

Draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2020-24

Report No:	CAB/WS/20/010	
Report to and date/s:	Cabinet	14 January 2020
	Council	25 February 2020
Cabinet Member:	Councillor John Griffiths Leader of the Council Tel: 01284 757136 Email: john.griffiths@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
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Decisions Plan: The decisions made as a result of this report will usually be published within 48 hours. This item will be referred to Council for a final decision and is therefore not subject to call-in. This item is included on the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: All wards

Recommendation: It is recommended that, subject to the approval of Council and the incorporation of Appendix A (Leader's Foreword), the draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2020-2024, as contained in Appendix B to Report No: CAB/WS/20/010 be adopted, taking account of the comments made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.



1. Background / Context

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet's approval of the draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework for 2020-24. 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 a draft Strategic Framework document.
- 1.9 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the draft document on 14 November 2019 and made a number of comments which are set out in section 3 below.

Draft Strategic Framework – structure

- 1.10 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. A draft Leader's Foreword is also attached to this report at **Appendix A**, for inclusion in the final, designed document following Cabinet approval.

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 West Suffolk Environment and Climate Change Taskforce and the West Suffolk Rural Taskforce, and the vision has been revised to reflect the Council's commitment to protecting and enhancing the environment.

3. Input from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 3.1 The following points were raised by members of the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee on 14 November 2019. The proposed handling of these points is shown in the right hand column below:

Input from:	Point raised:	Proposed handling:
Cllr Ian Shipp	Given the evidence that there is a need for one bedroomed properties and bungalows, could	It is proposed that the detail of the size and type of properties to be delivered should be covered in the Local Plan,

	this be made clear in the document?	following the Housing Needs Assessment.
Cllr Diane Hind	The framework should highlight the work that needs to be done to respond to the issues arising from an ageing population and increased prevalence of dementia. The document should also reflect the disparities highlighted in the recent Ward reports, especially around children and educational attainment	The infographics that have now been included in the draft (since the meeting of O&S) highlight these and similar issues. Further, action 2 on p16 of the draft document commits West Suffolk Council to working in partnership to support initiatives that focus on prevention and early intervention, particularly on issues such as health, crime and social isolation.
Cllr Richard Rout	The issue of climate change should be included in the bullets in section 4 of the framework (underpinning the vision)	Revise the first bullet point under the Growth priority to read: "encourage economic growth in West Suffolk that benefits our local economy, our workforce, our families and communities and our global and local environments, in particular by tackling climate change. "
Cllr Stephen Frost	The priority "Drive progress with partners to plan for the infrastructure needed to support our economy" (p15) should include reference to infrastructure that protects and enhances the environment	Revise bullet point 3 on p15 to read: "Drive progress with partners to plan for the infrastructure needed to support our economy, including infrastructure that reduces our impact on the environment, for example, non-car transport "
Cllr Simon Cole	The document should include more detail on the evidence to support the selection of the priorities	The updated version of the document (as attached at Appendix A) includes a range of statistics and infographics.
Cllr Lisa Ingwall-King	The priority of protecting the environment and mitigating the impact of climate change should be integrated more fully in the document. Cllr Ingwall-King had produced a set of drafting suggestions for	Given the scale of the changes proposed by Cllr Ingwall-King, it was agreed that the Environment and Climate Change Taskforce should be invited to consider how to handle them. In discussion with the Chair of the Taskforce it was agreed that the Strategic Framework should be adopted



	inclusion in the document.	with the priorities that had already been recommended by the Taskforce (numbers 8 p15; 7 on p16; and 7 on p17), but that further time and consideration should be given to any further, more detailed, environmental references.
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4. Alternative options

- 4.1 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.

5. Consultation and engagement

- 5.1 Discussion by Overview and Scrutiny Committee provided 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.

6. Risks

6.1

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



7. Implications arising from the proposal

Financial

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

Equalities

- 7.2 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.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Draft Leader’s Foreword to West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2020-24
Appendix B – Draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework document 2020-24

9. Background documents

- 9.1 West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2018-20
www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/strategicframework

