



Forest Heath • St Edmundsbury

West Suffolk
working together

Sustainability Strategy

2013-2018

A sustainable future for West Suffolk

Date Approved: December 2013



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Preface

Increasing demands for resources such as land, food, energy and water necessitate a better balance between our economic and social needs without compromising the needs of others or the state of the environment. The changing climate may also have significant implications, both positive and negative. West Suffolk is not isolated from these challenges.

For many decades, local authorities have played a strategic delivery role in shaping the quality of the local area, whether it has been through the planning framework, providing key services such as waste collection, public health, cleansing and housing to ensure that the local community can function and prosper or enabling others to live fulfilling lives in a safe environment.

Working together, Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) and St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) are committed to managing the effects that our activities have on the natural environment. The two councils already regulate activities which could have an impact on human health and the environment using our powers under planning and other statutory frameworks. In this Strategy and the supporting action plan a range of issues have been identified which the Councils wish to influence through our services at a local level.

We recognise the value of working with the wider community in West Suffolk, including the commercial and voluntary sectors as well as locally significant organisations if we all are to make genuine progress on reducing CO₂ emissions and becoming a more climate resilient place. Our collaborative approach should also help us find resources to deliver appropriate solutions to meet the challenges.

The challenge of creating a sustainable future is great. We will strive to achieve the ambitions contained in our Strategy, allowing the benefits to be felt by residents, communities and businesses as well as the protection of our natural environment in West Suffolk.

Jargon Buster

CO ₂	Carbon Dioxide
DECC	Department for Energy and Climate Change
WHECA	Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act
FHDC	Forest Heath District Council
GEP	Green Economy Pathfinder
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
LNP	Local Nature Partnership
PBO	Professional Buying Organisations
SCAP	Suffolk Climate Action Plan
SCCP	Suffolk Climate Change Partnership
SEBC	St Edmundsbury Borough Council
SSP	Suffolk Strategic Partnership
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
SWP	Suffolk Waste Partnership

Our vision for a sustainable future in West Suffolk

Our vision is to create the best possible future for people in West Suffolk. Within this Strategy, to deliver this ambition we will endeavour to:

Be a community leader: Where possible, our business activities will demonstrate best sustainable practices and our estate, transport fleet and assets will play their part in cutting our energy and water use. In so doing, we will work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions with an aspiration to cut our emissions ahead of statutory national targets in line with the ambition of our partners within Suffolk – Creating the Greenest County¹

Build a strong, resilient economy: We will help businesses become more resource efficient, resilient to a changing climate, and be able to take advantage of any opportunities

Help to alleviate fuel poverty: We will strive so that everyone who lives in West Suffolk has the opportunity to live in a decent and affordably warm home

Respond by adapting to a changing climate: We will ensure that our services are climate-resilient and help others in West Suffolk to be the same

Help local communities become energy and water efficient: We will endeavour to influence the design and construction of development in the area. We will also work with others to find cost-effective refurbishment solutions to improve energy and water efficiency

Ensure green open spaces for all: We will work to protect and enhance local biodiversity so that wildlife can flourish. We will ensure that green open spaces are accessible and well managed to bringing wider social and economic benefits to West Suffolk

Help to make travel more sustainable: We will manage the environmental impact of own transport and travel arrangements. Working with others, we will help to positively influence the quality of transport infrastructure and travel modes across West Suffolk

Help to improve local land, air and water quality: We will work to protect human health and the local environment by managing our own business operations to reduce emissions and waste. Working with others, we will help to improve land, air and water quality, through giving advice and support and, where necessary, using our regulatory powers

Secure high levels of recycling and low levels of waste to landfill: We will support households and businesses to manage waste by ensuring we have suitable, reliable and cost-effective waste collection and recycling infrastructure in place.

We will progress our aim in line with each of the Council's corporate priorities. More details can be found via the following links:

www.forest-heath.gov.uk

www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk

¹ Suffolk Climate Action Plan 2 - Supporting the transition to a green economy
www.greensuffolk.org/assets/Greenest-County/SCCP/Climate-Change/Suffolk-Climate-Action-Plan-2-FINAL.pdf

2. Priority themes

This Strategy cuts across a number of key themes. Implementing many of the proposals will be through other strategies, programmes, major projects and decisions.

