

APPENDIX A – Rural Taskforce Implementation – Action Plan (September 2021 final update)

DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY, ACCESS TO HEALTH AND TRANSPORT

Better connected rural places, where people are able to stay safe, healthy and well, build relationships and community and access skills, education and jobs.

Themes	Actions	Associated activities	Planned actions	Progress
Improving rural transport and access to services	T1. Initiate a review of rural transport options across West Suffolk and then co-ordinate a plan to fill in any gaps, including exploring the potential alternative options to address these	a) Review timetabling and whether it meets the needs of customers	a) Understand from SCC what processes they undertake to review rural transport efficiency and effectiveness; then review what further action West Suffolk may need to take.	a) COMPLETE. SCC currently spend over £1.2m per year on 25 local bus contracts, all of which are rural in nature. The Connecting Communities services are also used across Suffolk, most of their work is rural in nature. Going forward the government's National Bus Strategy describes the plans to improve bus services. The strategy includes the need to consider rural public transport. The guidance sets out timeframes to build the Enhanced Partnership (EP)

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		b) Explore taxi buses	b) Explore with SCC, including lessons learned from school bus pilot.	and establish the Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIP). b) COMPLETE. SCC submitted a bid in June 2020 to a Department for Transport (DfT) Rural Mobility fund, with a proposal for piloting taxi buses in three Suffolk localities, including Lidgate, Ousden, Hawkedon and Hundon in West Suffolk. This bid was rejected as DfT wanted to support the expansion of schemes that were already in operation. However, SCC decided to launch the Katch service between Framlingham, Wickham Market and Wickham Market station (Campsea Ashe) as a pilot. If successful, the plan is to duplicate this elsewhere including the bid areas.
	T2. Review how all existing transport services and alternative transport methods are publicised and consider improvements	Include consideration of a single point of contact for transport information (whether improving	Understand how transport information is currently communicated; then consider what further action West Suffolk may need to take to support communication in rural areas.	COMPLETE. All transport information is available online. Suffolk OnBoard contains timetable information and a journey planner. A Bus Back Better web presence is also being developed. While booklets are no longer produced, displays at bus stations and a few other

Themes	Actions	Associated activities	Planned actions	Progress
		existing or creating new)		key interchange stops are still maintained. SCC provide the countywide real time bus information system that powers the screens at Bury and Mildenhall and also mobile apps that provide info on any stop in Suffolk. New screens continue to be installed, when funding permits.
	T3. Work with the business community to assess the commercial viability of cross-funded services to provide transport to rural areas		Contact Chamber of Commerce to discuss how best to promote this idea.	COMPLETE. Officers contacted Suffolk Chamber of Commerce. They are not aware of any companies offering this at present, however, Suffolk Chamber are doing some work to encourage better bus use, especially for rural businesses. A roundtable meeting was held in January 2020 with bus operators, businesses and Suffolk County Council, at which ideas were explored for doing this, particularly in light of the sustainability agenda.
	T4. Explore with bus companies the viability of incorporating stops at key locations eg West Suffolk Hospital,		Discuss with bus companies and SCC to find out what could be possible.	COMPLETE. The viability of changing the routes of buses coming into Bury from rural areas was discussed at the Bury St Edmunds bus liaison meeting (between SCC, West Suffolk Council and the bus operators) on 11 February 2020. The clear response from the bus

Themes	Actions	Associated activities	Planned actions	Progress
	Western Way for buses to Bury St Edmunds			<p>operators was that this proposal would require additional funding in order to be viable and not to result in negative consequences for other bus services. This was because an extension of the current routes would result in services becoming less frequent in rural areas. Concerns were also raised about the impact on road surfaces of more buses driving on the roads around West Suffolk Hospital.</p> <p>In response to reading the minutes of the meeting, officers were contacted by The Voluntary Network and asked to promote 'West Suffolk Hospital Ride' which supports people needing to travel to West Suffolk Hospital from Haverhill and rural areas between.</p>
Enabling more walking and cycling around rural settlements, safe from speeding vehicles	T5. Review availability of information about rural foot and cycle paths (maps, signage etc), encouraging parish councils to publicise these		Find out what information is currently available; then review what further action West Suffolk may need to take.	COMPLETE. SCC provide several resources: Active Travel contains news on the active travel activity, ongoing consultations, contact details etc.; and The Way to Go holds the SCC behaviour change information, including the cycling and walking maps and journey planning for many Suffolk towns

