be a strong correlation with the events that the civic leaders of both St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Forest Heath District Council have attended and the council's priorities, particularly increased opportunities for economic growth and homes for communities. There is, however, more correlation with the priority related to resilient families and communities that are healthy and active. However, the current Mayoral/Chairman protocol does not make reference to the council's priorities being a core determining factor as to whether to support events. Instead, the decision as to what to attend is mainly down to the discretion of each civic leader in terms of what they would like to promote.

**Diagram 4 - Breakdown of the total number of events attended by St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 by category**





**Diagram 5 - Breakdown of the total number of events attended by Forest Heath District Council Chairman 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 by category**



## **11.4 Attire of the civic leader for functions**

- 11.4.1 Sections 4.2.6 and 4.3.6 outline the different modes of dress for St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor and Forest Heath District Council Chairman.
- 11.4.2 With regards to St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor, it was not possible to find out at what number of events robes are worn because there are no records kept regarding this information. However, previous mayors were spoken to about this and they outlined that the decision about whether or not to wear robes required an understanding of any sensitivities with regards to the event. So, for example, if St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor was taking 'centre stage' at an event, then wearing the robes can attract a lot of positive attention from both the public and media, but if the wearing of robes would deflect attention from the purpose of an event, this would not be appropriate. There was, also, a view that people want to see the robes because it is associated with prestige and can help people to feel acknowledged and supported. Feedback included the fact that the robes are very visual; they are easily recognisable and represent someone who can be trusted and approached by the public. This is particularly the case with younger generations.
- 11.4.3 In order to try and capture the impact of the mayoral robes, further questions were asked during the telephone survey on this aspect (see section 16.1).

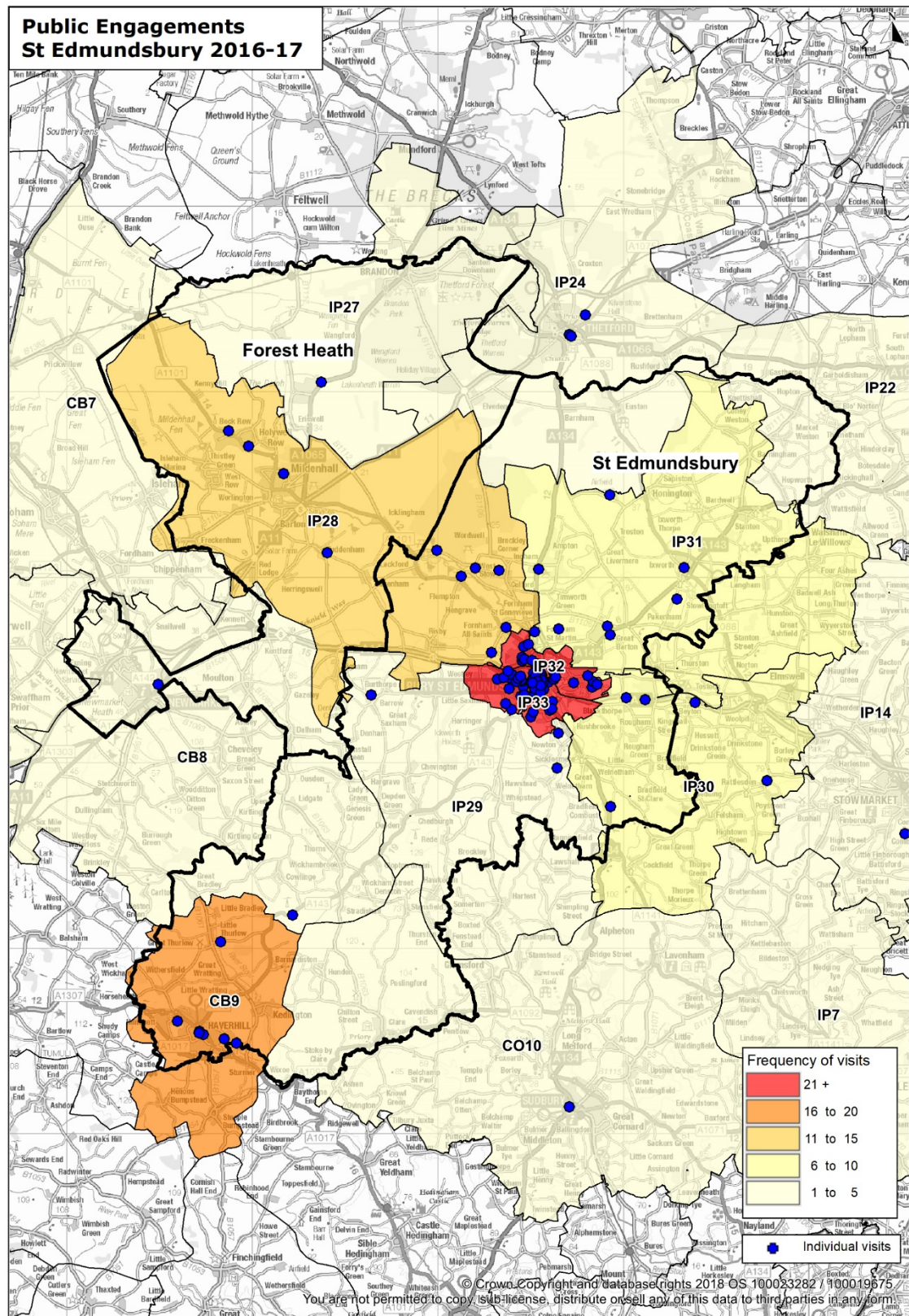
## **11.5 Analysis of events attended by location**

- 11.5.1 As well as considering what types of events have been attended, it is important to consider how the civic leaders have carried out their functions across the borough/district.
- 11.5.2 The maps on the following pages provide an overview of the distribution of events carried out across the borough/district. Please note that it was not possible to show every event on these maps, so in order to show the scale of where engagements have been carried out, the engagements have been aggregated and grouped at postcode level. Therefore, the dots do not represent the total number of events attended.
- 11.5.3 Points of note in relation to the geographic spread of where events have been attended are:
- The highest density of events attended for the St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor in both 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 are in IP32 and IP33 (Bury St Edmunds town), with CB9 (Haverhill) being the third most visited area.
  - There is limited attendance of events in the rural areas of the Borough of St Edmundsbury across 2016/2017 and 2017/2018,

but that is not to say that in previous years, past mayors have not attended a higher number of events in rural areas.

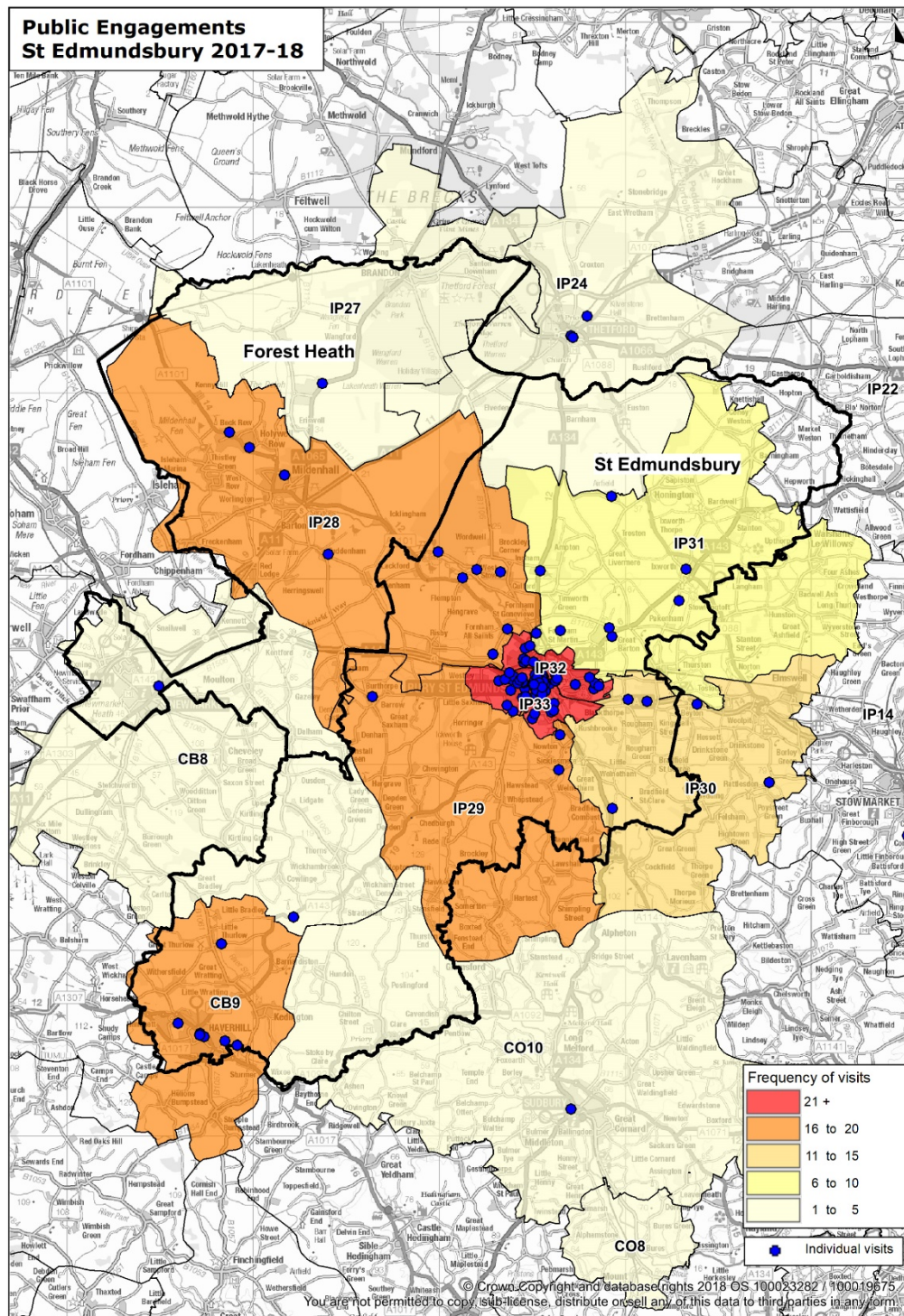
- The majority of engagements undertaken by the Forest Heath District Council Chairman are undertaken in the towns of Mildenhall and Newmarket, with some coverage of Brandon in 2017/2018.
- The Forest Heath District Council Chairman attends a significant number of events in both 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 in IP33 (Bury St Edmunds town).
- There is limited attendance of events in the rural areas of Forest Heath across 2016/2017 and 2017/2018, but that is not to say that in previous years, past chairmen have not attended a higher number of events in rural areas.