The following section breaks down our work into individual issues and areas of work. There are many links between the themes and they should not be taken to be exclusive areas of work.

2.1 Creating sustainable economic growth

The prosperity of West Suffolk's economy has been built on a combination of traditional sectors, like agriculture/food processing and manufacturing, and service sectors including finance and public administration.

Sustainability provides a great opportunity for improving both the diversity of economy and business performance in an increasingly competitive world. This is recognised in the New Anglia Local Enterprise's Green Economy Manifesto and its national lead status on "green growth".

We support local businesses in West Suffolk through our economic development role. We also actively promote services available to small and medium sized businesses to help them become more energy, water and fuel efficient and have been able to help some local firms secure funds to make capital and operational improvements. Typical annual savings in the region of £6,000 per business have identified through one of the free resource efficiency advice services supported by the Councils².

We aim to build the identity of West Suffolk as a distinct economic sub-region ensuring we derive maximum benefit from our position within both the New Anglia and Greater Cambridgeshire Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership areas.

We will work towards a low carbon economy by exploiting economic opportunities which may arise by:

- Increasing awareness amongst businesses of the impact of climate change and how they can become more resilient
- Improving business resource efficiency
- Encouraging the sustainable generation of energy and supporting the associated economic sector
- Increasing waste recycling in business and promoting waste reduction
- Identifying opportunities to support business markets for environmental goods and services.

² Suffolk Environmental Business Advisor Service delivered by Groundwork in the East on behalf of the local authorities in Suffolk

2.2 Energy conservation and renewable energy

In Suffolk, we are aiming to cut CO₂ emissions by 60% by 2025 against a 2004 baseline³. We hope to achieve this through a combination of energy conservation and use of renewable energy.

Energy conservation not only helps to reduce energy use, it can result in significant financial savings along with improved environmental quality, and resilience to a volatile energy supply market.

We want to ensure Council buildings are used as efficiently and effectively as possible and we should set an example to other organisations with property in the locality. Therefore, we are keen that each building we own or manage should play its part in reducing the consumption of energy.

To date, we have invested in energy efficiency in much of our public buildings and designed new buildings to high environmental specifications. We are also supporting key users of council owned buildings to become more energy and water efficient; an example of this work are Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill Leisure Centres where in partnership with the Abbeycroft Leisure Trust investment has been made into better energy management, heating and lighting. This should realise significant operational benefits as well help to buffer against rising energy costs.

Local planning policies covering West Suffolk set out the case for energy efficient and low carbon development to meet and certain cases be ahead of current national policy.

Through the SCCP Business Adviser Service we are working with 'Small to Medium Enterprises' (SMEs) and qualifying 'not for profit' organisations to help them to assess their resource use. This advice can then lead to practical business improvement to cut costs and carbon emissions whilst improving environmental impact, staff awareness and understanding of the green agenda.

We will continue to support our local communities and residents by providing energy-related advice. We will continue to help as many residents as possible benefit from living in more energy efficient homes. This work includes promoting schemes designed to achieve cost-effective investment in energy efficiency such as the Government's Green Deal⁴.

Across West Suffolk, we are developing new ways of investing in renewable energy generation, for example using the Government's Clean Energy Cash back⁵. Further opportunities to invest are being identified at our own sites and also through community initiatives.

³ Transforming Suffolk - Suffolk's Community Strategy 2008-2028. Suffolk Strategic Partnership

⁴ Launched in January 2013, the Green Deal is the Coalition Government's initiative aims to deliver a step change in the update of energy efficiency measures in both households and business premises by creating the conditions for business investment and removing the barriers of knowledge and the need for up-front costs.

⁵ Source: Gov.uk - Feed-in Tariffs: get money for generating your own electricity

New financial arrangements like the Community Infrastructure Levy, Allowable Solutions⁶ and the Green Deal⁷ may create opportunities to support renewable and low carbon energy. While recognising that there are significant infrastructure requirements from planned growth, finance made available, and other financial mechanisms, could contribute to strategic developments such as district heating networks and other opportunities for local energy generation and use. We will work to maximise local benefit from such financial mechanisms.