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				Hard copies of cycling and walking maps are also made available to libraries and Tourist Information Centres.
	T6. Promote use of cycle and footways for both recreation and purposeful journeys		Find out what activities are currently undertaken in this area; then review what further action West Suffolk may need to take.	COMPLETE. The SCC Cycling Policy Development Panel completed its three-month task and reported to SCC Cabinet in June 2020. The Government awarded funding to Suffolk for a number of Emergency Active Travel Fund schemes, listed here: https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/advice-on-travel/active-travel-improvements-for-cycling-and-walking/
	T7. Explain the process/criteria that are available to parish councils to influence speed limits			COMPLETE. Families and Communities Officers are able to provide advice to Parish and Town councils in relation to setting up Community Speedwatch schemes
	T8. Continue to co-ordinate support for Community Speedwatch from the police		Continue role of Families and Communities Team in signposting community groups and parishes who come to West Suffolk Council asking how to do this (the Council has no role as it has to be done directly between the	COMPLETE

Themes	Actions	Associated activities	Planned actions	Progress
			community and the Police).	
	T9. Explore with SCC/Police/Suffolk Roadsafe the potential for a rural road safety / driver behaviour change campaign to tackle speeding in villages	a) explore ANPR use	Contact Suffolk Police to discuss this proposal.	<p>IN WORK PROGRAMME. This will be taken forward through the Families and Communities Team's ongoing liaison with Suffolk Police on issues raised by rural communities</p> <p>SCC have also commissioned an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) project through the Suffolk 2020 fund. These will be mobile devices that record the number plate of speeding drivers. Drivers of vehicles that exceed an agreed threshold will receive a letter badged with SCC and Suffolk Constabulary.</p> <p>Data will also be forwarded to the Police's Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT) about drivers who have received more than two letters in 12 months. The SNTs, resource permitting, will contact the drivers directly.</p>

Themes	Actions	Associated activities	Planned actions	Progress
<p>Improving digital connectivity in rural areas</p>	<p>T10. Work with SCC/Suffolk Broadband to understand existing provision and planned improvements, including not - spots and plans to target them</p>	<p>a) aim for 100% coverage</p>		<p>COMPLETE. West Suffolk Council is an active member of the Suffolk Better Broadband task group. Progress to date means that the total superfast broadband coverage in Suffolk is around 98%.</p> <p>Further additional funding has delivered or is in process of delivering connectivity to approximately 5,000 more premises in harder to reach areas.</p> <p>There has also been significant investment in the Suffolk Cloud Network. This programme looks to improve connectivity to key public sector sites across Suffolk (including Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill, Mildenhall and Newmarket in the West Suffolk area).</p>

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	T11. Establish what improvements are required to data speeds for health service centres in rural areas to promote access to local provision, minimising travel and maximising use of technology		Contact WS CCG to find out current situation in surgeries and health centres and what improvements are needed.	COMPLETE. West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group advised that there are no significant problems within health service centres. However, all health centres within key towns are covered by the Suffolk Cloud and able to benefit from this update to the core network.
	T12. Lobby Government to influence policy on further funding to support rural area rollout of superfast broadband / mobile data		Invite Peter Stevens to write to Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, copied to Chair of Rural Services Network and Matt Hancock MP, lobbying for better Broadband.	SUPERSEDED. In August 2021, Government announced further roll-out of Project Gigabit which aims to give people in rural England access to the fastest broadband speeds on the market. Suffolk is on phase 1b of the project, with procurement due to take place in February 2022 and the contract commencing in January 2023.
	T13. Ensure clear and realistic provision of information to community groups on local (short term) solutions to broadband data	a) Provide information / support to communities on how they can access land for self-dig provision of ducting to enable improved	Signpost community groups to Openreach Community Officer and website	IN WORK PROGRAMME. Families and Communities officers will continue to signpost community groups to these resources. Links will be made to Project Gigabit.

