

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title of Report:	Annual Report by the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture	
Report No:	OAS/SE/19/002	
Report to and date:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	9 January 2019
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Joanna Rayner Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture Tel: 07872 456836 Email: joanna.rayner@stedsbc.gov.uk	
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Purpose of report:	<p>As part of the "Challenge" role, Overview and Scrutiny are asked to consider the roles and responsibilities of Cabinet Members. It is part of the Scrutiny role to "challenge" in the form of questions.</p> <p>Therefore, to carry out this constitutional requirement, at every ordinary Overview and Scrutiny meeting at least one Cabinet Member shall attend to give an account of his or her portfolio and answer questions from the Committee.</p>	

Recommendation:	<p>Members of the Committee are asked to question the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture on her portfolio responsibilities, and having considered the information, the Committee may wish to:</p> <p>1) Make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture for her consideration; OR</p> <p>2) Request further information and / or receive a future update; OR</p> <p>3) Take any other appropriate action as necessary.</p>		
Key Decision: <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i>	<p><i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i></p> <p>Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>		
Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 		
Alternative option(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 		
Implications:			
<i>Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	•
<i>Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	•
<i>Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	•
<i>Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	•
<i>Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	•
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
	Low/Medium/ High*		Low/Medium/ High*
None			
Wards affected:		All	
Background papers:		None	
Documents attached:		<p>Appendix 1 – Apex economic impact study.</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Abbeycroft Leisure Impact report 2017/18</p>	

Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

1. Background

- 1.1 As part of its "Challenge" role, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the roles and responsibilities of Cabinet Members. To carry out this constitutional requirement, at every ordinary Overview and Scrutiny meeting at least one Cabinet Member shall be invited to give an account of his or her portfolio and to answer questions from the Committee.
- 1.2 Last year, on 10 January 2018, Councillor Joanna Rayner, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture attended this committee and presented a report which summarised the areas of responsibility covered under her portfolio.

2. Scrutiny Focus

- 2.1 At this meeting, the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture, Councillor Joanna Rayner has been invited to the meeting and asked to prepare a report which answers the following specific question(s) identified by committee members as being relevant to the leisure and culture portfolio:
 - 1. Parks and open spaces:** (West Stow Country Park) - Please can you provide the following data covering the last five years on attendance figures; income receipts; profit and loss and future projections.
 - 2. Parks and open spaces:** Request an update on plans for now, and in the future for West Stow Anglo Saxon Village.
 - 3. Heritage and culture:** What is the progress of engaging with and supporting the rural areas as destination venues?
 - 4. Heritage and culture:** With £150,000 being given to "Bury and Beyond", how has this directly benefited and positively impacted businesses; residents and communities across the Borough (split by rural and non- rural areas).
 - 5. Sports:** How does the council ensure that money given to Abbeycroft is spend 100% on St Edmundsbury owned sites when Abbeycroft run other sites outside of the area?
 - 6. Sport:** What efforts are made by the council to ensure all health and fitness related outlets, whether privately owned or not, are included and kept informed of projects to enhance the health and wellbeing of our residents across West Suffolk?
 - 7. Sports:** What efforts have been made during the refurbishment of the Haverhill Leisure Centre to ensure that experienced end users are involved in designing the new facilities such as the Parkour?
 - 8. Heritage and culture:** (The Apex) - Please can you provide the following data covering the last five years on attendance figures; income receipts; profit and loss and future projections.

9. Heritage and culture: (The Apex) - What efforts are being made to ensure that all taxpayers, who contribute to The APEX and Theatre Royal in Bury St Edmunds are able to access those services in the evenings when there is no public transport services particularly from south of Bury St Edmunds?

Section 4 of this report also includes an update on The Apex.

3. Response to Key Questions Set out in the Scrutiny Focus (Section 2 above)

3.1 Parks and open spaces:

(West Stow Country Park) - Please can you provide the following data covering the last five years on attendance figures; income receipts; profit and loss and future projections

West Stow Country Park is one of five public parks across West Suffolk to have been awarded the Green Flag accreditation in 2018. Like East Town Park in Haverhill and Nowton Park on the outskirts of Bury St Edmunds footfall at West Stow Country Park is measured via a vehicle counters in the car-park.