2.3 Affordable warmth

Every year, mortality rises by 19% in the winter months in England⁸. This amounts to an average of 27,000 'excess' winter deaths or about 1,560 more people per week dying between December and March compared with the rest of the year. Around a fifth of these deaths can be attributed to cold homes⁹. However, in many northern European countries with much colder weather than ours such a rise of this scale is not seen.

In Suffolk, on average over 400 excess winter deaths are recorded each year. The majority of these deaths are people aged over 65. Furthermore, many more people go to their GP and into hospital in winter with a range of cold weather-related conditions.

While the extent to which excess winter mortality and illnesses are caused directly by fuel poverty is uncertain; what is clear is that fuel poverty is a factor. The Government-commissioned Hills Review pointed to the cost to the NHS of the medical treatment associated with the health impacts of fuel poverty, ranging from depression to cardiovascular disease.

There are also wider concerns about the social impacts associated with living in cold homes, such as social isolation and poor educational attainment in young people. Some vulnerable households may spend more time at home and have particular needs so requiring more home energy.

The annual cost to the NHS of treating winter-related disease due to cold private housing is over £850 million. Public health evidence shows that investing £1 in keeping homes warm saved the NHS up to 42 pence in health costs annually.

Around 11% of households in West Suffolk are thought to be in fuel poverty¹⁰. Many of West Suffolk's rural communities are off the mains gas network while many properties are hard to make energy efficient because of the way they were built.

⁶

⁷ Source: gov.uk - Giving communities more power in planning local development - <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/giving-communities-more-power-in-planning-local-development/supporting-pages/community-infrastructure-levy>

⁸ Cold Weather Plan for England - Protecting health and reducing harm from severe cold." Dept of Health and Health Protection Agency, Nov 2011

⁹ Cold Weather Plan for England - Protecting health and reducing harm from severe cold." Dept of Health and Health Protection Agency, Nov 2011

John Hills. Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, London School of Economics, October 2011

¹⁰ Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fuel-poverty-2011-detailed-tables> Department for Energy & Climate Change, 2010

The varying quality of the housing stock and people's ability to access capital or the lowest prices for energy have meant that some households struggle to keep their homes affordably warm. The state of the economy and its impact on household income has seen some households forced into hard choices about heating their home in cold weather. All of these factors lead to significant variations in a household's energy spend and ability to afford warmth.

We are working to develop collective working arrangements with energy efficiency providers, including local suppliers where possible, to deliver Green Deal and ECO across our area, with the objective of drawing in funding to benefit fuel-poor households and those living in hard to treat properties.

We will assist vulnerable households by supporting national energy efficiency schemes such as the Energy Company Obligation¹¹ by drawing in external funding for targeted projects in key areas.

2.4 Health and well-being

An individual's health is strongly influenced by their lifestyle and the environment in which they live and work. Medical care can prolong survival after serious illness but social and economic conditions often influence mental and physical health and well-being in the first place.

The effects of climate change on the living environment are a key concern as the UK population typically spends 90% of their time indoors. Weather extremes caused by a changing climate are likely to exacerbate health risks associated with building overheating, indoor air pollution and flood damage as well as wider disruption to services and local infrastructure which could affect emergency response. In addition, community-based accommodation such as residential and care homes, health centres and hospitals may also be adversely affected by high temperatures experienced during heat waves and flooding.

The Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board has been established to improve health and wellbeing and decrease inequalities across Suffolk. Through its strategy the Board aims to ensure that people in Suffolk live long, fulfilling and healthy lives and the health inequalities gap between our affluent and poorer areas is narrowed.

In its shadow form, the Board has agreed four priority areas. These priorities were chosen using information from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and evidence that shows action in these areas will help attain their long term aims. The four priority areas are:

- Priority one: Every child in Suffolk has the best start in life
- Priority two: Suffolk residents have access to a healthy environment and take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing

¹¹ The Energy Company Obligation is a financial support mechanism delivered through the Green Deal; to assist qualifying households to discounted energy efficiency measures.