Themes	Actions	Associated activities	Planned actions	Progress
	speeds and access to funding	pace / cost of infrastructure provision b) engage open reach fibre project		

APPROPRIATE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

A wider variety of housing in rural areas that is appropriate and affordable for a range of local people, located in developments that the local community support

Themes	Actions	Associated activities	Planned actions	Progress
Community engagement with future planning and development	H1. Increase the involvement of local communities and parish councils in new housing development	a) Proactively inform and engage with communities and parishes on the need for local growth and affordable housing	Build engagement with rural communities and parish councils into the West Suffolk Local Plan consultation and engagement strategy, including a Parish Forum.	<p>IN WORK PROGRAMME.</p> <p>Consultation on Issues and Options as part of the local plan will take place October to December 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Member and Parish information packs, information sheets, posters, leaflets, dedicated number and email address. - Dedicated workshop with Town and Parish Councils - Attended individual town and parish councils - Local Plan update notifications - Attended and presented at Town and Parish Forum <p>Officers will review engagement plan and involve Town and Parish</p>

Themes	Actions	Associated activities	Planned actions	Progress
				Councils in advance of Preferred Options consultation (March 2022)
	H2. Improve communications and relationships between West Suffolk and Parish Councils, through consistent engagement via Ward members (with F&C team support)		<p>Ensure engagement on planning applications reflects preferences of rural residents and organisations.</p> <p>Build local leadership skills around planning and development into Member Development programme, including through Development Control Committee briefing sessions.</p>	<p>IN WORK PROGRAMME.</p> <p>Findings of Rural Taskforce surveys about how best to engage with rural communities have been shared with Development Management Team to influence engagement.</p> <p>Officers are considering how best to embed local leadership skills around planning and development into the Member Development programme.</p> <p>The Development Management team send out regular newsletters to Parish and Town Councillors and Members which provide updates on the team, as well as summaries of regulation and legislation changes and spotlights on particular issues (for example, our approach to noise considerations close to the US air force bases,</p>

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				<p>flood requirements). We also attend individual Parish and Town Council meetings, when invited, to address particular topics.</p> <p>Development Management officers are discussing with the Democratic Services Team the possibility of online training on specific hot topics as a series of separate events.</p>
	<p>H3. Support the development of the Eastern Community Homes Hub (a tool for the Parish Councils that are interested in Community Land Trust / community led housing)</p>		<p>Share Community Action Suffolk (CAS) announcement about Eastern Community Homes Hub with Members and officers</p>	<p>COMPLETE. There are now 17 local authorities signed up to the Hub including West Suffolk Council. Eastern Community Homes have been working to engage with town councils, parish councils, landowners, and individuals in relation to community-led housing. The launch event took place in March 2021. No town or parish councils within West Suffolk took up the opportunity to attend these events. Ten town or parish councils have been given introductions to community-led housing and the Eastern</p>