Below are the five year visitor numbers to West Stow Country Park:

Financial Year	Number
2013/2014	122,837
2014/2015	128,511
2015/2016	145,490
2016/2017	164,633
2017/2018	150,926

NB. The above numbers are calculated by halving the number of vehicle movements through the gate and multiplying that number by 2 + Coaches parties. Anglers to the site park in a separate car-parking area and their numbers are excluded.

Footfall to the West Stow Anglo Saxon Village and Museum, which the Borough Council manage on behalf of the West Stow Saxon Trust is listed below:

	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14
Group visits	16,512	17,431	14,864	12,819	8,606
General Admissions	22,619	26,063	22,497	17,202	18,660
Total visitors to Village (Pay Zone)	39,131	43,494	37,361	30,021	27,266

West Stow Country Park Features:

- Anglo-Saxon Village and Museum (within a chargeable pay-zone)
- Café

- St Edmundsbury BC – Collections Building
- Children’s play area
- Beowulf and Grendel Sculpture Trail
- Car-park (pay and display)
- Two fishing lakes
- 125 acres of Heath and woodland- some of which is SSSI
- Section of the River Lark
- Various Public Rights of way including part of the St Edmunds Way
- bird hides
- An old Victorian sewage pump house

The Budget for the past 5 years

Expenditure/ Income	Financial Year				
	2017/2018	2016/2017	2015/2016	2014/2015	2013/2014
Staffing	217,180.28	199,088.11	185,588.41	178,732.84	248,315.61
Building related costs	108,223.90	109,041.95	98,846.72	83,813.15	93,139.14
Maintenance of grounds	46,145.16	31,797.06	36,836.01	32,974.38	53,048.89
Business Rates	5,011.65	4,274.20	4,239.80	4,145.20	4,050.60
Insurance	6,876.03	8,064.68	6,609.74	10,664.66	16,450.00
Support Services	82,526.99	65,397.03	67,311.28	60,687.00	56,694.33
Income from Car-park	-32,868.99	-32,476.17	-31,119.64	-27,873.96	-28,013.62
Income from Lakes	-11,589.00	-11,611.95	-11,602.35	-11,826.85	-10,052.05
Income from Pay zone	-151,103.61	-149,704.90	-133,588.23	-100,350.11	-88,159.16
Other income	-67,166.88	-36,556.59	-34,489.06	-26,744.41	-67,484.24
Total	203,235.53	187,313.42	188,632.68	204,221.90	277,989.50

NB.

Staffing costs mentioned above relate to:

- The employment of ten members of staff (five of whom are part-time).
- The costs associated with employing a collections Officer, who deals in the care and maintenance of the Borough’s collection across the Borough.
- The employment of a Heritage Manager, who again works at both Museums and on other Heritage and tourism projects.

Building costs include:

- The Borough’s collection/archive building which sits within the site. This explains why these costs are comparatively high for this particular park.

As we have done for The Apex, a forward plan is currently being prepared for West Stow Country Park. Key issues which will be included in that plan are:

- Marketing and Promotion
- Clarifying and reviewing the Trust arrangements

- Maintenance and repair of the reconstructed buildings
- Events and activities (both within the pay zone and wider Country park e.g. Cyclo-cross)
- Links with other Anglo Saxon sites
- Country Park management
- Pathway links and promotion
- Utilising the former sewage pump house as a means to generate revenue income.
- Licences and leases – (including: angling lakes, catering)

3.2 **Parks and open spaces:** Request an update on plans for now, and in the future for West Stow Anglo Saxon Village.

The West Stow Anglo Saxon Village is subject to a long-term lease to the West Stow Saxon Village Trust. The Trust is managed by eight Trustees four of whom are Borough Councillors and the other four are non-elected members with a keen interest and background in Archaeology/heritage.