**Map 2 - Spread of events attended in St Edmundsbury Borough Council 2016/2017**



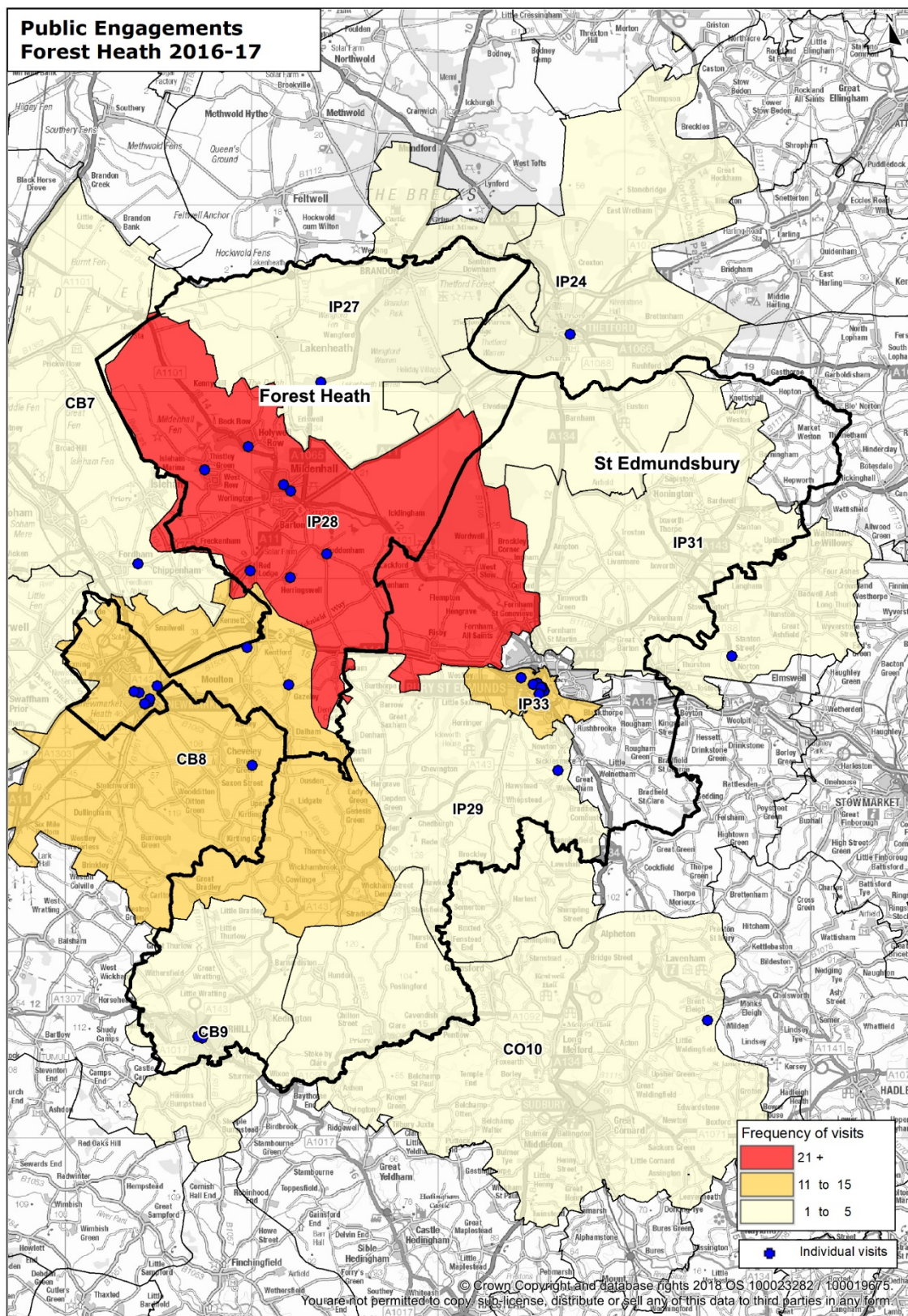


**Map 3 - Spread of events attended in St Edmundsbury Borough Council 2017/2018**



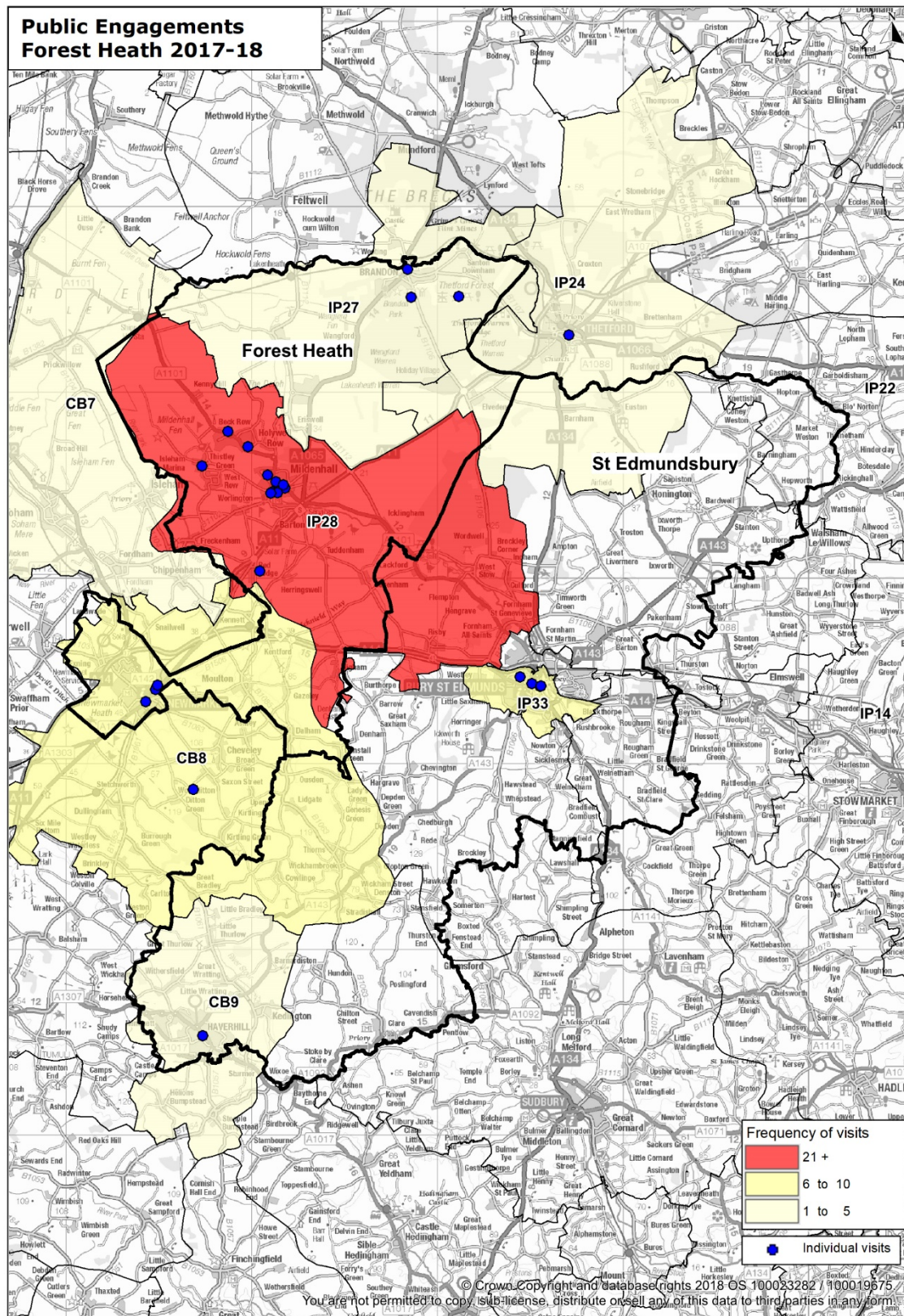


**Map 4 - Spread of events attended in Forest Heath District Council  
2016/2017**





**Map 5 - Spread of events attended in Forest Heath District Council  
2017/2018**



## **12. Review of Civic Events – St Edmundsbury Borough Council Deputy Mayor/Forest Heath District Council Deputy Chairman**

### **12.1 Total number of events attended 2016/2017 and 2017/2018**

- 12.1.1 When looking at the range of engagements that have been undertaken, it is, also, important to take account of the support provided by St Edmundsbury Borough Council Deputy Mayor/Forest Heath District Council Deputy Chairman. The total number of events that the deputy civic leaders have attended over the last two years, are shown in the table below:

**Table 11 – Total number of events attended by Deputy civic leaders 2016/2017 and 2017/2018**

<b>Deputy Mayor</b>	
2016/2017	60
2017/2018	56
<b>Deputy Chairman</b>	
2016/2017	10
2017/2018	18

- 12.1.2 There are some events that St Edmundsbury Borough Council Deputy Mayor and Forest Heath District Council Chairman attend, as well as St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor/Forest Heath District Council Chairman. If the events are removed that they attend together, the total number of additional events attended are shown in the table below:

**Table 12 – Total number of events attended by Deputy civic leaders separately 2016/2017 and 2017/2018**

<b>Deputy Mayor</b>	
2016/2017	38
2017/2018	26
<b>Deputy Chairman</b>	
2016/2017	2
2017/2018	5

- 12.1.3 It is not surprising that the level of support provided by St Edmundsbury Borough Council Deputy Mayor is higher than Forest Heath District Council Deputy Chairman, considering the scale of the events the civic leaders attend themselves.

### **12.2 Analysis of types of events attended by category**

- 12.2.1 The information on the next page, provides an overview of the types of events that have been attended by the deputy civic leaders.



(Please note that the same categories have been used as explained in Section 11.2).

- **Council business** - Both the St Edmundsbury Borough Council Deputy Mayor and the Forest Heath District Council Deputy Chairman have attended some civic receptions on behalf of the civic leaders and they have, also, deputised at Council meetings.
- **Community events and cultural events** - Attending and supporting additional community and cultural events was one of the biggest contributions of St Edmundsbury Borough Council Deputy Mayor, which included attending togetherness services, cultural festivals, village fun days, events with Stepping Stones, theatre productions and exhibitions. However, there was some cross-over with communities that St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor was, also, involved with, albeit they were on different occasions. Likewise, Forest Heath District Council Deputy Chairman attended a community garden party and the St Edmunds Day Service.
- **Local Growth** – St Edmundsbury Borough Council Deputy Mayor has been involved in events that promote local growth, which have included; shop openings, studio openings and refurbished sports centres. Forest Heath District Council Deputy Chairman did not attend any events that supported local growth.
- **Educational events** – St Edmundsbury Borough Council Deputy Mayor attended several educational/aspirational events, such as, celebrations of primary school achievements, national citizen service presentations, and West Suffolk Sports awards. Forest Heath District Council Deputy Chairman was, also, involved in supporting events in this area, such as an awards evening and graduation ceremony.
- **Twinning** - St Edmundsbury Borough Council Deputy Mayor was involved in twinning events, including lunches, quiz nights and welcome visits.
- **Community issues/charity** – There was limited involvement from either deputy civic leader in these types of events, although St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor did attend a charity dog show and an Age UK event.
- **Military events** – St Edmundsbury Borough Council Deputy Mayor supported several military events, including Armed Forces Day, RAF Changes in Command, HMS Vengeance meetings and Aircraft Viewings. Forest Heath District Council Deputy Chairman, also, attended one military event, the Battle of Britain Parade and Service.

## 12.3 Analysis of events attended by location

12.3.1 The table below shows the locations where events were attended. (The postcodes can be correlated with the maps shown in Section 11.5).