Themes	Actions	Associated activities	Planned actions	Progress
				Community Homes hub through the Eastern Community Homes advisor for Suffolk.
Establishing an evidence base to guide future development	H4. Develop a compendium of approaches to understanding need and developing local housing plans	a) Become an enabler of housing needs surveys that establish FUTURE housing need (including looking at local land availability) and are supported by communications with local communities	Raise awareness of Housing Needs Surveys in villages.	IN WORK PROGRAMME. Community Action Suffolk is working with four Parish Councils who are going ahead with housing needs studies but to date no decision has been made with regards to bringing forward a rural exception site or community-led housing development.
		b) Encourage housing needs surveys alongside Neighbourhood Plans	Strategic Planning Team to promote Housing Needs Surveys as Neighbourhood plan proposals come forward.	COMPLETE. The Strategic Planning Team have been briefed so that they will encourage Housing Needs Surveys. The Local Plans team provide advice and assistance through the Neighbourhood Planning process
Ensuring the planning and infrastructure frameworks are appropriate	H5. Develop a policy that reflects housing need based on future demographics	a) factors are age and ability	Develop an appropriate Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in response to need.	IN WORK PROGRAMME. The housing types and mix evidence base to inform policy preparation is underway.

Themes	Actions	Associated activities	Planned actions	Progress
				Local Plan Policy – Adoption July 2024. SPD to follow.
	H6. Review / update the Affordable Housing guide (following Local plan adoption) and promote it with Councillors and Parish Councils		Develop an appropriate Affordable Housing Guide in response to need.	IN WORK PROGRAMME after 2024. Affordable Housing Guide will follow SPD.
	H7. Explore possibility of designating land as Rural so as to allow affordable housing in developments of <10 dwellings		Include as a question to consider as part of the Local Plan Preferred Options stage.	IN WORK PROGRAMME. The Local Plan does not designate rural areas. This is carried out through the Housing Act (section 157). The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is expected to amend the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and set out its proposals to reform the Planning system in the Autumn 2021. It is expected that these reforms may make this option no longer viable in the short term as the Government focuses on delivery. Officers will review this

Themes	Actions	Associated activities	Planned actions	Progress
				issue once the reforms are published.
	H8. Set new local plan policies to cover the following issues:	a) Review settlement boundaries in our rural settlements to allow, where appropriate, small scale growth	Include as a question to consider as part of the Local Plan Preferred Options stage.	IN WORK PROGRAMME. A review of settlement boundaries will take place following Preferred Options consultation and inform Proposed Submission consultation (February 2023).
		b) Introduce / develop design standards that promote sustainable places where people want to live		IN WORK PROGRAMME. Design policies (in accordance with NPPF and emerging evidence (including viability assessment)) will be included in the Preferred Options consultation (March 2022).
		c) Explore mechanisms for requiring sustainable technologies e.g. Air/Ground Source Heat Pumps		IN WORK PROGRAMME. Sustainable Construction Policies (in accordance with NPPF and emerging evidence (including viability assessment)) will be included in the Preferred Options consultation (March 2022).
		d) Retain single storey homes in villages where appropriate (not within gift of council		IN WORK PROGRAMME. It is not possible to include a single storey home policy restriction within a Local Plan.

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		- can be dealt with through Lifetime Homes)		Policies to meet or support accessible home standard will be included in Preferred Options consultation (March 2022)
		e) Provide for sustainable and flexible housing types (both tenure and lifetime homes). e.g. revise settlement hierarchy to include more types of place to support growth in rural areas		<p>IN WORK PROGRAMME. Policies to meet accessible home standard (in accordance with NPPF and emerging evidence (including viability assessment)) will be included in Preferred Options consultation (March 2022).</p> <p>The settlement hierarchy has been revised and consulted upon in Issues and Options (October – December 2021). The proposed hierarchy included two further ‘types of place’ to support appropriate growth in rural areas.</p> <p>The hierarchy was based upon factual evidence prepared in accordance with the NPPF.</p>

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		f) Revise exception site policy to enable more exception sites delivered across West Suffolk where there is an identified Housing Need		IN WORK PROGRAMME. Policies to support exception sites (in accordance with NPPF and emerging evidence (including viability assessment)) will be included in the Preferred Options consultation (March 2022)
		g) Introduce space standards into housing / planning requirements		IN WORK PROGRAMME. Policies to support space standards (in accordance with NPPF and emerging evidence (including viability assessment)) will be included in the Preferred Options consultation (March 2022)
	H9. Enable provision of homes for people with a local connection through Affordable Housing SPD policy, based on evidence of local housing need (through survey). This		Include in the range of options considered as part of the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).	IN WORK PROGRAMME (after 2024). SPD will follow Local Plan