Trustees meet three or four times a year with officers of the Council and a representative from the Friends of West Stow. The main focus of these meetings in recent years has been to review the council's maintenance and management of the site and that of the Friends of West Stow.

The Friends of West Stow total around 150 people. The Friends help the trust and the Council in a number of ways including:

- Undertaking certain repairs and maintenance around the site
- Undertake costumed re-enactments on site
- Promotion of the site.

The Borough Council has been successful, in recent years, in attracting third party grants from both the Arts Council and Heritage lottery. These schemes have included installation of a new shelter to help enable accommodate the growing pupil visits, improvements to the design and layout of the museum displays to make them more engaging and flexible so that displays can be changed more easily to keep them relevant.

Within the wider country park, we have installed a sculpture trail (Beowulf and Grendel Trail). Beowulf is the longest and greatest surviving Anglo-Saxon poem. The setting of the epic is the sixth century in what is now known as Denmark and south-western Sweden. The sculptures depict characters from that poem.

The Council have also made use of an element of the park, which was previously used as a land fill site, to set out a cyclocross track. The first cyclocross event was hosted at West Stow on 3 November it attracted around 300 participants plus a similar number of spectators. The success of this event triggered a meeting with the regional representative with British Cycling (the national governing body for cycle sport in Great

Britain) who are interested in using the venue to champion other off road cycling events.

The Council has recently renegotiated the lease on the café to guarantee a financial return. It has also reviewed the leases on the fishing lake.

The Council are also part of a multimillion-pound HLF bid for investment in the Brecks (HLF bid called 'Rivers and Fen Edge').

West Stow Country Park will host the launch of the 12th Suffolk Walking Festival on 11 May 2019.

Trust Consultant Archaeologist Faye Minter has been working closely with UCL to promote West Stow as a venue for Undergraduate experimental archaeology courses later in 2019. This would include a week long experimental project programme for around 60 students with demonstrations by professionals in a series of ancient technology and archaeological techniques. Schools and visitors will be able to interact. This is part of the future plans to extended the sites award winning education offer (winners of the Suffolk Museums learning and Access 2017) on site to a new age range which currently focuses on key stages 1 and 2.

There are also plans to replace the current buildings oil-burning boiler with a new ground source heat pump, so reducing the sites energy bills.

3.3 **Heritage and culture:** What is the progress of engaging with and supporting the rural areas as destination venues?

West Suffolk is currently in a strong position in terms of promoting our towns as visitor destinations as we capitalise on the variety of key assets that each area has. These visitor infrastructure assets include both accommodation and attraction providers.

In recent years we have encouraged cross promotion among our destinations, attractions and accommodation providers to ensure that visitors to the area have the opportunity to explore beyond the "hubs" of the areas main towns and into the more rural areas of our Borough. This practice is also replicated on a higher level across the county and neighbouring areas in collaboration with other organisations such as Visit Cambridge and Beyond, All About Ipswich and The Suffolk Coast.

By encouraging visitors to explore beyond Bury St Edmunds, for example, the stay duration can increase, the rural destinations can expect an increase in visitors and the overall trip spend per visit can increase.

We continue to encourage businesses in our rural areas to engage with the Destination Management Organisations that exist in order to establish a beneficial way of working. This process will include engaging with local

businesses and tourism specific providers to understand their current issues and views.

A recent example is Visit Clare which works with both Bury St Edmunds and Beyond and Visit Suffolk to amplify the message of Clare's offer as a destination.

As well as promoting rural places to stay the Bury and Beyond and What's on West Suffolk web sites promote various initiatives in the rural areas throughout the year. One such initiative is the annual Heritage Open Day events. In 2018 the Heritage Open Day event promoted rural venues including: Lackford Lakes, Rede Hall Farm Park, Great War Huts (Hawstead)

The Borough has also for many years supported the annual Suffolk Walking Festival, which has promoted visits into the rural areas of the Borough. West Stow Country Park will be hosting the launch of the 2019 Suffolk Walking Festival.