**Table 13 - St Edmundsbury Borough Council Deputy Mayor visits by postcode**

Postcode reference	Number of visits 2016/2017	Number of visits 2017/2018*
IP32	3	2
IP33	21	7
IP14	1	1
IP31	1	-
IP29	3	-
IP30	1	1
IP28	1	1
IP27	2	-
IP7	1	1
CB9	3	10
CB8	1	-
IP31	-	1
CO10	-	1

\*There was one twinning event attended in this year which could not be coded locally as it took place in Windsor.\*

\*If postcode references are not included in the above table, it is because there were no visits to these areas.\*

12.3.2 The spread of the events attended by St Edmundsbury Borough Council Deputy Mayor does not significantly change the geographic coverage as represented by the Mayor. The most frequently attended location in 2016/2017 was IP33 (Bury St Edmunds), which accounted for 55% of events attended. Likewise, this was, also, frequently attended in 2017/2018, representing 27% of events attended. However, in 2017/2018, the most frequently attended postcode was Haverhill, (representing 38% of events attended).

12.3.3 The table below shows the locations where events were held. (The postcodes can be correlated with the maps shown in Section 11.5).

**Table 14 - Forest Heath District Council Deputy Chairman visits by postcode**

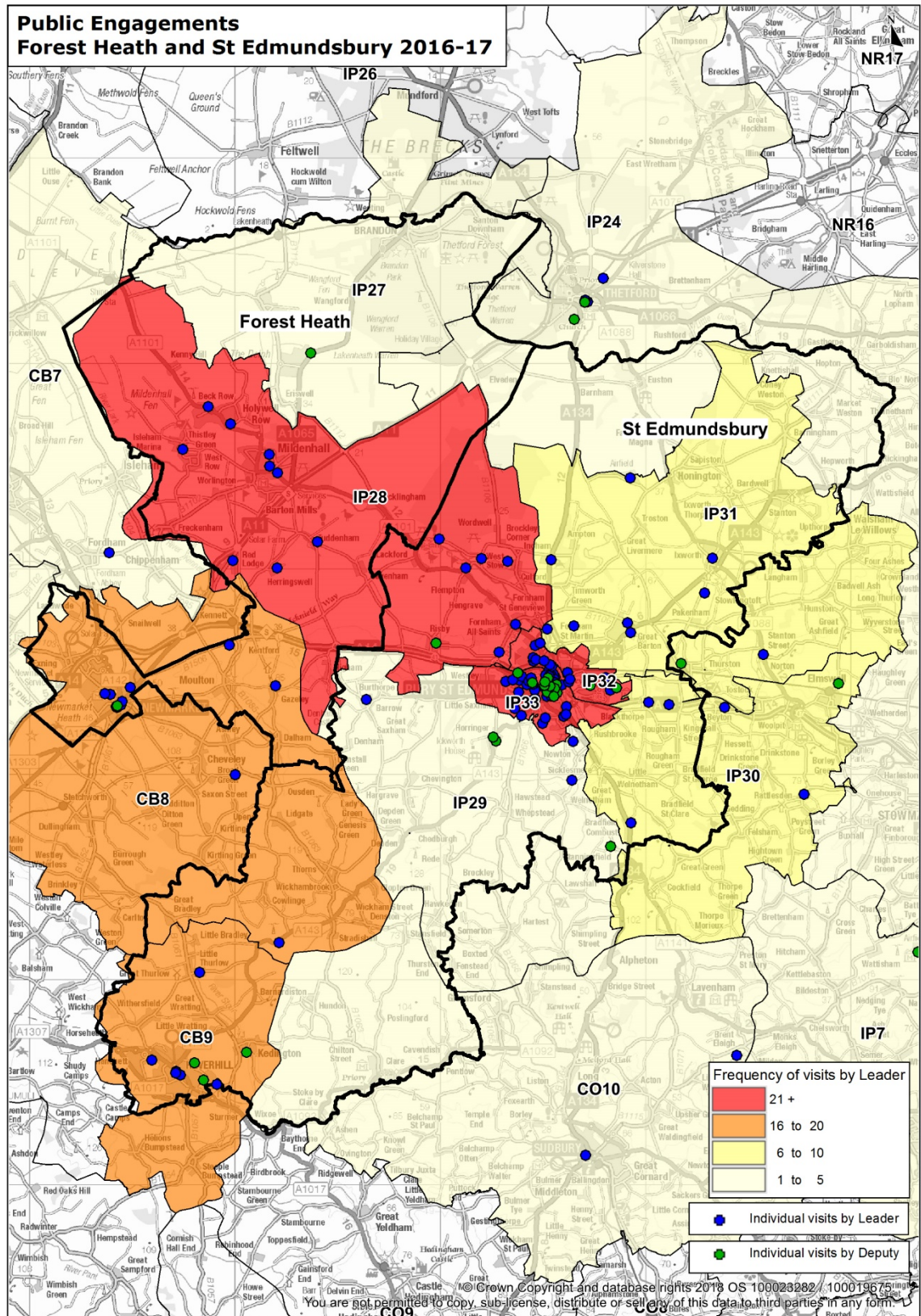
Postcode reference	Number of visits 2016/2017	Number of visits 2017/2018*
IP24	2	
IP33		2
CB8		1
IP27		1

\*There was one event attended in this year which could not be coded locally.\*

\*If postcode references are not included in the above table, it is because there were no visits to these areas.\*

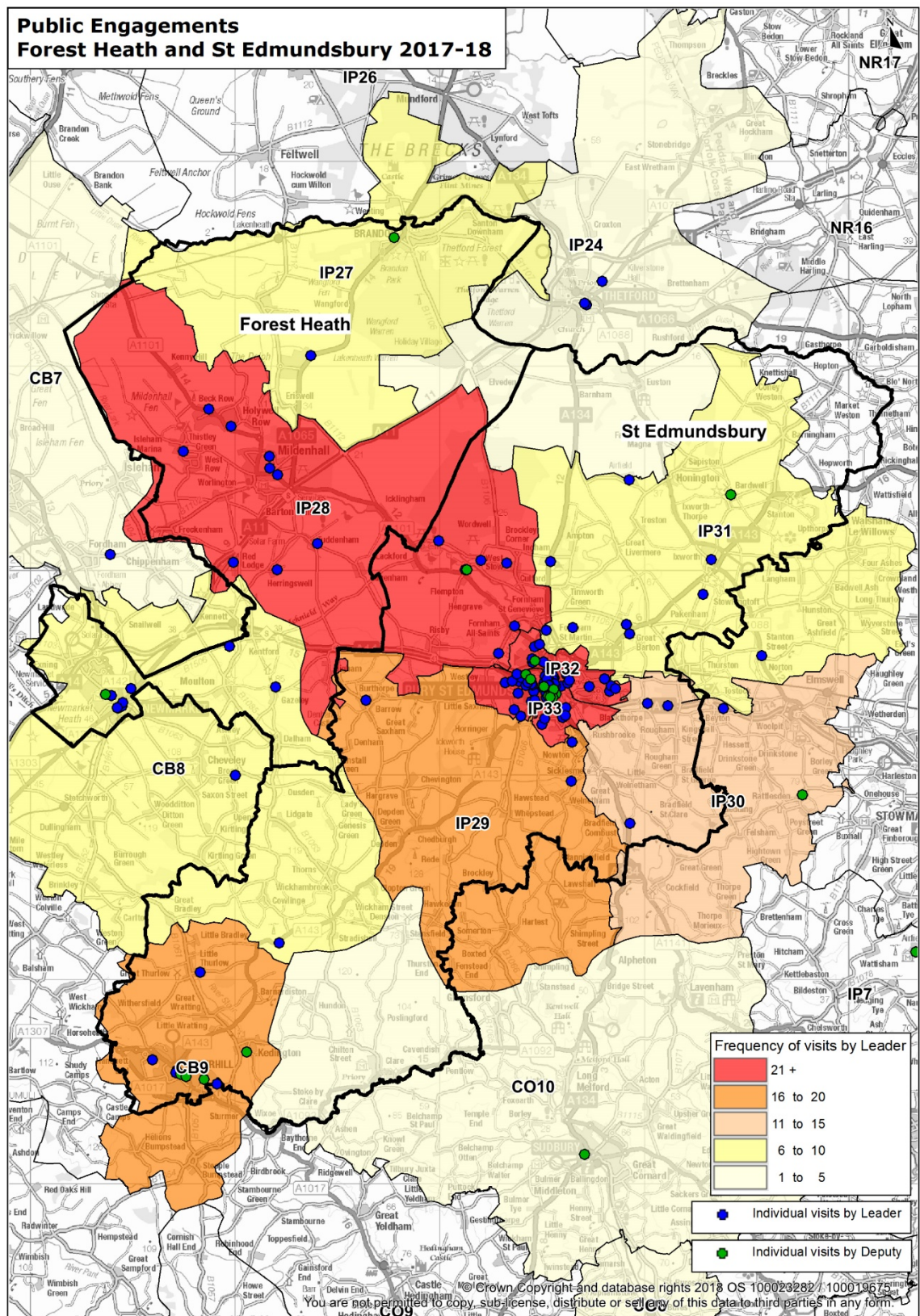
- 12.3.4 Of the events attended by Forest Heath District Council Deputy Chairman, looking across both years, four of the events were outside of Forest Heath District (two in Thetford and two in Bury St Edmunds). The events attended by the Forest Heath District Council Deputy Chairman does not significantly alter the geographic overview ascertained from Forest Heath District Council Chairman.
- 12.3.5 Considering all of the above information regarding the locations of events attended by the two deputy civic leaders, the maps on the following pages show the overall spread of events attended by the civic leaders and their deputies across St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath over the last two years. (Please note that the blue dots relate to the events attended by St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor/Forest Heath District Council Chairman and the green dots represent those that are attended by St Edmundsbury Borough Council Deputy Mayor/Forest Heath District Council Deputy Chairman).

**Map 6 - Spread of events attended across both St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Forest Heath District Council 2016/2017**





**Map 7 - Spread of events attended across both St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Forest Heath District Council 2017/2018**



## **13. Media Coverage of St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor and Forest Heath District Council Chairman**

### **13.1 Review of press coverage**

13.1.1 A review of press coverage in the written press between 1 May 2018 and 1 August 2018 (12 weeks) has been conducted, utilising the media alerts developed by West Suffolk Council's media team. It is recognised that this is just one measure of the coverage given to these roles in the local media and excludes a review of social media, (which was outside the scope of this review). Nevertheless, it does highlight some interesting points:

- There have been 37 times when St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor or Forest Heath District Council Chairman have been in a media alert on the west Suffolk summaries, which covers a range of local written media publications (namely, East Anglian Daily Times, Bury Free Press and Haverhill Echo, Brandon Times).
- Within the study period, the Chairman of Forest Heath District Council was out of action, and only two items related to the Chairman's activities. These both related to RAF Lakenheath.
- Thirty five items related to the Mayor of St Edmundsbury Borough Council. Most events the Mayor attends gets coverage from multiple media outlets over the course of one-two weeks, so there is repeated coverage of the same events included within this figure.
- The types of events that received coverage which the Mayor attended alone include:
  - Hard hat tour of Marham Park (housing development)
  - Art exhibition at school
  - Independent Businesses Week
  - Women on Wheels
  - Restored Guildhall
  - Relay for Life
  - Dementia screening
  - Gatehouse Dementia Support Building opening
  - Britain in Blooms Competition
  - 40th Anniversary of Suffolk Young People's Theatre
- There are, also, a number of events covered where St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor has attended with other members of the Council, which include:
  - Community Centre Refurbishment (attended with other councillors)

- 10th Anniversary of Community Service Team – High Sherriff of Suffolk, Town Pastors
  - Haverhill Mayor’s Civic Service (attended with other councillors and other Civic Leaders)
  - Felixstowe Civic Service – (attended with other councillors and other civic leaders)
  - New footpath (attended with ward councillor)
  - WW1 Art Trail (attended with Bury St Edmunds MP)
  - HRH royal visit (attended with the Chief Executive)
- The types of events in the media where the Mayor was wearing robes include:
    - 10th Anniversary of Community Service Team – High Sherriff of Suffolk, Town Pastors
    - Haverhill Mayor’s Civic Service – councillors, and other civic leaders
    - Independent Businesses Week
    - Restored Guildhall
    - WW1 Art Trail – BSE MP
    - Britain in Blooms competition

13.1.2 The review of the media alerts shows that there is more coverage for other councillors/cabinet members over this time period, rather than the civic leaders.