- Priority three: Older people in Suffolk have a good quality of life
- Priority four: People in Suffolk have the opportunity to improve their mental health and wellbeing

West Suffolk has member representation on the Board supporting the programme covering the 4 priorities.

In West Suffolk we have our own Health and Wellbeing Forum which includes Councillors and local organisations to review and support issues that arise locally.

Recently, we have secured funding from the Clinical Commissioning Group to enable West Suffolk to have a Falls Prevention Exercise Coordinator who will work with residents to reduce slips, trips and falls.

We will continue to work with our partners to sustain in future years our winter fuel poverty programme which includes the successful Warm Homes Healthy People project.

2.5 Housing

There is an increasingly strong link between adequate supplies of good quality housing and delivering successful and sustainable communities. Providing good quality affordable housing is a key factor in delivering and promoting the general health and well-being of the community.

The availability and quality of housing also has an impact on local economic development with the housing 'offer' playing a part in determining local economic success.

Key issues to be considered:

- The Councils have declining land stock and capital funds to facilitate new housing development
- Currently we have over 2,000 empty homes in West Suffolk which could be brought back into use
- We need to better understand the profile of rural housing needs and how we can ensure future housing developments address those needs sustainably.

Local planning policies already set out the need for good quality housing in West Suffolk with secure and affordable housing critical for most people.

Across West Suffolk, we are working with private landlords to promote and, where necessary, enforce improvements to their properties to meet current home standards.

We are contacting property owners of empty homes with the aim of bringing these properties back into use.

As part of the SCCP as well as within West Suffolk, we are working to develop collective working arrangements with energy efficiency providers,

including local suppliers where possible, to deliver Green Deal and ECO across our area. We will promote to residents the opportunities for retrofit home improvements and funding available to those in receipt of certain benefits, those living in hard to treat properties such as a homes with solid walls, as well as area based funding for those in low income areas and rural properties off the mains gas network.

2.6 Natural and heritage capital

West Suffolk is fortunate to contain some internationally important natural landscapes such as the Brecks to the north, the Stour and Dedham Vale to the south and high quality river valleys. There are also a wide range of semi-natural areas both in towns and countryside that form important links to these key habitats. These are regarded as some of the most important natural habitats in the country.

Both the landscapes and the wildlife that they contain are important for their own sake. In addition, local biodiversity provides us with services which are vital to our wellbeing and local prosperity. The links between health and the environment are recognised in Suffolk and the need to empower communities to utilise, encourage and expand their activity to meet needs that have been locally identified, have been incorporated into the Suffolk Joint Health and Wellbeing strategy. This social and economic value is also recognised nationally¹². Our challenge is to prevent a decline in this natural capital for the benefit of current and future generations.

A significant contribution to the protection and enhancement of local landscapes and environmental assets is made by local planning policies covering West Suffolk.¹³

Our countryside services work hard to conserve and enhance West Suffolk's special landscape and wildlife, managing our own assets along with working closely with land owners, local communities and partner organisations, to manage a number of important local sites, provide advice on countryside issues and to develop opportunities for access and enjoyment of the area. Separate arrangements are in place to manage the parks and other open spaces under the control of the councils; these include specific management plans for key parks along with a more general Tree and Woodland Strategy covering St Edmundsbury¹⁴.

As part of this work we are supported extensively by volunteers who participate in community projects, local nature reserve management, wildlife, ecological advice and a whole range of other projects which protect and enhance local habitats and wildlife.

West Suffolk is home to a wealth of heritage sites including many historic buildings, parkland and other key public spaces. We will, where resources

¹² Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011

¹³ For more information visit www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/landscape-and-hedges.cfm and www.forest-heath.gov.uk/info/856/local_development_framework

¹⁴ Tree and Woodland Strategy, 2009. www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/leisure-and-tourism/parks/Tree-management/Tree-strategy.cfm

allow, preserve the area's built heritage, support their sympathetic use and development and promote their educational value.