3.4 **Heritage and culture:** With £150,000 being given to "Bury and Beyond", how has this directly benefited and positively impacted businesses; residents and communities across the Borough (split by rural and non-rural areas).

Bury St Edmunds and Beyond Destination Management Organisation (DMO) was established in April 2017 and launched in September 2017 with the remit of increasing staying visitors to the area and in turn increasing the value of tourism to the local economy.

Over the last 18 months the DMO has actively engaged with local businesses and those tourism focussed businesses in the rural areas. A business receives a wide range of benefits for the subscription payment such as national PR and increased visibility, in addition to the benefits of collaboration and cross promotion as mentioned above. Although there is no initial direct benefit to residents and communities the DMO is tasked with attracting visitors from 3-4 hours away to encourage overnight stays and increased spend. This in turn benefits residents, businesses and communities by increasing the footfall to the town and the surrounding area, and by providing a cohesive and quality brand. The DMO works with both rural and non-rural businesses in the same manner, by helping to amplify their offer and ensuring that they are a part of the quality offer of Bury St Edmunds and Beyond.

3.5 **Sports:** How does the council ensure that money given to Abbeycroft is spent 100% on St Edmundsbury owned sites when Abbeycroft run other sites outside of the area?

St Edmundsbury Borough Council has an agreement with Abbeycroft Leisure which covers the key areas of business, which it pay's Abbeycroft Leisure to deliver. These key areas of business include:

- Leisure Centre facility management
- Sports Development
- Managing/Facilitating mass participation events
- Provide Strategic Advice

A management fee review is conducted annually that monitors progress against the management fee reduction plan and the original investment plan with Abbeycroft Leisure providing financial information to support this process. The sums paid to Abbeycroft Leisure are set a year in advance and are now reducing on a year on year's basis

Representatives from the Council and Abbeycroft Leisure meet on a quarterly basis to review performance. In advance of those meetings Abbeycroft Leisure furnish the Council with quarterly updates regarding activities associated with the work they do for the Council, including financial performance.

In addition to quarterly reports and monitoring Abbeycroft Leisure also provide the council with its annual report and accounts as required by the, Charity Commission and Companies House, which covers all of its activities and identifies funding provided by St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

As Portfolio Holder, I meet at regular intervals, with the CEO of Abbeycroft Leisure along with one of the Council's Corporate Directors to review performance and to discuss any issues of concern.

For further details relating to the work undertaken by Abbeycroft Leisure, please refer to **Appendix 2** Abbeycroft Leisure Impact report 2017/18.

3.6 **Sports:** What efforts are made by the council to ensure all health and fitness related outlets, whether privately owned or not, are included and kept informed of projects to enhance the health and wellbeing of our residents across West Suffolk?

There are a number of bodies that are responsible for promoting the health and wellbeing of our residents. The Council adopted its "Promoting Physical Activity" Framework in 2017 that sets out the outcomes it is seeking and works in partnership to deliver on this. Public Health take a lead on a number of initiatives such as Workplace Wellbeing and commissions the healthy lifestyle partnership One Life. The Council is also a partner in the Most Active County and works with Suffolk Sport to promote initiatives such as Fit Villages and activities for disabled people that are delivered through a range of partners.

In addition, the Council commissions its strategic leisure partner Abbeycroft to undertake sports development activities including:

- Co-ordinate/Facilitate a mass participation events programme linked to sport and physical activity. (example hosting legs of national cycle tours)

- Provide advice or direct local organisations to such advice in relation to advice on sport and physical activity.
- Organise a sports awards event that celebrates local sporting achievement. (2018 event held at Tattersalls, Newmarket)

The Council, via its Families and Communities team, works with local sports and health assets in the towns and villages across the area. Be that to attract additional funding or to promote the offer within the community. In addition they look at how these different organisations can work collaboratively and make those connections where possible.

The Council have supported the setting-up of walk/run routes, park runs and also the Keep Active programme that Abbeycroft facilitate at present.