13.1.3 The role of the media/communications for the civic leader is an integral part to the role of the future civic leader to ensure that the breadth of the role is captured and most importantly, to ensure that public recognition is provided for events across the whole of west Suffolk communities (as currently the coverage does not extend across the whole of the geographic area, but it has to be recognised that this is reflective of the current scale of the events attended by both civic leaders, and the geographic locations in which current events are based).

## **14. Review of ward councillors and cabinet members/portfolio holders and their support to civic leadership**

### **14.1 Ward councillors**

14.1.1 The opinions of some ward councillors were obtained to review the links between their role and the civic leader and to consider how this may change in the new West Suffolk Council. (The questions used are shown in Appendix 12).

#### **Promotion of the wider civic functions of the council**

Feedback has identified that ward councillors are invited to attend and represent the council at national events (such as Armistice Day

and Battle of Britain) or civic events (such as Mayor Making/Jankyn Smyth). These would, also, be attended by the civic leader. Councillors reported that they sometimes attend such events, but there were various factors that discouraged them from attending more frequently; some events come with a cost; and they sometimes found they were clustered together at events (whether naturally, or by all being seated together) which reduced the impact of their attendance. Councillors, also, highlighted they need to support their local events so, in rural areas, on Armistice Day, for instance, they will usually attend their Parish events rather than the Bury St Edmunds/Haverhill events.

Ward councillors represent their community by attending events they get invited to by the community (such as parades and RAF ceremonies). They, also, attend events such as openings and launches in their wards and promote local business and culture by attending events linked to this (such as openings or refurbishments). While some of this does have a civic role, by championing communities, for example, it is, also, about dealing with issues in their ward as well as using the local press to communicate with their communities. Councillors reported that they will consider whether or not it would be appropriate to invite the civic leader to an event in their ward, such as an opening ceremony or particular community event; but often they would be the lead member representing their council at such events. Even when suggested by their local councillor that inviting St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor or Forest Heath District Council Chairman would be of benefit, not all community organisations will decide to do so.

It was noted that the work of the civic leader is often reported through media, and social media outlets, as well as community reporting, which reduces the need for ward councillors to actively promote the work of the civic leader. For example, in St Edmundsbury, some local councils are receiving the weekly lists of St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor's forthcoming events and, therefore, are fully aware of what the civic leader does. One councillor reported that they circulate this list directly to their parishes so that the parishes can see what St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor is doing.

### **Support of the council's priorities**

In 2014, the councils agreed a Families and Communities Strategy which recognised the important role of local ward members in their communities, providing early and proactive help to communities to enable them to be more resilient and self-sufficient. This has been reinforced through national research such as the 21st Century Councillor, which places strong emphasis on the role of the councillor as a community leader and driver of change. Councillors are consciously supporting the councils' promotion of resilient communities, local growth, and improved housing, by listening to



residents and acting upon queries, as well as attending events and writing articles.

Through this approach, councillors are often at the forefront in their community, most notably through utilising their locality budget, given to each councillor to enable them to support community-led initiatives to support their residents to be healthy, active and resilient, in line with corporate priorities.

### **Events attended with St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor/Forest Heath District Council Chairman**

Local councillors will usually attend appropriate events in their ward when, also, attended by St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor or Forest Heath District Council Chairman; for example, they will usually attend openings, charity functions or community events where their attendance would be expected to show support to their community, and, also, assist St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor or Forest Heath District Council Chairman in meeting key people. Some members felt that their local member role could be more valuable than the civic leader, as they know the people, and know who had contributed towards success in the community – which St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor or Forest Heath District Council Chairman may not. Members felt it is important St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor or Forest Heath District Council Chairman should have the right briefing to know the key people where they were going so they can personally thank them.

It was recognised that in some situations St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor's robes could cause quite an impression – particularly with young people. However, it was felt that this impact is at its greatest when St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor's robes are used selectively to maximise their impact.

### **Ways community contributions are recognised**

Within St Edmundsbury Borough Council, there are several schemes to recognise community contributions. Firstly, at a local level, each member can grant up to two individual community awards in their area during each four year term. These awards recognise the outstanding contribution that individuals have made to their local community. Secondly, St Edmundsbury Borough Council has, also, granted Freedom awards, to individuals and organisations that have made an exceptional contribution to the Borough. Freedoms are granted by a special ceremony, chaired by St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor, and such awards are rarely granted. The Council, also, grants long-serving councillors with a service award, which are given by St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor at Council meetings.

Forest Heath District Council does not undertake any similar schemes, but members recognised that it is not always certificates or

awards that count – ensuring that people receive a personal thank you, and the knowledge that their work and contribution is highly valued is equally as crucial.

## **Working together in the future**

Owing to the demanding nature of the engagements required of the civic leader, it was felt that it is harder for councillors wishing to pursue a career in executive or political leadership to undertake the role, because it requires them to step down from committees and this could impact on who undertakes the role in the future.

Councillors outlined that it is important for them to continue to support their local events in a reciprocal arrangement with the civic leader, but moving forwards, where they attend together, there needs to be a better team approach. For example, where there are a number of people representing the council at events, the focus needs to be about maximising the impact of their attendance and making the most of the engagement opportunity.

It is important that in the future, whether as a councillor or as the civic leader, the priority for attending events should be about benefitting the local area and focussing on events that will progress the council's agenda.

If the role of the civic leader is to become more business-focused, then if the civic leader is a mayor in the future, councillors questioned whether the wearing of the robes would be appropriate, because it was suggested that the robes are more about 'PR'. Thus, it was suggested that if the civic leader is a mayor, there is a need to consider the appropriateness of wearing the robes, which may need to be more infrequently worn if the focus of the role changes.

## **14.2 Cabinet members/portfolio holders**

- 14.2.1 The opinions of some portfolio holders were obtained to review the links between their role and the civic leader and to consider how this may change in the new West Suffolk Council. (The questions used as shown in Appendix 13).

### **Promotion of portfolios**

This is done in a variety of different ways, including attending seminars and functions, engaging with fellow members and working with the community to promote their areas of interest and raise awareness with the wider public through a range of channels including the media.

### **Support of the civic leader**

While there are occasions that the portfolio holders support meetings and events where the civic leader, also, attends, there was a view

expressed that generally the roles of portfolio holder and civic leader are separate, because the civic leader has a much more focused community role.

### **Events attended with St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor/Forest Heath District Council Chairman**

The types of events which portfolio holders attend in support of the civic leader include, for example Mayor-making, remembrance services, Jankyn Smyth, sports awards, charity meals and military events. There was a general view that there are a number of events that are attended jointly. However, there was a view that St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor/Forest Heath District Council Chairman provide a non-political gravitas, whereas the portfolio holders can present this perspective, thus there are sometimes different aspects to the roles that contribute to the need for their attendance.

### **Impact of the civic leaders on events**

There was a general consensus that St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor/Forest Heath District Council Chairman acts as a focal point of any event, which is a result of the title/prestige of the role. Therefore, it is usually St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor/Forest Heath District Council Chairman who is expected to make a speech or present the awards where there are a number of councillors in attendance.

### **Working together**

In terms of whether the presence of both the civic leader and a portfolio holder at the same events were beneficial, there was a view that this depends on the type of events attended. For example, it would be important for both to be there when the event entails socio-economic well-being, but not if it is a community event, such as a tea party. There was the opinion that a civic leader's presence is the most important, which correlates back to the prestige of the role.

### **Future changes**

Under a Single Council in a changing financial context, it was felt that portfolio holders would have a more prominent role to fulfil across the bigger area and that collectively, the council would be facing more complex financial challenges, which would require greater planning and preparation as to which projects are supported. Equally communications and a team approach is considered to be essential to deliver against the growing workloads, not only in terms of local community meetings, but when working with other frontline councillors and other authorities, such as the County Council. There was, also, a need to consider how the roles would be undertaken, and whether any additional support would be required.

## **15. Review of focus groups**

### **15.1 Feedback from focus groups: Part 1**

- 15.1.1 A summary of the common themes that were identified with regards to the first part of the focus group questions, which was about defining the role of the civic leader are provided on the following three pages, grouping the focus groups into three areas: town councils, community groups and councillors.

### **Priorities of the civic leader**

- Communicating with the public – being a visible champion
- New role needs to reflect the emergence of the new Council (re-engage and revive the role) – creating a local identity
- Need to consider more consistent approach as currently the role varies depending on who undertakes the role
- The new role needs to engender a sense of community and bring together the two areas (Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury) not be centred on one location
- Focus on building links with businesses
- Excellent communication with town and parish councils
- Engaging with young people
- Smooth running of meetings

### **Ensuring civic leader is approachable/engaging with diverse communities**

- Attending events and engaging with communities – improve communication
- Ensuring the public feel represented by their council
- Making best use of social media/communication tools (particularly important given the size of the new area)
- Provide a single point of contact for parishioners (consider things such as attending parish councils/hosting meetings in areas)
- Picking the right person to undertake the role and ensuring this is publicised through various channels – they need to be visible and connected with the communities

### **Who civic leader should work with**

- Councillors – to develop better links with communities and make best use of wider council resources (especially as the civic leader will be covering a bigger area)
- Better connection with towns and parishes
- It is a 'PR' role to support businesses and communities and there is a need to 'sell' this element of the role
- Police and Crime Commissioner, police, Suffolk County Council, MP's, town councils, general public

## **Town councils**

### **Issues for civic leader to address**

- Most community issues are addressed by councillors rather than the civic leader – thus there is a need to develop the team approach to supporting communities, but it is important to keep the focus local and in line with the legacy of current approaches
- Promoting the area and businesses
- Fight for the fact West Suffolk is a 'rural area'.
- Reduce the crime rate, improve and implement new transport systems and improve parking

### **Recognising contributions in communities**

- Working with the LEP and businesses
- Recognising smaller groups, organisations and individuals & volunteers
- Need the public to have input on awards – not councillors/civic leader making the decisions

### **Priorities of the civic leader**

- Clear leader in community – helping to bridge the gap between councillors, local services and local people
- Help connect community to the council – provide an overview of what is going on in communities and businesses
- Promoting the community and the area
- Be apolitical
- It is a 'PR' role & provides status for the area
- Integrate Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury
- Leader needs to have a real interest in the area and a desire to drive things forward
- Support economic prosperity through improving business opportunities
- Ensure equal distribution of services and facilities
- Well-being of communities

### **Ensuring civic leader is approachable/engaging with diverse communities**

- Need to attend all types of events to raise visibility of diverse range of areas/groups
- Part of wider team effort – with councillors and leaders to be more approachable
- Improve engagement approach
- Need to avoid being 'Bury Centric'