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	would include Registered Provider-led housing			
	H10. Increase provision of rural infrastructure by supporting communities to plan for future needs which will support targeted help		Encourage production of neighbourhood plans and other initiatives by communities to consider their future needs, through ongoing liaison with local areas.	IN WORK PROGRAMME. Nine Neighbourhood Plans are in progress. Three Neighbourhood Plans have been adopted or made. Strategic Planning and Families and Communities Teams are providing advice and assistance.
	H11. Explore HMOs / Temp accommodation in hard to let properties (on a case by case basis, depending on suitability, e.g. transport)		Monitor hard to let properties, using data from Choice Based Lettings. Then share with housing strategy team to work with Registered Providers to see if there are alternative options.	IN WORK PROGRAMME. This will be a future task for the Data and Analysis Business Partner: to look at properties on the Choice Based Lettings system; to analyse the number of bids; to identify which properties have not been let; and from this deduce which are the 20 properties which are the hardest to let in West Suffolk. This analysis will then be shared with the Housing Options Team, to consider

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				whether alternative options such as HMOs and Temporary accommodation should be discussed with Registered Providers.
<p>Changing the wider economic model for housing development</p>	<p>H12. Explore opportunities around church and charitable land</p> <p>H13. Lobby Government for greater funding to support building rural housing</p>		<p>Raise awareness of services offered by Locality https://locality.org.uk/</p> <p>Invite Peter Stevens to write to Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, copying to Rural Services Network and Matt Hancock MP, lobbying for greater funding to support rural housing.</p>	<p>IN WORK PROGRAMME. The Families and Communities Team will raise awareness of the resources available as appropriate.</p> <p>IN WORK PROGRAMME. This issue has been included in the wider lobbying and strategic communications approach that officers have developed during COVID-19. This approach has been developed to ensure key messages are fed into different lobbying opportunities as appropriate, and in a coherent, timely and joined-up way, especially given the pressures Government ministers are facing</p>

Themes	Actions	Associated activities	Planned actions	Progress
				during the response and recovery phases of COVID.

STRONG COMMUNITIES

Strong rural communities that are integrated, informed, equipped and empowered.

Themes	Actions	Associated activities	Planned actions	Progress
Supporting long term planning by communities to identify need / support	C1. Support communities with appraisal / plans for their future	a) Gain a better understanding of people in communities (their capability and capacity) and assets	<p>Include this approach in Member Development for Ward Members.</p> <p>Continue the support of Families and Communities Officers for local communities, in line with Asset Based Community Development approaches.</p>	<p>IN WORK PROGRAMME. There is evidence of good progress in this area. One of the reasons for the positive response to COVID-19 in rural areas was Members and officers knowing the local connectors, and communities being empowered.</p> <p>Families and Communities Team support development of plans by community groups where appropriate, for example, setting up a Good Neighbour Scheme or improving a local asset. More neighbourhood plans are also being looked at.</p> <p>The Families and Communities Team and Portfolio Holder recently completed eight weeks of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) training</p>

Themes	Actions	Associated activities	Planned actions	Progress
	C2. Review the toolkit / compendium of guidance to help communities obtain targeted and proactive support from VCS / Councils		<p>Review the communications, resources, training and signposting available to local communities.</p> <p>Explore the resources available from other organisations working in rural West Suffolk.</p>	<p>COMPLETE. The Community Restart (Recovery) Cell reviewed the available information and made more available as groups get started back up again. Information is available on funding (including workshops) and training. The Families and Communities Team signpost to this information.</p> <p>Catch up meetings have been established with Community Action Suffolk (CAS) to ensure support is available to communities and to discuss how to enhance the offer from WSC Families and Communities team. The available information is here: Information to Support VCSE Organisations During Covid-19 - Community Action Suffolk</p> <p>Groups that were established or enhanced during COVID-19 were signposted to relevant support organisations (for personal protective equipment (PPE), finance, safeguarding issues, volunteer training) by West</p>