To do this we manage a portfolio of historic and culturally valuable facilities such as Palace House, the former Newmarket home of Charles II, as well as the West Stow Anglo Saxon village among others. We also support local museums and heritage centres within the area.

2.7 The built environment

Our built environment should inspire us and make us feel proud of our locality and diverse heritage. It should reduce whole life energy and materials costs through efficient use of natural resources. It should provide places which contribute to our physical and mental well-being and enhance creativity and productivity. Our built environment also needs to be flexible and adaptable to future uses, and be resilient to cope with a changing climate.

Across West Suffolk, we are incorporating sustainable development principles within the National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF¹⁵) into local planning policy. We are developing policies based on the Code for Sustainable Homes seeking CO₂ reduction standards for new homes which exceed the relevant Building Regulations in force at the time of the planning application.

By locating new developments on brownfield sites, near to public transport and local services, we can reduce the need to travel by car.

St Edmundsbury's Vision 2031¹⁶ documents for Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill and the Rural Area Action Plans will guide the overall direction of future service provision and management of growth in the borough over the next 20 years. These documents are part of the Local Development Framework, which establishes where and how development will take place across the borough.

In Forest Heath, new local plan documents are being developed. Sustainability will be one of the central elements of these documents with the aim of ensuring a sustainable built environment in West Suffolk.

Whilst new built environments can be designed to meet these aspirations we must not forget the legacy of our existing buildings and infrastructure, constructed when standards for efficiency were much lower. For example, at least 80% of our current housing stock will still be standing in 2050. This means that retrofitting buildings to tackle resource efficiency is vitally important. As previously stated, we will work with others to promote and support the improvement of existing buildings to make them more resource efficient.

¹⁵ National Planning Policy Framework - https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf

¹⁶ Source: St Edmundsbury Borough Council – Vision 2031 - <http://www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/sebc-planning-policy-section/>

2.8 Transport

People need to travel to reach their homes, places of work, schools, health services and leisure facilities. Travel into and around West Suffolk is heavily reliant on the car. Regionally, businesses report that the road network is vital to trade and that a key concern is traffic congestion¹⁷.

In West Suffolk, transport is a major contributor to local health-related air emissions and noise and is the source of around 30% of the area's Carbon Dioxide emissions¹⁸.

Suffolk County Council is the body responsible for long term strategic transport planning, as set out in the Local Transport Plan. In the Plan, SCC sets out how transport will play its part in supporting and facilitating future sustainable economic growth by:

- maintaining (and in the future improving) our transport networks;
- tackling congestion improving access to jobs and markets; and
- encouraging a shift to more sustainable travel patterns.

The Councils' local plan policies have a key role to play in shaping future development which enables people and goods to move around efficiently and safely to the benefit of the economy and community, with minimum harm to the environment by seeking to reduce car dependency and encouraging more sustainable forms of transport where appropriate and providing greater accessibility to services for all. The Core Strategies for each Council seek to promote walk, cycling and public transport in a sustainable transport hierarchy.

The Councils' own transport fleet, both for commercial operations and passenger business travel, contribute to business costs and environmental performance. In the latter case, local authorities are required to report on their greenhouse gas emissions which include business transport. We endeavour to mitigate this impact by buying commercial vehicles which are at least as fuel efficient as required by law, utilising commercial fleet route optimisation and putting in place measures to avoid unnecessary staff travel.

We have also started to develop the electric vehicle charging infrastructure with charging points in Bury St Edmunds with two sites linked to concessionary car parking.

2.9 Water resources

This decade has seen some of the driest and wettest conditions on record in England¹⁹. As a region we continue to face significant water challenges²⁰. East Anglia is the driest part of the UK with an annual

¹⁷ Suffolk Local Transport Plan 2011-2031. Suffolk County Council.
www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/suffolk.gov.uk/Environment%20and%20Transport/Planning/2011-07-06%20Suffolk%20Local%20Plan%20Part%201%20lr.pdf

¹⁸ Local and Regional CO₂ Emissions Estimates for 2005-2011. Produced by Ricardo-AEA for DEC

¹⁹ Managing flood and coastal erosion risks in England: 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013. Environment Agency

²⁰ Source: East of England Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies (CAMS) – Environment Agency

rainfall of just 70% of the national average. We rely on underground water resources supplied through the mains water grid network or from private supply boreholes.