## **Community groups**

### **Who civic leader should work with**

- Other towns and visiting officials
- Better engagement with individuals
- Managing conflicts between councils to ensure suitable support and provision is available
- Engaging with young people (youth groups and schools)

### **Issues for civic leader to address**

- It is more of a 'PR' role and about gaining publicity – it is for the wider councillors/leaders and CEO to deal with the issues
- Local charities and organisations to help bring the council and people together
- Supporting local community groups working with community members, such as those with disabilities
- Attending charity events – helps raise funds and gains press coverage

### **Recognising contributions**

- Attend charity dinners and events such as 'Bury in Bloom'
- Use their platform to help advertise events in advance
- Need a team effort to rewarding and recognising communities, groups and individuals
- Appropriate use of locality budgets
- Supporting projects that need funding to continue operating
- Help to empower communities

### **Priorities of the civic leader**

- More engagement with communities (younger & older generations) and businesses
- Managing the business of full council
- Promoting West Suffolk regionally and nationally
- To be apolitical
- Visible champion for the community
- Promote local arts, heritage and culture
- Support health and well-being
- General view that it is good to support charities, but views expressed that; "It was not okay to convert officer time to charity fundraising" and that support could be shown in different ways

### **Ensuring civic leader is approachable/engaging with diverse communities**

- Engage with councillors
- Build on what has historically been done
- Engage with hard-to-reach groups
- Allow civic leader to be themselves but have a secure protocol in place
- Strong communication methods

## **Councillors**

### **Who civic leader should work with**

- Support ward members, parish and town councils
- Businesses (but avoid duplication with portfolio holders)
- Team approach to identifying who is best placed to support the events that people request council attendance at (better definition of the roles of cabinet and ward members)
- Charities and voluntary sector
- Schools, colleges, police, chamber of commerce, BIDS RAF
- Clubs such as Beavers, Scouts, Sea Cadets, ATC, sports clubs

### **Recognising contributions**

- Annual ceremony of appreciation
- Recognising hidden elements
- Organising volunteer receptions
- Look at examples and do not rely purely on nominations

### **Issues for civic leader to address**

- Support the introduction of the new council – ensuring its identity, meaning and reach
- Liaise with businesses
- Build relationships
- Breakdown the boundaries between Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury – avoid being 'Bury-centric'
- Ensure strong communication with more rural based groups

## **15.2 Analysis of focus group feedback: Part 1**

- 15.2.1 There were some overarching concerns raised about the size of the role and, also, the different skill sets required for the role, in particular, between chairing a meeting and carrying out civic functions. This needs to be considered carefully when the new civic leadership role is defined; "...We will move to being the seventh biggest local council in the county and we need to have a way that makes the civic leader role achievable and to ensure that is focused on areas where they can have the biggest impact."
- 15.2.2 There are some overarching priorities that the civic leader should focus on, including: promoting economic prosperity through improving business opportunities, ensuring equal distribution of services and facilities, supporting young people and helping to support the well-being of communities.
- 15.2.3 There is a need for a wider 'team approach' to civic leadership on a number of different levels:
- "Every councillor should be a civic leader"
  - "Portfolio holders also have a lot to do with businesses - need to avoid duplication"
  - "Local district and county councillors should attend events in their own wards/divisions"
  - Councillors need to; "Walk through the door together" when attending events together to maximise opportunities to network, communicate and make a difference.
- 15.2.4 There is a need to improve communications at all levels and for the civic leader to be visible and engaging across a diverse range of communities:
- "...we need to ensure that there is some communication between the civic leader and those groups, perhaps having quarterly meetings with the chairs."
  - "Spend a bit of time with each councillor or to visit a parish. A lot of the parishes feel that they are very neglected".
  - "Have a programme that each civic leader has to work through, if we are going to devolve to the towns and parishes new civic leader needs to meet with them and they need to consider how collectively they are going to do this."
- 15.2.5 Rewarding and recognising contributions from a variety of different community groups remains a key part of the civic leader's role; "Civic leader should link with councillors to better their communities".
- 15.2.6 It is recognised that there is a need for greater engagement and improved communications with town and parish councils. This is for a number of reasons, including a feeling that there is; "confusion as



to the role with the town councils" and because of the size of the larger area that will be covered by the new civic leader;

- "If we can get the idea of Parishes and Towns being more involved, people will be happier".
- "It should be about local delegation and empowerment with strong community involvement."
- "Parishes need to be given the main role in their own communities with the mayor supporting...."
- "Avoid duplication of existing civic leader roles in towns and parishes."
- "Look at it event by event....town council could do remembrance services, for instance as they are town by town"

15.2.7 In terms of the role of town and parish councils moving forwards, the following comments were made:

- "Town council should take on responsibility for the cost of the Mayor, with initial support from West Suffolk for two years."
- Parishes could pay towards towns for their mayors to visit'
- '...having town mayors that span to include local parishes and villages, the area will be more manageable and will avoid confusion...."
- 'By having Town Mayors the areas could be covered more effectively", although others felt that this was not necessarily true as parishes not being able to have a mayoral presence.
- There was one view expressed that the; "Leader should not work with parish councils and should focus on voluntary and community interest companies".

15.2.8 There is a need to define the new role across west Suffolk to ensure it is inclusive and supports the wider area and is not focused on one location; "To sell the role, need to get everybody on board initially".

15.2.9 There was, also, a view expressed that the civic leader, "should be more west facing (Cambridge) not east facing" and there is a need to "promote West Suffolk locally and regionally".

15.2.10 Whatever role is adopted in the future there is need for a 'good leader' and the role needs to continue to have a key role in championing and promoting local communities and businesses. The 'PR' aspects of the civic leader's role are a key element to building links with communities.

15.2.11 Concerns have been raised over the timing of the decision, although whatever decision is made, it is recognised that it is important to recognise the history and traditions of the two areas, whilst focusing on the fact that; "West Suffolk has a unique opportunity to change what civic leadership means in the area".

## **15.3 Feedback and analysis from focus groups: Part 2**

15.3.1 The second part of the focus group focused on gaining views around district/borough status and mayor/chairman.

15.3.2 An overview of the findings are provided below, but it is important to recognise that there are a range of views and opinions around the benefits and concerns of becoming a borough and, likewise, of having a mayor, and these have to be considered on their own merit when determining what the right civic leadership approach is for the new West Suffolk Council:

### **Benefits of being a borough**

- Gives the option to have a mayor/chairman
- Continuity of history and ensuring that the background to the Borough of St Edmundsbury is not lost– concerns that if the borough status was lost, it may not be possible to get it back in the future; 'Didn't go through that hassle all those years ago just for this generation to give it up on a whim'
- Borough gives weight and standing in the region, and
- If done right, it takes away the centrism of Bury and Newmarket within their current districts, "people look to belong to West Suffolk and get out of shadows of the biggest towns within their districts".

### **Concerns of being a borough**

- May take a long time to become a borough and could be seen as old fashioned and not being progressive; "There is a view that the town council has greater status than parish council and that borough has greater status than district council – need to realise they are equal, not higher status than others".
- Forest Heath communities may feel voices are not being heard/feel loss of identity and it may feel like a takeover by St Edmundsbury, especially if the borough institutional hallmarks remain 'business as usual' whilst Forest Heath functions are abolished;
- It could be difficult to associate such a large area with the term 'borough'; "New West Suffolk Council will involve a considerable increase in number of residents in the geographic area and we could not sustain borough status and should be designated as a district";
- The costs of becoming a borough, particularly as it would be only honorific and ceremonial;
  - "A borough is fairly meaningless apart from that it allows for a mayor and may be an extra cost with no benefit for Newmarket"
  - "Financial damage from having a borough mayor would be detrimental".

## **Benefits of mayor**

- The ceremonial aspects associated with the mayoralty creates an aura of something special: 'There is a feel good factor associated with having a Mayor' and "Despite the cost it was felt that the mayor brings unseen value to the community that cannot be measured";
- Good publicity and help to advertise events;
- Attractive to tourism – mayor may be good value for money;
- Sense of pride, brings unseen value;
- Retains heritage and historical tradition;
- Having a mayor would give West Suffolk an advantage in competition with other areas;
- As a respected member of the community, the mayor has a wider breadth for bringing together St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath together than a chairman would have;
- Prestige - a real figurehead; and
- It is a good role model for children.

## **Concerns with mayor**

- Mayors should be kept at the town level, spanning to surrounding villages, to avoid the confusion that would come with having both a Town and Borough mayor
- "Bury Town councillors appear disinterested in having a town mayor but this does not mean that there is any reason for the whole district to continue to subsidise Mayoral activities that have historically centred on and benefitted most Bury St Edmunds"
- Alternative option is to consider having a Chairman with two deputies
- St Edmundsbury 'inherited' Bury St Edmund's town mayor in the creation of the borough, so retain the history in returning this function to the town  
"Having a Mayor is only a glorified photo opportunity, it is not about the person but the about the red robe and hat"
- Financial implications
- People may not recognise the Mayor is for West Suffolk and not just for St Edmundsbury and because of the underlying differences between Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council, Forest Heath District Council could be seen as inferior and people may feel that their opinions are not being heard, and
- Bury St Edmunds will always be the centre of activity.

## 16. Review of telephone survey

### 16.1 Telephone survey: Mayor's events 2017/2018

16.1.1 Numerous organisations were spoken to as part of this survey, including: local community events (such as BSE Camera Club Presentation, Gatehouse Carers Support Group, The Great Get Together in Hepworth, Fetes, Women's Guild of Friends, Troston Community Music Evening, Community Café and sporting events), various charities and a care home, various openings of businesses/markets, St Edmundsbury Cathedral, West Suffolk College and various youth groups, as well as Westgate Primary School.

