

Draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2020-2024

Report No:	OAS/WS/19/012	
Report to and dates:	Overview and Scrutiny	14 November 2019
	Cabinet	26 November 2019
	Council	17 December 2019
Cabinet Member:	Councillor John Griffiths Leader of the Council Tel: 01284 757136 Email: john.griffiths@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Ian Gallin Chief Executive Tel: 01284 757001 Email: ian.gallin@westsuffolk.gov.uk	

Decisions Plan: This item is published in the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: All

Recommendation: Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to make comments on the draft Strategic Framework document for Cabinet to consider.

1. Background / Context

- 1.1 This report seeks the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's input into the development of a draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework for 2020-24 (**Appendix A**). The document is intended to succeed the West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2018-20.

'Planning for the Future'

- 1.2 The preparation of the new draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework has been taking place as part of a wider piece of work aimed at 'Planning for the Future', in which a joined-up approach is being taken to the Strategic Framework, West Suffolk Local Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 1.3 The advent of the new council and the aligned timetables of the three documents gives a good opportunity for West Suffolk Council to develop a single, coherent narrative and approach to what councillors want to see achieved in West Suffolk in coming years.

Draft Strategic Framework – progress so far

- 1.4 In preparing the draft Strategic Framework, officers began by compiling information on Members' existing and future priorities. This included analysis of the previous Strategic Framework and other council strategies, the Single Council Business case, existing business plans for council services and Ward member priorities, as shared with the Families and Communities Portfolio Holder.
- 1.5 Two workshops were then organised on 11 and 17 September 2019, to which all Members were invited.
- 1.6 At the first workshop on 11 September, Members provided input on the following questions, the feedback from which has been used to inform both the Strategic Framework and the initial scoping of the new West Suffolk Local Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy:
1. What makes West Suffolk unique (that you want to preserve)?
 2. What are the strategic challenges and opportunities for West Suffolk over the next 20 years?
 3. What are the key things you would like to see achieved over the next 20 years?
- 1.7 The second workshop considered in more detail what might be the best approach to achieving growth in West Suffolk in future years.
- 1.8 The input from Members was then combined with the existing commitments and priorities, plus those of partner organisations, to produce the attached draft Strategic Framework document.

Draft Strategic Framework – structure

- 1.8 As in 2018-20, the document takes the form of a vision, supported by high level strategic priorities, and more detailed actions, as well as some 'ways of working' that outline *how* the council will work to take forward the ambitious set of projects and activities described.

2. Key points to note

- 2.1 **The document is not comprehensive.** The aim of the Strategic Framework document is to provide councillors, staff, partners and interested members of the public with an overview of the councils' strategic direction and its distinctive ways of working, as opposed to a complete description of the activities the councils will be carrying out. The content is therefore necessarily high-level and focused on areas that are changing, with the detail and business as usual activities being fleshed out in individual plans, strategies and service-specific business plans.
- 2.2 **It is proposed that the council's strategic priorities remain the same.** The draft document reflects an ongoing commitment to the three priorities of Growth, Families and Communities and Housing, while updating the detail of how West Suffolk Council will work to improve the quality of life for West Suffolk residents in these areas.
- 2.3 **West Suffolk's contribution is only part of the picture.** The diagram on **page 4** of the draft document shows that West Suffolk's role is not to directly deliver everything referred to in the document but to play a role in influencing, partnering with and working alongside other partners, not least residents and communities.
- 2.4 **The document includes a new emphasis on the Environment and Rural issues.** Space has been left in the draft document to include the emerging priorities of the Environment and Climate Change Taskforce and the Rural Taskforce, and the vision has been revised to reflect the council's commitment to protecting and enhancing the environment.
- 2.5 **The document is a draft that will be designed and formatted before publication,** for example yellow highlighted text will be removed.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 It is not compulsory for councils to have strategic planning documents in place. However, this can result in a lack of strategic direction and agreement on the vision and purpose of the organisation, or the outcomes that councillors and staff are working towards.

4. Consultation and engagement

- 4.1 Discussion by Overview and Scrutiny Committee provides an important input into the draft document as a whole, in addition to the engagement with Members that took place through the September workshops. The more detailed proposals contained in the document have arisen as a result of ongoing engagement by councillors and officers with a wide range of stakeholders, for example, business, residents, communities and voluntary

groups. This engagement includes formal consultations, surveys and monitoring of feedback, as well as more informal dialogue.

5. Risks

5.1	Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
		Low/Medium/High*		Low/Medium/High*
	Lack of funding to support full set of projects listed in draft document.	Medium	Finance team involvement in business planning to fully assess value for money of detailed proposals	Low
	Future changes in the wider economic environment affect the delivery of economic development and housing objectives	Medium	Ongoing monitoring of local economic conditions. Wider changes in model of service delivery to allow prioritisation of economic and housing priorities	Low
	Unable to meet public's expectations of what the councils will deliver	Medium	Effective communications to educate residents about new ways of working	Low

6. Implications arising from the proposal

Financial

- 6.1 The draft strategic framework document is aligned with the Medium Term Financial Strategy and budget setting process for 2020-24.

Equalities

- 6.2 The draft document includes a number of priorities where a particular emphasis is placed on meeting the needs of different groups. Where appropriate, individual policies and projects referred to in the draft Strategic Framework document have already undergone, or will undergo, an Equality Impact Assessment.

7. Appendices

- 7.1 **Appendix A** – Draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework document 2020-24

8. Background documents

- 8.1 West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2018-2020
www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/strategicframework