Themes	Actions	Associated activities	Planned actions	Progress
				<p>Suffolk Council and CAS working in partnership.</p> <p>Following a SWOT analysis of the community groups that worked on COVID-19, CAS have also contacted these groups to ask what type of support they would like in the longer term.</p>
Supporting and nurturing volunteering	C3. Work with the VCS on flexible and creative approaches to engaging people in volunteering, including young people and businesses. (for example, information in GP surgeries, shops, workplaces, libraries and pubs)	a) Encourage employer-supported volunteering schemes, encouraging businesses to support volunteering initiatives in communities or undertake volunteering initiatives themselves	Find out from Community Action Suffolk (who are leading on promoting volunteering) what work is underway or planned; and then consider whether further action is needed by West Suffolk Council.	<p>IN WORK PROGRAMME. A draft Suffolk Volunteer Strategy is being considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board. The Families and Communities Team are working with West Suffolk HR team to consider how to link into it.</p> <p>Work is also ongoing with Community Action Suffolk around a survey to capture input from people who volunteered over last 12 months. For example, do they still want to volunteer and where are their skills?</p>
		b) Support new volunteers through mentoring		<p>Work is also underway to bolster volunteering in youthwork – for example supporting qualifications for those involved in working with</p>

Themes	Actions	Associated activities	Planned actions	Progress
		c) Support volunteering by enabling local people to just get on and do the things they are passionate about to help others		young people and supporting safeguarding. Safeguarding support and keeping people safe: Covid-19 - Community Action Suffolk
		d) Tackle understanding/myths about red tape associated with volunteering		This progress builds on the experience during COVID when 90 per cent of parish councils played an active role in COVID-19 work, for example, through dedicated helplines, co-ordinating the community groups in the area, or signposting residents to existing support. Evidence now suggests that most community groups are restarting after restrictions ease.
		e) Work with parish councils to myth bust about what being a parish councillor involves		
Helping communities access funding	C4. Provide local communities with information and support on accessing funding	a) Share information with local councillors and community champions	Find out from Community Action Suffolk (who lead on supporting communities to access funding) what work is underway or planned; and then consider whether further action is needed by West Suffolk Council.	

Themes	Actions	Associated activities	Planned actions	Progress
			<p>Establish links with Suffolk Community Foundation and share funding opportunities with communities</p> <p>Continue to promote funding opportunities to communities when new funding streams become available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing Locality Budget allocations by £500 for each Councillor (for second year) - Promoting Suffolk Community Foundation's COVID-19 Response Fund. - Administering COVID restart funding <p>This work will continue through ongoing catch ups with CAS to discuss further support and how we can link in with their services better and the WS grants officer attending Suffolk wide funding group. Links have also been made with Suffolk Community Foundation.</p> <p>CAS information is here: Coronavirus Funding and Sustainability - Community Action Suffolk</p>
		b) Ensure training and development for parish councillors includes material on accessing funding and is promoted	Find out from Suffolk Association of Local Councils what work is underway or planned; and then consider whether further action is needed by West Suffolk Council.	COMPLETE. Meeting with Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) Chief Executive and Chair took place on 13 March 2020. Actions agreed, to be taken forward.

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		c) Promote the funding portal / help to apply	All Families and Communities officers to continue to signpost community groups to Funding4Suffolk	IN WORK PROGRAMME
Improving knowledge of and access to information and advice	C5. Improve how existing VCS resources are communicated to communities	a) Further develop the network of community connectors / champions that can be go-to supporters	Continue with the Families and Communities Team approach of identifying, supporting and equipping Community Connectors to lead change in their local areas.	IN WORK PROGRAMME. During COVID-19, relationships with Community Connectors were found to be strong and effective, as over 400 organisations came forward within days of lockdown being announced, asking to be involved in the COVID-19 response in West Suffolk. The Families and Communities Team support community connectors with advice and support and work to link communities in with Community Action Suffolk to ensure aware of all services available.