16.1.2 The table on the next page shows a summary of the themes from the respondents.

**Table 15 - Summary of the telephone survey St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor 2017/2018**

Questions	Themes from responses
Reason for attending event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The community value of the Mayor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ "...he was interacting with many different groups of children, adults and even visitors from other countries telling them about the history of Bury St Edmunds. I believe the Mayor has the ability to bring the community together in a positive way".</li> <li>◦ "...because the people we help love to see the Mayor."</li> <li>◦ "To enable other people in the community to see what we do"</li> </ul> </li> <li>• To have someone official to open the event and help people feel included in the Suffolk area</li> <li>• Tradition</li> <li>• Working with the Mayor/local government helps to ensure that we best serve our community, "...it maximises potential collaboration opportunities for our students and staff to support the community as well as opening lines of communication..."</li> <li>• To show support from the council/to show partnership (or because they have received funding support from the Council)</li> <li>• Having the status of the Mayor enhances the reputation of the event as there is support from a civic dignitary</li> <li>• To gain publicity and get more volunteers/promote events</li> <li>• High profile event/to help raise the profile/image and add "prominence to the event"</li> <li>• To show support as they are a chosen charity of the Mayor/to promote local charity work</li> </ul>
Benefits of attending the event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publicity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ "...which is important because we rely on local sponsors."</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

for their organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ "The Mayor brought publicity to the event which was a national Event..."</li> <li>○ "Councillor Clements is very active on social media...for us it allowed further networking."</li> <li>• Raises profile of the business – the mayor attending the event helps to demonstrate the Council's support and promotes the relationship between the Council and the organisation.</li> <li>• To help promote/show case charity work</li> <li>• Provides networking opportunities</li> </ul>
Benefits of attending the event for their community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raises awareness/profile of the event/make event more special; "they stand out and people notice them."</li> <li>• Promotes the local community and support community groups and give people an opportunity to speak to the Mayor; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ "...the Mayor makes an effort to talk to other people and shows a genuine interest in them and I think the community really values that."</li> <li>○ "...enhances the feel good factor in the community."</li> <li>○ "Hepworth residents involved were included and felt part of Suffolk, and the Mayor represented that."</li> <li>○ "People were pleased that the Mayor took the time to visit Troston as it is a very small village and not many people would know it exists."</li> <li>○ "It was good for the scouts and good PR for the local scout group"</li> </ul> </li> <li>• People appreciate the presence of the Mayor, "it gives them a sense of importance", "pre-school children are excited to see the Mayor"</li> <li>• Helps teach young people about democracy and local government and gives them the opportunity to think about and discuss issues linked to local area.</li> <li>• Promotes inclusion in the community and helps to develop a sense of belonging.</li> <li>• Shows the support of the Borough Council/chance to thank them for their support</li> </ul>
Any specific feedback/comments from other people about the Mayor's attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally really positive impact/feel good factor for people who genuinely enjoy seeing the Mayor at events and feel this adds positively to the atmosphere and makes it more special; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ "They often say that the Mayor makes the event more fun and relaxed."</li> <li>○ "...in those moments the Mayor is engaging with them, they love it."</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Positively supporting students; "The Mayors, both past and present have been incredibly helpful and supportive of the college and with their support we have created many unique, real life experience opportunities for our students and business connections for them which has greatly increased the chances of getting higher wage employment in their industry."</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The local town council appreciated the attendance from the borough council.</li> <li>• Businesses are always grateful for the time taken by the Mayor to attend and support them</li> <li>• Gained additional publicity from attendance of local people who made use of the internet to comment about the event</li> </ul>
Did the Mayor attend in their robes and what benefit (if any) did this have?	<p><b>Where robes were worn:</b></p> <p>The robes make the Mayor stand out/easy to identify;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ "...this encourages people (especially children) to approach them and find out more about the role."</li> <li>○ "It also helps young people with the historical value of the robes and what it means."</li> <li>○ "This was great for the children, as it was very grand and interesting for them to learn about the outfit and chains."</li> <li>○ "...they have invariably worn their robes and this is always appreciated and just by their presence it attracts interest from public, which benefits businesses."</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It creates additional media attention</li> <li>• Helps people to visually understand the importance of the event and makes the event more impressive.</li> </ul> <p><b>Where robes were not worn;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some people did need clarification that it was the Mayor in attendance (the Mayor was not in their robes at the event) – "If the Mayor wasn't wearing their robes, I think a lot of people wouldn't know who they are", where as numerous others have remarked that the chain of office is instantly recognisable.</li> </ul>
Was any press coverage sought and if so did the presence of the Mayor help to promote their event?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eighteen organisations directly sought press coverage. The general opinion was that having the Mayor at the event helps to get it noticed both online and in print and that photos of the Mayor help to advertise the event/promote the organisation.</li> <li>• One organisation felt that when the Mayor is in attendance there is a greater likelihood that the local papers will send a photographer – "...basically the attendance of the Mayor in their insignia is far more likely to get excellent media coverage in the local media..."</li> <li>• Some outlined that the when people see a photo of the Mayor in the written press it encourages them to read the article.</li> <li>• One organisation has outlined that the press do not attend specifically because they Mayor is there as they support the event each year.</li> </ul>
Any other comments about the Mayor's attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisations have commented that it is a privilege to have the Mayor at their event and that they are "positive ambassadors for our region" and that they appreciate their continued support, as do those that attend the events.</li> <li>• One organisation has praised the support of the Mayor's office.</li> <li>• The mayor plays some key roles; "Coming from a town twinning perspective, the mayor has always been the</li> </ul>

	<p>president of Former Friends of Kevelaer, if we have no Mayor, then we have no president of the association and we lose the connections between Kevelaer and other towns we are twinned with."</p>
<p>How can civic leader of West Suffolk support community events/community groups in the future?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a desire to continue to work with the future civic leader of the West Suffolk Council whether they are a Mayor/Chairman.</li> <li>• To continue to attend events and host civic events.</li> <li>• To continue with the current arrangements/for the role to remain similar to what it is now; "Having established a relationship, it would be nice if this could be continued in the future, having a representative coming to visit the school and talk to the children about their role and discuss issues important to the children".</li> <li>• To show support for small villages and events.</li> <li>• Some felt that without the Mayoralty, their communities would not stand out and not receive as much recognition and numerous organisations outlined that they would like to retain the mayoralty and feel it would be shame to lose the history: "...I don't think a more 'modern' civic leader would have the same effect." "The local Mayor is a traditional role that people like and can relate to."</li> <li>• The role should remain as a figurehead of the council that local people can relate to because it benefits organisations, the community and the town.</li> <li>• Some spoke specifically about the importance of the figurehead visiting charities.</li> <li>• Some raised concerns about the ability of one person to continue in the current format and whether the larger West Suffolk area would spread the role too thinly.</li> </ul>

## 16.2 Telephone survey: Chairman's events 2017/2018

- 16.2.1 A variety of organisations were spoken to including, the USAFE, local community events (Newmarket Carnival and Mildenhall and West Row Cycling Festival) a local awards ceremony for volunteers in Brandon, a local Church and the Mildenhall Sea Cadets. (When speaking to the USAFE they were asked about both St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor and Forest Heath District Council Chairman as a number of events are attended/supported by both civic leaders).
- 16.2.2 The table on the next page shows a summary of the themes from the respondents.

**Table 16 - Summary of the telephone survey Forest Heath District Council Chairman 2017/2018**

Questions	Themes from responses
Reason for attending event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement with the local community</li> <li>• Maintaining relationships with the local council</li> <li>• To promote the event locally – there is kudos attached to the attendance of the Chairman</li> <li>• High profile event</li> <li>• Give support/recognition to people who have undertaken work on behalf of the community (e.g. volunteers)</li> <li>• Supporting young people and encouraging them to value democracy – “meet/see someone important”</li> </ul>
Benefits of attending the event for their organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social engagement is the key benefit and this is more important than the business benefits</li> <li>• Good opportunity to raise local issues</li> </ul>
Benefits of attending the event for their community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The local community appreciate the presence of the Chairman at the event, “gives people a better feeling”.</li> <li>• Local residents get to see their Chairman/Councillor</li> <li>• Promotes their event and can be viewed as an “endorsement”</li> <li>• Adds prestige to the event</li> <li>• Sense of importance/focus</li> <li>• Shows the District Council/Chairman values the events</li> <li>• Important for young people to see/meet a figurehead</li> </ul>
Any specific feedback/comments from other people about the Chairman’s attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It encouraged a few people to ask about the Chairman and the local Town Council appreciated the attendance from the District Council.</li> <li>• General feedback received was that the Chairman’s attendance was received really positively</li> <li>• Brings more people together – sometimes from across the county, which otherwise may not have happened</li> </ul>
Was any press coverage sought and if so did the presence of the Chairman help to promote their event?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three organisations actively sought press coverage. The general opinion was that the Chairman’s attendance was used in the coverage of the event and while it did not help to promote it, it did add to the importance of the occasion. However, one organisation did feel that the attendance of the Chairman does help to promote their organisation/event.</li> </ul>
Any other comments about the Chairman’s attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keen to see what the new structure will look like so that they can develop links and engage with the new civic leader</li> <li>• The Chairman attended with other civic figureheads and this was appreciated by the Lord Lieutenant.</li> </ul>



How can civic leader of West Suffolk support community events/community groups in the future?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The decision as to whether the civic leader should be a Mayor/Chairman should not amount to a significant change, as they intend to engage with the new civic leader who would form part of their etiquette invite list and the will work with the new civic leader to help promote what they do in the community.</li> <li>• Desire to continue to have local links with the civic leader and receive support for Forest Heath.</li> <li>• A civic leader is needed to support organisations in the future and would welcome their attendance to support events.</li> </ul>
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## 16.3 Analysis of the telephone surveys

- 16.3.1 Regardless as to whether the mayor or the chairman is the future civic leader, opinions of which can be taken from the comments above, there are some consistent themes around what organisations value from the support that need to be considered:
- Attending events is a key way for community groups and businesses to develop and maintain relationships with the council and build networking opportunities.
  - Attending events offers a good communication mechanism to share views and provide feedback.
  - Attending events is a good way of showing support for the community and helping to raise the profile of the event.
  - Attending events is a good way of recognising and appreciating the work of organisations for communities, and
  - Attending events is about visibility and engagement.
- 16.3.2 All organisations are keen to see the engagement and interaction continue, because whether it is a mayor or chair that attends their event, they feel that there is value in this. However, there are some concerns around the scale of the role and how it will deliver in the bigger area, so communications is going to be a key element of the role moving forwards.
- 16.3.3 Generally, there is a positive impact on publicity from the civic leader's attendance at the event and ways to maximise this for both the council and the organisation need to be capitalised upon in the future.

## **17. Review of online survey**

### **17.1 Overview of respondents**

17.1.1 In total, there were 494 responses received. However, of these there were 23 blank responses, meaning the total number of surveys analysed was 471.

17.1.2 The full survey results are available for viewing via the following link:

[Online Survey Data](#)

17.1.3 There is a more detailed overview of who completed the survey provided in Appendix 14, but in summary, the following points are of note:

- While not statistically representative of the population of west Suffolk as a whole, the spread of respondents was broadly proportionate to the wider population in terms of gender, disability and district (St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath).<sup>5</sup>
- The proportion of respondents from 'other white' ethnic backgrounds was lower than the wider population due to the large presence of US Visiting Forces in the area who had a lower response rate. The proportion of respondents from younger age groups was, also, lower, hence our approach of targeting schools for engagement with young people.
- Respondents came from a large spread of age groups. Those over 60 were over represented in the sample and 18-24 year olds were particularly under represented. However, we had a good response from those aged under 18.
- A slightly larger proportion of responses came from people living in 'urban' areas (according to Defra's rural/urban 2011 classification). However, this was influenced to some extent by local campaigns carried out in specific localities. Targeted engagement took place to ensure rural communities were able to engage with the review in other ways as well (e.g. phone surveys, focus groups). For an overview of the geographic breakdown of survey respondents, see Appendix 15.

### **17.2 Overview of findings by question**

17.2.1 The following tables give a summary of the responses received to each question in the survey, in order to inform the consideration of the future of civic leadership in west Suffolk.

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<sup>5</sup> Not including the United States Visiting Forces population.