West Stow Country Park is hosting the launch of this year's walking festival.

We have also supported groups to bring in funding to enhance the local offer, from small projects such as the set-up of new walking group to larger projects like the Bardwell Cricket Pavilion. We work with organisations such as One Life Suffolk, ActivLives and DanceEast.

Our social prescribing project, Haverhill LifeLink, provides individuals with the opportunity to connect with sports and physical activity opportunities in the town. The project has a focus around supporting individuals who are socially isolated, lonely and/or managing long term health conditions. LifeLink use coaching techniques to coproduce an action plan, giving the participant the ownership of their own health and wellbeing journey. Knowing that if individuals have enough information and support to make informed decisions they are likely to commit to change, therefore seeing improvement in their health and also wellbeing. Haverhill LifeLink is a project that joins the dots across the local groups and organisations within the town and is able to introduce local residents to different activities, support and groups. This benefits both the participants, the local health services (GPs, NSFT, and Social Care) and also the voluntary and community sector. Within Haverhill there are roughly 170 different groups and activities and LifeLink has worked with 65 of these so far. Some examples of different activities that participants get involved in include walking football, country dancing and the local operatic society.

The Council have now secured funding to develop a project with local partners and the community in Brandon and Mildenhall, as well as an increase in our offer in Haverhill. This funding is for the next 3 years.

3.7 **Sports:** What efforts have been made during the refurbishment of the Haverhill Leisure Centre to ensure that experienced end users are involved in designing the new facilities such as the Parkour?

St Edmundsbury Borough Council have been working with Abbeycroft Leisure to reduce the ongoing revenue implications of running the Borough's two Leisure Centres. Associated with the agreed reduction in revenue funding has been an agreed capital spend on centre refurbishment, to help make the facilities more sustainable.

The Haverhill Leisure Centre has recently undergone a refurbishment. A team of experienced consultants initially scoped the refurbishment works by reviewing user statistics and feedback and evaluating the sites potential. The consultants' recommendations were then priced and the priced work was then prioritised.

Sport user groups were informed of the proposed changes and following feedback from certain groups, (e.g. short tennis) changes were made to better accommodate their needs.

Throughout the refurbishment user groups were kept updated so that the disruption to their activities was kept to a minimum.

On the back of the rise and recent success of gymnastics, British Gymnastics now recognise Parkour as another branch of gymnastics activity. The consultants who provided support to SEBC and Abbeycroft Leisure believe Parkour is an activity that has potential of growth and something new to help 'keep people, more active, more often!'

In addition, Abbeycroft Leisure have worked with 'Parkour Generations' a leading Parkour equipment provider to determine what would be suit Haverhill Leisure Centre. Parkour Generations consist of people who participate in Parkour and supply equipment not just in the UK but Worldwide. Abbeycrofts 'Xtreme Leader' will be meeting local groups and individuals in the New Year to determine the exact content of the programme (groups such as Haverhill Town Council's 'Youth Action Group' and Haverhill Gymnastics Club).

3.8 **Heritage and Culture:** (The Apex) - Please can you provide the following data covering the last five years on attendance figures; income receipts; profit and loss and future projections

Attendance figures are provided in paragraph 4.3.7 below cumulative box office sales by year since the site first opened in 2010.

Income and Expenditure (budgets and estimates)

2013/14	Budget £	Actual £	Variance
Expenditure	1,258,650	1,437,826	179,176
Income	(516,400)	(738,762)	(222,362)
Net Expenditure	742,250	699,063	(43,187)
2014/15	Budget £	Actual £	Variance
Expenditure	1,260,137	1,727,393	467,256
Income	(588,297)	(1,130,285)	(541,988)
Net Expenditure	671,840	597,108	(74,732)
2015/16	Budget £	Actual £	Variance
Expenditure	1,437,000	1,992,320	555,320
Income	(797,569)	(1,399,980)	(602,411)
Net Expenditure	639,431	592,340	(47,901)
2016/17	Budget £	Actual £	Variance
Expenditure	1,831,012	2,177,076	346,064
Income	(1,178,675)	(1,564,556)	(385,881)
Net Expenditure	652,337	612,520	(39,817)
2017/18	Budget £	Actual £	Variance
Expenditure	1,995,153	2,225,617	230,464
Income	(1,419,450)	(1,710,112)	(290,662)
Net Expenditure	575,703	515,505	(60,198)
2018/19	Budget £	Estimate £	Variance
Expenditure	2,058,933		
Income	(1,485,039)		
Net Expenditure	573,894		