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		b) Understand and communicate who partners are and what their offer is	Review the current approach to communicating with communities, sharing best practice and signposting them to support; and put in place improvements.	IN WORK PROGRAMME. Feedback from community groups was that communication with was in large part extremely effective during COVID-19. CAS and WSC are working with community groups to ensure these links continue after COVID-19, and that community groups' views on the best form of support are taken forward.
		c) Share best practice and learning from successes/failures		
	C6. Promote and develop use of networking resources such as "Next Door" to enable individual engagement in supporting community needs		Remind Families and Communities Team to promote use of networking resources within communities.	IN WORK PROGRAMME. The Families and Communities Team promote Infolink and My Neighbourhood plus other resources that are most appropriate, for example, local Facebook pages.
	C7. Explore with SALC the development of an app to communicate with parish councils	a) Share information on opportunities for development of assets (churches, village halls and other buildings)	Explore with SALC.	IN WORK PROGRAMME. Meeting with SALC CEO and Chair took place on 13 March 2020. The Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit (JEPU) have also been working on improving communication with town and

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				<p>parish councils, drawing on lessons learned during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>JEPU have been working with CAS, SALC and the Collaborative Communities Board to create a system through which all voluntary organisations can be communicated with. The work includes exploring the potential role of online tools to enable parish and town councils to store and share key information.</p>
Identifying and nurturing assets	C8. Raise awareness of the value that community assets offer		Continue to support communities in championing the role of both existing and new facilities in their local areas. Signpost community groups to support from Locality .	<p>IN WORK PROGRAMME. The Families and Communities Team work holistically with communities, to help them secure the appropriate grant funding for local assets – whether it is for heritage purposes, environmental grants, business grants or Government funding for village halls.</p> <p>CAS also provide information on village halls here: Covid-19 Information for Village Halls and Community Buildings - Community Action Suffolk</p>

Themes	Actions	Associated activities	Planned actions	Progress
Bringing all together in supporting rural communities	C9. Promotion of parish council clustering where appropriate to share approaches		Families and Communities Service Manager to explore with parish councils the opportunity for clustering and where appropriate share resources.	IN WORK PROGRAMME. WSC will continue to explore with Parish Councils in the future as appropriate as opportunities arise. During COVID-19, Parish councils spoke to one another to offer mutual support, For example, Newmarket Town Council set up an action line quickly so other councils were in contact to learn how to do it. Neighbouring villages also 'looked after' one another
	C10. Explore approaches to clustering assets e.g. village halls to simplifying management		Where opportunities are identified Families and Communities Officers will continue to promote sharing and clustering of assets with communities for example sharing of booking systems.	IN WORK PROGRAMME. WSC to explore with Parish Councils in the future as appropriate as opportunities arise. The work will include any assets that are not reopening as the issue may be pertinent in this context. The Families and Communities Team will link local groups up with others who have experience of successfully managing joint assets.

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	C11. Explore combining SALC and WSC Parish liaison		Discuss with SALC the opportunity to merge forums to ensure better support from all parishes	COMPLETE On 14 July 2021 the first SALC/WSC forum took place
	C12. Continue linking up Good Neighbour Schemes		Remind Families and Communities Team to promote within communities, where appropriate. Continue to work with CAS in promoting Good Neighbour Schemes.	IN WORK PROGRAMME. A number of new Good Neighbour Schemes have emerged as a result of COVID-19. WSC links new schemes with existing ones to share best practice. WSC is working with some of the smaller schemes that would like to have co-ordinating arrangements to bring them together and signposting them to the CAS support and funding that is available.