- 17.2.2 The first two questions focused on ascertaining people's views on the priorities of civic leadership and the tables below provide the findings:

**Table 17- Summary of findings from Question 2: What do you think are the three most important things about civic leadership in west Suffolk?**

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Number of respondents who included this in their top three choices</b>
1	Promote and represent West Suffolk and its communities locally, regionally and nationally	220
2	Be a visible champion for the council and community	190
3	Ensure the smooth running of council meetings in order to promote and increase public confidence in democracy	150

**Table 18 – Summary of findings from Question 3: What do you think are the three least important things about civic leadership in west Suffolk?**

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Number of respondents who included this in their bottom three choices</b>
9	Promote local business	136
10	Ensure the smooth running of council meetings in order to promote and increase public confidence in democracy	129
11	Give all residents, particularly children and young people, an understanding of citizenship and local institutions	114

- 17.2.3 Some further analysis was conducted of these ratings in order to give a more informed perspective of the priorities that were considered most important. This was achieved by looking at the combined scores for each of the statements. For example, where 220 respondents included the statement; "Promote and represent West Suffolk and its communities locally, regionally and nationally" in their top three choices but 58 respondents included it in their bottom three choices, this gives a combined score of 162. By presenting the results in this way it is possible to see areas of consensus and disagreement between respondents. Table 19 ranks the statements in order of their combined scores. For example, 220 respondents included 'Promote and represent West Suffolk and its communities locally, regionally and nationally' in their top three priorities and 58 chose the same statement in their bottom three priorities. 220 respondents minus 58 gives the statement a combined score of 162.

**Table 19 – Analysis of the top priorities of the civic leader in the future**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Number of respondents who included this in their top three choices</b>	<b>Number of respondents who included this in their bottom three choices</b>	<b>Combined score</b>
Promote and represent West Suffolk and its communities locally, regionally and nationally	220	58	162
Be a visible champion for the council and community	190	93	97
Support local groups and community and voluntary organisations	125	35	90
Engender a sense of local identity, belonging and pride	120	73	47
Promote, support and champion specific issues for example, health and wellbeing, young people, older people, the environment, rural communities	141	107	34
Ensure the smooth running of council meetings in order to promote and increase public confidence in democracy	150	129	21
Continue the history and heritage of West Suffolk	125	106	19
Promote community cohesion	79	104	-25
Promote local arts, heritage and culture	60	95	-35
Give all residents, particularly children and young people, an understanding of citizenship and local institutions	64	114	-50
Promote local business	79	136	-57

17.2.4 The next four questions in the survey (questions 4 – 7) focused on the benefits/concerns of west Suffolk being a borough council and the benefits/concerns of west Suffolk having a mayor rather than a chairman. Respondents had the opportunity to give a free text answer. The following tables record the frequency with which common themes appeared in the responses. The numbers refer to the number of mentions made of a given theme not to the number of respondents who included it in their response. Some respondents may have included more than one theme in their response. Other

respondents left this section of the survey blank or said there were 'no benefits' or 'no concerns'.

**Table 20 - Summary of findings from Question 4 - What do you think would be the benefits (if any) for west Suffolk of being a borough council, in terms of civic leadership?**

Theme	Percentage of all responses that included a mention of this theme
We can choose to have a Mayor	20%
Maintains history, heritage and tradition	13%
Benefits all of West Suffolk and not just Bury St Edmunds, as it gives West Suffolk more influence and status	9%
Promotes the area and makes the community feel proud of where they live	8%
Prestige and status	8%
Saves the Council money	4%
Sense of pomp and ceremony	1%

Twenty three respondents gave the response 'don't know'.

Illustrative examples of common responses given in relation to the top three themes:

- "Enabling the new council to have a Mayor rather than a chairman."
- "I believe the position of mayor encourages embracing heritage, history and culture in the area instead of a more modern take on civic leadership."
- "Higher profile on national stage, attracting visitors, investment, cultural activities, and so on."

**Table 21 – Summary of findings from Question 5 - What concerns would you have (if any) about west Suffolk being a borough council, in terms of civic leadership?**

Theme	Percentage of all responses that included a mention of this theme
West Suffolk is too large an area to be a Borough	14%
The costs involved	11%
St Edmundsbury will lose its tradition and identity	4%
Civic leaders are self-serving	3%
It is outdated	2%
Pomp and ceremony distracts from council duties	2%

Fourteen respondents gave the response 'don't know'.

Illustrative examples of common responses given in relation to the top three themes:

- "Too large an area to commit fully in attending civic functions."
- "I think that whatever the outcome, it needs to be whichever costs the general public the least. Civic leadership sounds all big cars and expenses."
- "We lose all sense of history." (This comment relates to a concern about St Edmundsbury losing its borough status to a wider geographical area)

**Table 22 – Summary of findings from Question 6 - What do you think would be the benefits (if any) for west Suffolk of having a mayor instead of a chairman, in terms of civic leadership?**

Theme	Percentage of all responses that included a mention of this theme
A more recognisable figurehead than a Chairman who can be a positive representation of the Council	19%
They are traditional and part of our history and heritage	17%
They have more prestige and gravitas than a Chairman	8%
They bring communities together and instil civic pride	7%
They promote the area	6%
Pomp and ceremony	5%
They support and promote good causes	2%

Five respondents gave the response 'don't know'.

Illustrative examples of common responses given in relation to the top three themes:

- "Mayors are so much more visible and recognisable than a Chairman would be."
- "Continuity of centuries of tradition."
- "An honorary prestige symbol."

**Table 23 – Summary of findings from Question 7 - What concerns would you have (if any) about west Suffolk having a mayor, instead of a chairman in terms of civic leadership?**

Theme	Percentage of all responses that included a mention of this theme
The costs associated	14%
It is merely symbolic	7%
The new West Suffolk is too large and diverse for just one Mayor	6%
It is an old fashioned and outdated tradition	4%
It is unfair to give so much status to one person	2%
There will be too many Mayors which will cause confusion	2%
They are unelected	2%
Towns will lose out on having a Mayor	1%

Illustrative examples of common responses given in relation to the top three themes:

- "Unnecessary expense in times of austerity."
- "Mayor tends to do little to actually help run the council or help the area, maybe if we had a chairperson they may actually do something apart from parade about in fancy dress."
- "Local people will not relate to a 'distant' mayor of a large authority such as West Suffolk; a successful mayor is one who is largely known by the local population and one whom they can identify as 'one of their own.'"

17.2.5 Question 8 was about how ways to improve engagement across west Suffolk communities and the table on the next page outlines the most regularly suggested ideas provided:

**Table 24 – Summary of findings from Question 8 - How should the civic leadership of the new west Suffolk ensure they engage with, represent and support a wide range of individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds?**

Theme	Percentage of all responses that included a mention of this theme
Be more visible by engaging with the community face-to-face	20%
Engage with diverse groups (such as religious groups, minorities, young people)	12%
Hold surgeries/focus groups. Have regular opportunities for the public to speak to them	7%
Do the same as current Mayors	6%
Support a range of community groups and charities	5%
Celebrate and promote diversity through holding and attending particular events (for example celebrating religious and LGBT events)	5%
Encourage those from diverse backgrounds to apply for councillor roles	5%
More consultation and engagement, including ensuring the views of diverse groups are represented	3%
Use all forms of media to communicate (for example using video, social media)	2%
Regular meetings with town and parish councils	1%
Engage with the whole of West Suffolk, not just the main towns	1%

Illustrative examples of common responses given in relation to the top three themes:

- "By being out in the community and attending events, engaging face to face with the public and feeding their experiences/observations back to the appropriate authorities."
- "Engage with different groups of different ages, back grounds, religion and social back ground and education"
- "Quarterly focus groups from a representative sample of key demographic groups and other opportunities for the public voice to be heard, e.g. something akin to surgeries."



17.2.6 The final question of the survey enabled respondents to provide any further comments. Eighteen respondents specifically referred to town councils having their own Mayors and illustrative examples of responses on this area specifically include:

- "The obvious answer is for Bury town council to have a mayor and take over the ceremonial duties of the town. This would ensure that the pomp and ceremony along with the regalia is there for future generations."
- "I think it would be preferable for Bury Town Council to have a Mayor and West Suffolk to have a chairman/woman. The former involving themselves with local activities in the community and the latter more involved in more strategic partnerships locally and regionally."
- "Would think it more sensible to have town mayors IE Newmarket, Haverhill, Bury St Edmund's etc. who are in touch with their local areas and could cope with the workload better than one overall borough mayor."

Other comments from a smaller number of individuals include:

- "What crest would be used? It would be a shame to lose the connection to St Edmund, the wolf and the crowns."
- "I don't believe that the mayor or civil leader should be voted in by councillors it should be by all local people."
- "Yes: there should be a second round of public consultation like this to invite comments on a variety of civic leadership models for the new West Suffolk local authority."
- "Will you publish the financial cost of having a mayor? The allowance, the clothing allowance, the cost of a driver and a secretary and so on."
- "I would like to have lessons about this at school, I believe that schools around the country should have the chance for a civic leader to come to schools or someone from the county council."
- "More local engagement within the current parish or town council structure would ensure better leadership rather than having a single figurehead over a large geographical area. This would also keep the costs down."

## **Part 4 – Civic leadership in the new West Suffolk Council**

### **18. Conclusion**

#### **18.1 Overview of key findings**

18.1.1 In conclusion, referring back to the Terms of Reference, as outlined in section 2.1, there were three main areas that need to be considered when defining the new role for civic leadership for West Suffolk Council:

- Requirements of the role.
- The priorities for the civic leader; and
- Format for how the role will be delivered.

18.1.2 Analysing all the information from this review, it is evident, that, in making this decision, there is no one approach that is recommended:

- A mayor and chairman have the same powers and they are both apolitical roles. There are many similarities in the core roles/purpose of the civic leader, particularly in terms of the ceremonial and ambassadorial functions regardless of whether this is undertaken by a mayor/chairman.
- Borough and district have exactly the same powers e.g. in relation to issuing Freedoms.
- There are mixed opinions with regards to the new West Suffolk Council being a borough. On the one hand, there are those that feel that the continuity of history and symbolism of the borough should not be lost (as this currently exists in St Edmundsbury). On the other, there are those that consider a borough to be old fashioned and not progressive and also feel that the size and rurality of the new council would not be compatible with borough status.
- Only boroughs can have a mayor but you can have a borough with a chairman. However, research shows that all authorities that are boroughs do have a mayor. Comparisons with the other districts/boroughs shows that in general, where a civic leader is a mayor, they tend to attend more events, up to 550 events, compared to around 100-200 for chairmen. Also, where there are mayors, the costs of civic leadership is almost always higher, reflecting the higher number of events and support required to undertake the bigger role.

- Predominately Bury St Edmunds residents do not want to lose the historic aspect and tradition and ceremony attached to Mayor. They have expressed the importance of the ceremonial aspects of this role and good press coverage/PR/profile raising that can be achieved. The review of written press coverage and the telephone survey suggests that St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor currently attracts more coverage. However, the attendance of St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor or Forest Heath District Council Chairman at events was equally appreciated.

- 18.1.3 Notwithstanding the fact that the Civic Leadership Working Group conclude that the findings from the review do not support one approach, there is, nevertheless, a wide range of information that has been gathered utilising a range of different methods to help inform decision making on the preferred option.
- 18.1.4 While it is recognised that a decision around borough status and whether to have a mayor/chairman may be subject to further debate by the new West Suffolk Council in the future, the present review is considered by the Civic Leadership Working Group to provide the most comprehensive assessment that can be reasonably undertaken at this time to help the Shadow Council to reach a decision.
- 18.1.5 It is important to emphasise that all of the different aspects within the report should be given equal consideration when reaching a decision, rather than relying on one element alone. Councillors need to understand that there is no right way forward.
- 18.1.6 While it is not possible to conclude a definitive approach in terms of how the role should be delivered in the future, it is, however, evident that there is a need for a revised approach because of the following overarching issues that have been identified:
- Events attended by St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor and Forest Heath District Council Chairman centre on the towns within St Edmundsbury, mainly Bury St Edmunds.
  - Rather than supporting the priorities of the councils, the agenda is individualised and changed every year. Therefore, there is not a strong correlation between events that the current civic leaders attend and the council's priorities, particularly in relation to growth and housing. Education and local growth are currently the least frequent events that are supported by either civic leader.