The forward plan for the Apex sets out an aspiration that by 2021/22 the net expenditure of the Apex will be reduced to £450,000.

- 3.9 **Heritage and culture:** (The Apex) - What efforts are being made to ensure that all taxpayers, who contribute to The APEX and Theatre Royal in Bury St Edmunds are able to access those services in the evenings when there is no public transport services particularly from south of Bury St Edmunds?

The issue of there being a lack of public transport in many areas of West Suffolk is not something that the Leisure and Cultural Services can address in isolation.

Across St Edmundsbury BC most households (84.1% average) own at least one car. With regards those wards south of Bury St Edmunds the vehicle ownership levels are as follows:

Horringer and Whelnetham 90%

Chedburgh 96%
Wickhambrook 94%
Withersfield 95%
Kedington 90%
Hundon 92%
Cavendish 91%
Clare 84%
Haverhill East 80%
Haverhill North 80%
Haverhill South 75%
Haverhill West 90%

The fact is that the majority of people living in a rural authority, currently, are reliant on a private mode of transport to enable them to get to where they want to go, when they want to go. Details relating to geographical location of the Apex's audience is indicated in paragraph 4.3.5 below.

The efforts the Borough Council is able to take to ease access to those services supported by the Council in the evenings fall into three main areas:

- Marketing and publicity – Letting people know what is on and promoting ticket sales on line, and via the phone, so people do not have to make multiple visits.
- Ticket costs and Car-parking costs – Ensuring that event ticket costs are reasonable and competitive. Car parking ticket prices are reviewed at agreed intervals by the council.
- Convenience of parking & taxi drop off points – Ensuring that local car-parks are of a good quality and that the location of The Apex and proximity to car-parks and taxi drop off points are suitably publicised and sign posted.