We can expect to experience reduced water availability in summer leading to more frequent water restrictions and in the longer term drought conditions could lead to water shortages. The gap between demand and supply will potentially widen, affecting all sectors of society. Adaptive action is required to increase water efficiency across all sectors and manage water abstraction in the summer months.

Water resource management is particularly important considering our high levels of planned growth. Future water availability will have a significant impact on our local food production thus affecting the economics of farming, the food industry and our health.

We can manage future water availability through planned growth and creating suitable development planning documents to support water resource management which meet or exceed national regulations. We are developing local planning policies which support sustainable water supply and management. We will also continue to work with local water suppliers to support campaigns to promote water efficiency in existing buildings.

Conversely, a changing climate could see wetter winters and more extreme rainfall events in the region. West Suffolk is on the watershed between rivers which flow to the east to the North Sea and those which flow to the north-west to the Wash. Flooding from rivers is much better understood than flooding from other sources such as surface water, groundwater and sewer flooding, and where flooding happens in combination.

An estimated 250,000 properties are at risk of flooding in the East of England, with 158,000 of those in Suffolk²¹. Although here in West Suffolk we are protected from coastal flooding we are already experiencing flash floods and high river levels during extreme weather events²².

The Suffolk Flood Management Partnership (SFMP), of which both Councils are members, has its own Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. Our primary focus is on 'local flooding' from surface water, groundwater or ordinary water courses such as streams and ditches. This type of 'flash flooding' generally caused by localised heavy rainfall is likely to become more common. We will work within the SFMP to help everyone understand and manage flood risk within the local area.

In the "Sustainable urban drainage" systems in new development will contribute to the management of surface water run-off. We will also work with individual developers as part of the planning process to make sure that water is managed effectively and that drainage infrastructure is

²¹ Suffolk Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, 2012

²² Source: Environment Agency 2009. Flooding in England, A National Assessment of Flood Risk. Report Reference GEH00609BQDS-E-P

appropriately designed and provision given to its on-going maintenance, where appropriate.

2.10 Procurement

In West Suffolk, the Councils deliver services to around 70,000 households and 6,000 businesses, either directly or by employing others to act on our behalf. Much of the work we do is either delivered directly by our staff using goods and services which we have procured or indirectly by others under contract.

The Government's National Procurement Strategy²³ requires every council to build sustainability into its procurement policy, processes and contracts. This has recently been reinforced by the Social Value Act which places a duty on public bodies to consider social value ahead of a procurement decision being made.

It is therefore important that we align our buying approach with national legal and policy requirements whilst taking account of our locality's needs and circumstances.

We are committed to improving our efficiency and reducing procurement costs. We will work to use a mix of the best suppliers to promote a diverse and competitive economy. Achieving our aim depends on such factors as:

- The quality of products and services available to us;
- The cost of products and services;
- The availability of products and services; and
- Our commitment to equality, sustainability and health and safety.

We already evaluate all our major contracts against sustainability criteria when we select suppliers and are working to target key contracts with higher standards where the risks and opportunities for more sustainable practices exist.

We will be developing a West Suffolk Procurement Strategy within which we will plan to embed the principles of sustainability to drive environmental improvement through our supply chain and the wider economic community as potential suppliers.

2.11 Waste

The Suffolk Waste Partnership (SWP)²⁴, of which both councils are members, is a strategic partnership of the county, district and borough councils, which works together to continuously improve waste management services throughout Suffolk. Both Councils are striving for a 60% recycling and composting rate across West Suffolk.

²³ Local Government Association – National procurement Strategy – Future Direction - http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/productivity/-/journal_content/56/10171/3671370/ARTICLE-TEMPLATE

²⁴ Suffolk Waste Partnership - <http://www.greensuffolk.org/about/suffolk-waste-partnership/>

Across West Suffolk, we seek to minimise levels of waste generated and to manage waste in ways that are environmentally, economically and socially sustainable. These principles are incorporated within planning policies for new developments.