- There is confusion over what civic leadership is and how the different civic roles work together. Two towns in west Suffolk currently have mayors. Having town mayors as well as a St Edmundsbury Borough Council Mayor tends to result in duplication of event coverage.
- There is duplication with attendance at events with ward councillors/cabinet members, although it is difficult to specify exactly to what extent this occurs.
- The geographic size of the new West Suffolk Council and ensuring that the role is deliverable by one person in terms of numbers of commitments.

18.1.7 The following sections of this report draw on the key findings to; determine the requirements of the role, outline the priorities for the new civic leader and consider how this would be funded and explore the format for how the role could be delivered and the options available to the Shadow Council in making this decision.

## **18.2 Requirements of the role of civic leader**

- 18.2.1 Having considered a range of different ways that civic leadership can be carried out, the proposal is to continue to appoint a civic leader from within the existing 64 elected councillors of the new West Suffolk Council (as per the Constitution) and to retain the approach of appointing one civic figurehead and one deputy, as per the Constitution, who maintain political neutrality.
- 18.2.2 The length of the term of office shall remain as one year.
- 18.2.3 A more co-ordinated and team-based approach is required to ensure that civic leadership is woven into the fabric of the council and is supported by other councillors and portfolio holders and vice versa, thereby reducing the need for joint attendance at some events and maximising the benefits where attendance is carried out together.
- 18.2.4 It is important to ensure that there is a more equitable approach to recognising communities across west Suffolk, removing the focus from being on key towns, and this needs to be reflected when determining what events the civic leader should attend.
- 18.2.5 Maximising communication methods and promoting the civic leadership role internally and externally are critical success factors, ensuring that press coverage reflects the work of the wider communities and businesses of west Suffolk, which goes hand-in-hand with the role being reflective of the broader area.

- 18.2.6 There is a need to consider how the civic leader can gain greater buy-in from young people, raising awareness about democracy and the role of the council. There are a range of options that could be considered, from appointing a cadet civic leader to hosting youth engagement events in the council chambers.
- 18.2.7 There is a requirement for more involvement of and closer consultation with town and parish councils. It is, also, worth noting that it is intended to undertake a review of town and parish councils in 2019/2020 and this needs to consider how the civic leader of West Suffolk Council can complement and support the work of towns and parishes better and, also, to consider how some functions could be undertaken differently.

### **18.3 Priorities for the civic leader/supporting the aims and ambitions of West Suffolk Council**

- 18.3.1 Regardless of title, what is required in the future is a professional, progressive and accessible civic leader, well-connected to the aims of West Suffolk Council.
- 18.3.2 The ambassadorial function remains a central part of the new role; championing and supporting local communities/businesses. Being non-political means the civic leader's views can be widely heard.
- 18.3.3 The civic leader can be a major influence in promoting the image and importance of West Suffolk Council in the regional and national context, as well as supporting local communities and businesses.
- 18.3.4 The working group recommend that the following principles apply to the new civic leader role:
- To support economic growth and development in partnership with key stakeholders, such as the BID and Chamber of Commerce and American airbases;
  - To continue to chair council meetings;
  - To continue to support key national and military events in a ceremonial role;
  - To continue to host countywide events such as the Harvest Festival, Battle of Britain commemorations, and so on;
  - To continue to support educational events, but to ensure where these are undertaken they are linked to a broader remit rather than being, for instance, specific to one school;
  - To reach out and engage with local communities and to continue to champion the contributions of local citizens, groups and businesses;
  - To remove twinning responsibilities and support them through the town councils, as they are in some cases already;
  - To support charities but not to be responsible for hosting or organising specific charity events; and

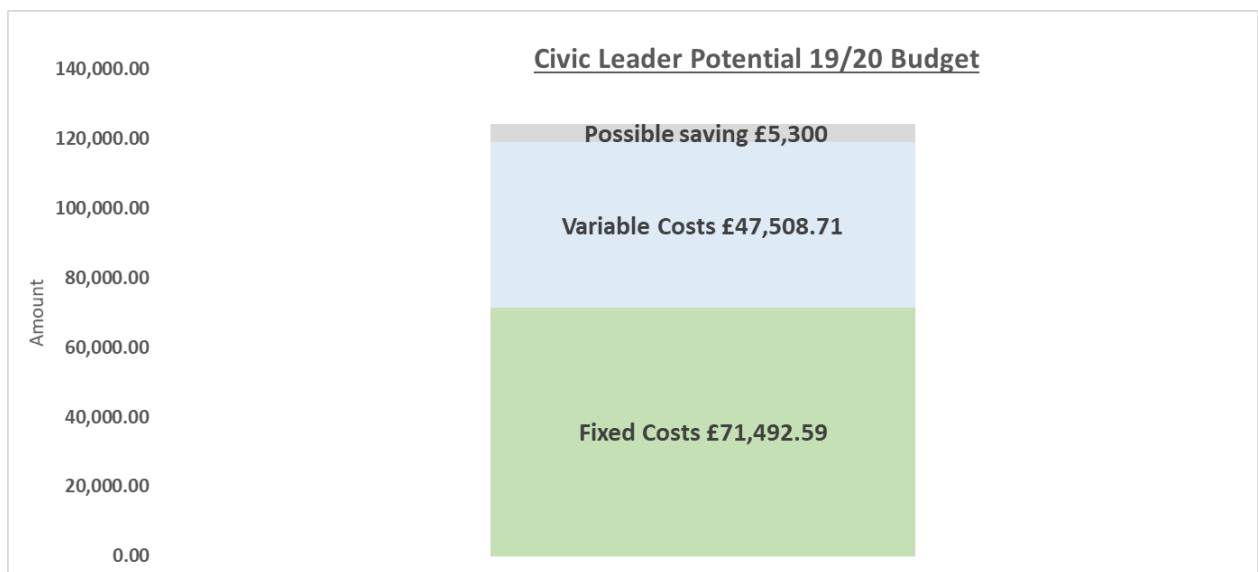
- To reduce the number of events attended by the civic leader, ensuring there is a more focused approach on supporting key strategic events, likely to have the biggest impact across West Suffolk communities.

18.3.5 To recognise and thank the contributions of citizens, including, for example, thanking people by attending events, hosting receptions for community groups and volunteers, granting Freedom awards and, also, by making best use of the advertising/promotion of events.

## 18.4 Funding of future civic leader

18.4.1 The diagram below outlines the potential budget that is likely to be required for the future civic leader, by breaking down the current spends into fixed costs, variable costs (some of which could amount to savings) and possible savings. However, it is important to note that this cannot be finalised until the format for how the role will be carried out is agreed:

**Diagram 6 - Fixed and variable costs relating to future civic leader**



18.4.2 The information below details how these different costs have been considered:

### Fixed costs

- The fixed costs include staffing (that is secretary support) and the wider council charges allocated to supporting the civic leader in the future, regardless of whether this is a mayor/chairman.

## **Variable costs**

- Dependent on what decisions are made with regards to the new civic role, there are costs that could either reduce or be used differently to support the new role. These include the funding used to support civic functions, such as, Jankyn Smyth, Battle of Britain Commemorations, the County Harvest Festival and Remembrance and costs associated directly with the Mayoralty, such as the macebearers, insignia and equipment repairs.

## **Possible saving**

- This is based on the fact that there will only be one allowance required. Please note that this has been set as a nominal figure for illustrative purposes at circa £5k, recognising that this will be determined in due course. (It is recognised that whether this is realised is dependent on the findings of the IRP).

## **18.5 Format for how the role will be delivered**

- 18.5.1 While the legal order laid down by Government is that West Suffolk Council will be a district with a chairman on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, there are various options councillors can look at as to whether the new Council will be a borough or district or have a mayor or a chair after this date, which are outlined in section 18.5.3.
- 18.5.2 The branding for the new West Suffolk Council will not change whichever decision is made regarding borough or district status.
- 18.5.3 There are three overarching options for how the civic leadership role could be undertaken:
- a) West Suffolk chooses not to apply for borough status and accepts district status, adopting a chairman as their civic leader.
  - b) West Suffolk applies for borough status and if granted then chooses whether to adopt a mayor or chairman as their civic leader.
  - c) West Suffolk applies for borough status, but fails to attain this and thus becomes a district council with a chairman as their civic leader.
- 18.5.4 In terms of deciding the format for which option will be adopted, there is a need for a staged approach to decision making. The Shadow Council initially needs to decide whether to apply to the Privy Council for borough status. Once the outcome of this is known, further consideration can then be given to deciding whether the civic leader will be a mayor/chairman, if and as required.
- 18.5.5 The decision to apply to the Privy Council for borough status would require a two-thirds majority vote, in favour, at a specially convened Shadow Council meeting. If councillors vote in favour of

convening this meeting, then the plan will be to arrange this in December 2018.

- 18.5.6 If the Council requests the convening of a special meeting to decide on borough status, the implications would be as follows:

**Table 25 - Overview of implications of vote on borough status**

Decision not to convene a special meeting	Decision to convene a special meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal position prevails and West Suffolk becomes a District Council in May 2019 with a Chairman.</li> <li>• Consult with town and parish councils on the impact and opportunities for them given the changes to civic leadership for the new West Suffolk Council for the longer term.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special meeting convened in December 2018.</li> <li>• If the special meeting achieves a 2/3rd majority in favour of applying to the Privy Council, the application to the Privy Council will be immediately made.</li> <li>• Consult with town and parish councils on the impact and opportunities for them with a particular focus on the interim year 2019/2020, whilst West Suffolk Council awaits the outcome of the application.</li> <li>• Interim arrangements for civic leadership from May 2019 with chairman (likely this format will be required for a year regardless as to whether the application for borough status is successful).</li> <li>• Await to hear the result from Privy Council and if borough status is granted, to make a decision as to whether the civic leader should be a mayor or a chairman.</li> </ul>

## 19. Recommendations

- 19.1 The recommendations are as follows:

- 1) To agree to the proposed requirements and priorities for the role of the future civic leader, as set out in section 18.2 and 18.3, and to delegate the writing of a new protocol encompassing these elements to the Assistant Director (HR, Legal and Democratic Services).
- 2) To work more closely with town and parish councils by;
  - 2a) Engaging with all town and parish councils to seek further ways of supporting them with civic leadership at a local level.



2b) Exploring with Bury Town Council possible options for them to lead on town centred ceremonial duties.

- 3) To take a vote on whether the Shadow Council should convene a special meeting for the purpose of deciding whether to apply for borough status and to suspend paragraph 13.1 of the Council Procedure Rules for this vote, so that it may only be passed should 2/3 majority of those present and voting at the meeting wish the Shadow Council to apply for borough status.

## **20. Next steps**

20.1 Following the Shadow Council meeting on 20 November 2018, the following actions will be undertaken:

- Writing of the protocol for the new civic leader (as outlined in the recommendations);
- Developing implementation options from 1 April 2019 (as required) which includes consulting with town and parish councils; and
- Agreeing the budget/resourcing requirements for supporting the civic leader.