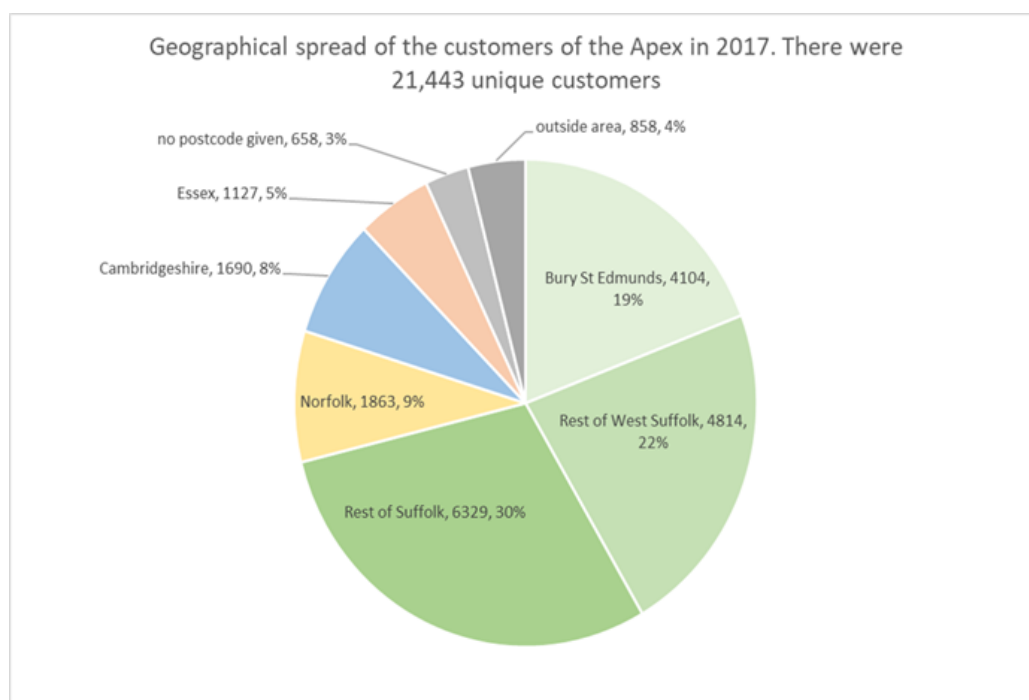
4. The Apex, Bury St Edmunds

Background

- 4.1 The popularity of The Apex has grown rapidly since 2010, when it first opened and is now well established in West Suffolk and beyond with a busy programme and a loyal and growing audience. In June of this year (2018) Cabinet adopted a forward plan for the Apex.
- 4.2 Owing to the positive trajectory of The Apex's performance, it was proposed by Cabinet that the performance of The Apex should in the future be monitored as part of the quarterly Operations Balance Scorecard review at Performance and Audit Committee. In addition to the quarterly monitoring it is also proposed that a more detailed report be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee every three years. The frequency of reporting would bring the service area in line with that of Abbeycroft Leisure.

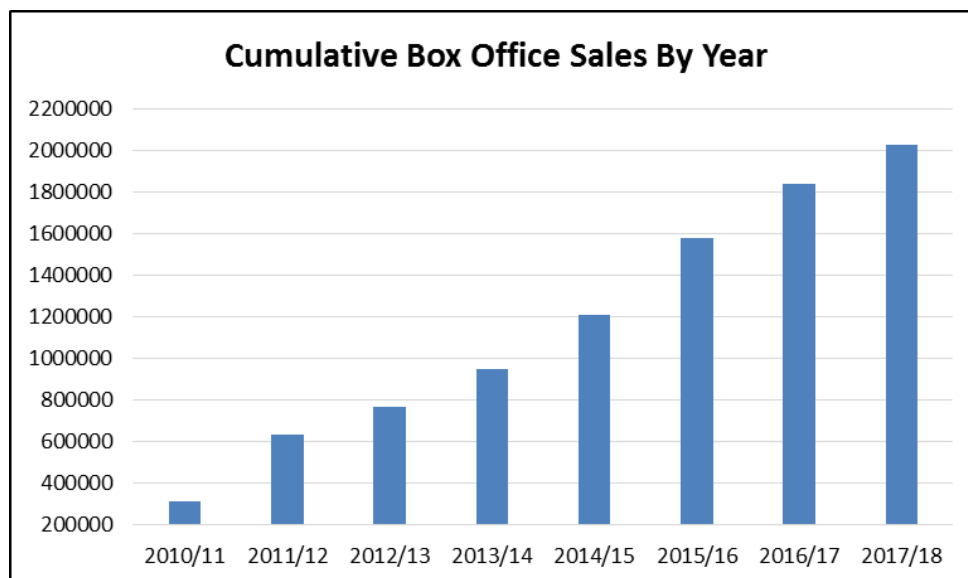
4.3 Apex Performance

- 4.3.1 This response covers the financial year from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. The Apex budget 2017/18 was set at £575,703 (16/17 out-turn was 612,520). The Apex continues to develop as an important local and regional venue and is attracting greater audiences and establishing a loyal customer base. Increased revenue has contributed to a positive variance of £60,197 against budget at the financial year-end and the out turn figure was £515,506 showing a continued reduction in expenditure.
- 4.3.2 The staff team has delivered a number of successful campaigns to raise awareness of the venue which has resulted in increased ticket sales and associated business. The 2017-18 event programme was made up of over 320 events which included professional and amateur performances plus community events in the auditorium, the foyer and lounge. The numbers of tickets sold increased in 2017/18 by 9% to 99,968 and income from ticket sales reached £1.94 million which is an increase of 13% over last year. This excludes meetings and conferences organised by Sodexo. The Apex also handles box office services for other venues.
- 4.3.3 The Apex continues to be a valuable community asset and more and more non-performance events are taking place. A greater use of the studio space is now being made with over 170 classes including yoga, tai chi and baby ballet.
- 4.3.4 The gallery on the first floor is in great demand with exhibitions booked a year in advance. The twelve exhibitions hosted in 2017-18 made a net contribution to the Apex's budget of £2,674.
- 4.3.5 As indicated in the pie chart below The Apex continues to attract a broad spectrum of people from a growing geographical area:



4.3.6 When the Apex first opened in 2010, its annual operating cost was £793,000. For 2018/19 the budget has been set at £570,780. We are confident of achieving further reductions in the cost to the Council of running The Apex over the next 3 years and we are aiming for the budget for 2021/22 to be set at £450,000.

4.3.7 As indicated in the table below the number of tickets sold at the Apex continues to rise:



4.3.8 Councillors and staff across West Suffolk are committed to:
"Supporting and investing in our West Suffolk communities and businesses to encourage and manage ambitious growth in prosperity and quality of life for all"

The Council's three key priorities are:

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

4.3.9 In February 2018, an economic impact study was undertaken by Destination Research Ltd to assess the impact of the Apex. This clearly demonstrates that the provision of a performing arts centre in the heart of Bury St Edmunds is having a significant impact on the town's economy. The study concluded that the Apex has a net annual impact on the local economy of over 6.6M and sustains the equivalent of 84 local jobs per annum. **Appendix 1** to this report provides the details of that report.

4.4. Marketing

4.4.1 The methods of marketing are broad and range from newspaper supplements to email, face book and twitter campaigns. Below are some of the headline statistics about the digital marketing campaigns:

4.4.2 **E-Mailing List**

The mailing list now has 32,069 email addresses of customers who have opted in to hear from us via email – growth of 15.7% over the last year.

4.4.3 **Emails**

The Apex's monthly eNewsletter has an average 'open' rate of 36% (UK average 22.9%)

4.4.4 **Facebook**

Our Facebook page now has 7,792 likes – growth of 26.5% over the last year. The average monthly website visits from Facebook is now 122% higher than in 2016-2017.

4.4.5 **Twitter**

The Apex now has 6,298 Twitter followers – growth of 14.9% over the last year. The average monthly website visits from Twitter is now 25.5% higher than in 2016-2017.

4.4.6 **Apex Website**

In 2017-18, 70% of ticket sales were sold online via the Apex's own website.

The Apex's website monthly unique users in 2017-18 were 22,152.

In order to keep ahead of the competition and keep our customer base growing we need to constantly innovate and update what we do. With this in mind, The Apex developed and launched its new website in 2017. The new website is fully mobile compatible, which has improved the ability to view the website and purchase tickets via mobile platforms.

4.5 **Catering Contract**

The Council entered into a contract with Sodexo in 2012. The budgetary return from that contract (catering and bar concession at The Apex) is detailed in the table below:

Sodexo	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Concession Income	£44,130	£57,408	£68,629	£68,160

At the time of preparing this report, the Council are in negotiations with Sodexo over a potential extension of the contract.

4.6 **Actions recently taken to further enhance The Apex's performance**

- 4.6.1 In April 2018, The Apex introduced booking fees. To date, (November 2018) this has generated a new income of £7,696. After booking fees were introduced we expected donations to decrease, but they have remained constant and between April and November we had generated £12,959 worth of donations, which is only a slight decrease on previous years.

- 4.6.2 In June we launched The Apex's membership scheme which has generated an additional £8,394 of new revenue.
- 4.6.3 The Apex Forward Plan, adopted in June 2018, set out an ambitious work plan for the Leisure Services Team and officers are working hard to realise those ambitions.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee ask follow-up questions of the Cabinet Member following this update.