We continue to encourage the community to recycle as much as possible and to reduce the amount of waste it produces. We aim to achieve higher recycling levels and, together with waste minimisation initiatives, limit the amount of waste disposed of at landfill. We will also continue to encourage households in the locality through waste minimisation initiatives and providing reliable recycling infrastructure.

We also provide waste collection services to local businesses and other organisations and have developed the offer to include trade waste recycling including cardboard and mixed dry recyclable waste. We will continue to develop these services where we can and promote waste reduction, reuse and recycling to local businesses in West Suffolk.

We are aware that waste is a cost to our organisation and have plans in place to push key waste streams generated by our activities further up the waste hierarchy as well as looking to tackle waste generation more effectively by continuing to improve our procurement practices.

3. Delivering the Strategy

3.1 Our action plan

Sustainability is embedded across a wide variety of each Council's activities. An action plan supporting this Strategy will be developed, setting out:

- What we plan to do and by when
- How our performance will be measured
- What outputs and outcomes are anticipated
- What resources we will use to achieve the actions
- Who we will work with.

The action plan will support rather than replace any existing plans delivered by our services.

3.2 Resources to deliver this Strategy

We have allocated resources to deliver this Strategy. We will also continue to work with others through key partnerships such as the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership (SCCP) so that effective support can be offered to our residents, communities and businesses.

We aim to take advantage of opportunities as they arise and where appropriate to develop new working arrangements to access funds and/or support which will benefit residents, communities and businesses in West Suffolk in line with this Strategy.

3.3 Engaging with others to help deliver the Strategy

This is a Council strategy. However, it cannot be delivered by the two councils alone. We are depending on partnerships, involving statutory, voluntary, academic and business sectors.

Further work will be undertaken with staff and politicians across the two councils, external stakeholders and the people of West Suffolk as part of delivering the Strategy.

In so doing, we will undertake our work to deliver this Strategy and its associated actions in as transparent a way as possible.

3.4 Managing and accessing information

We already gather a variety of information from various sources in support of our work. This information may take different forms. So, it is important that the information is managed systematically and can be readily accessible. Information will need to be kept up-to-date and we will regularly check and review the status of key data to ensure the information we have is current and accurate.

Local authorities are subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act, the Data Protection Act and the Environmental Information Regulations. Accordingly, we are committed to ensuring open

access to information unless there are specific legal or technical reasons preventing us doing so.

General information and advice about Sustainability is available on our websites. Specific enquiries can be made through our websites, by email, telephone, in writing or in person.

There may be cost associated with answering an enquiry subject to the abovementioned statutes. We will say in advance if there will be a charge and ensure that it is reasonable.

3.5 Communicating and reporting progress

We already provide information about our work in various ways both within the two councils with staff and elected members and externally with individuals and organisations.

We will report publically on our progress using our Committees and through service reporting of performance. We will also use less-formal ways of reporting including our websites, press releases, newsletters and through articles and other forms of communication. We will endeavour, as far as practical, to report on our activities in an accurate, meaningful and responsible way.

3.6 Reviewing the Strategy

We will review our Strategy every five years, as a minimum; although more frequent reviews may be undertaken should these be needed. We will endeavour to ensure that any required changes to the Strategy are implemented in a timely and effective manner.



Forest Heath
District Council



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Forest Heath District
Council
District Offices
College Heath Road
Mildenhall IP28 7EY
Tel: 01638 719000
Email: [info@forest-
heath.gov.uk](mailto:info@forest-heath.gov.uk)

St Edmundsbury Borough Council
West Suffolk House
Western Way
Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU
Tel: 01284 763233
email: stedmundsbury@stedsbc.gov.uk

Chief Executive: Ian Gallin
Tel: 01284 757001 / 01638 719632 email: ian.gallin@westsuffolk.gov.uk

Links to partner organisations

www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/partnercontacts
[www.forest-
heath.gov.uk/info/100004/council_and_democracy/666/links to partner
organisations](http://www.forest-heath.gov.uk/info/100004/council_and_democracy/666/links_to_partner_organisations)