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COMMITTEE: **BABERGH CABINET**

VENUE: **KING EDMUND CHAMBER -
ENDEAVOUR HOUSE, 8
RUSSELL ROAD, IPSWICH**

DATE: **THURSDAY, 12 JULY 2018
9.30 AM**

Conservative Group	Independent	Liberal Democrat Group	Labour	Babergh Unionists
Cllr J Ward – C Cllr J Osborne – VC Cllr T Campbell Cllr K Grandon Cllr F Lawrenson Cllr M Maybury Cllr P Patrick Cllr N Ridley	Cllr D Davis			

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AGENDA

PART 1

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To consider whether, pursuant to Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public should be excluded from the meeting for the business specified below on the grounds that if the public were present during these items, it is likely that there would be the disclosure to them of exempt information as indicated against each item.

The authors of the reports proposed to be considered in Part II of the Agenda are satisfied that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

PART 2

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DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Please note that the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 9 August 2018 commencing at 5:30pm in the King Edmund Chamber, Endeavour House.

For further information on any of the Part 1 items listed above, please contact the Governance Officer on 01449 724682 or via e-mail at committeeservices@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

Introduction to Public Meetings

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Agenda Item 3

BCa/18/07

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

BABERGH CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BABERGH CABINET HELD IN KING EDMUND CHAMBER - ENDEAVOUR HOUSE, 8 RUSSELL ROAD, IPSWICH ON MONDAY, 11 JUNE 2018 AT 9:30AM

PRESENT: John Ward – Chair
Jan Osborne – Vice Chair

Margaret Maybury	Kathryn Grandon
Peter Patrick	Nick Ridley
Derek Davis	Frank Lawrenson

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor Simon Barrett
Councillor Peter Beer
Councillor Alan Ferguson
Councillor John Hinton
Councillor Alastair McCraw

Chief Executive (AC)
Corporate Business Improvement Manager (KC)
Assistant Director – Housing (GF)
Economic Development Officer (AMc)
Corporate Business Co-ordinator (SM – notes)
Strategic Director (KN)
Corporate Manager – BMBS (JWN)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Campbell.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS

Councillor Osborne declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 10, report BCa/18/05, Sudbury Vision for Prosperity, as a member of Sudbury Town Council.

3 BCA/18/01 - TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 MAY 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2018 were declared as a correct record.

4 TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF PETITIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S PETITION SCHEME

None received.

5 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS

None received.

6 MATTERS REFERRED BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OR JOINT AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEES

There were no matters arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or the Joint Audit and Standards Committee.

7 BCA/18/02 FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST

The Forthcoming Decisions list was noted and the following comments were made:

- Reference number CNL09, whether this could be postponed to a later date as the Cabinet Member would not be able to attend. It was agreed this would be checked but may have to be picked up without the relevant Cabinet Member being present.

8 BCA/18/03 - BABERGH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION - 5 YEAR HOUSING LAND SUPPLY

8.1 Councillor Ridley, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning introduced report BCa/18/03 and moved the recommendation. This was seconded by Councillor Patrick.

8.2 With reference to the annual assessment the Corporate Manager for Strategic Planning explained documentation needed to be submitted once a year. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning wished to see these moved to half yearly as the more up to date the Council was the better in terms of Judicial Reviews. Having up to date information every 6 months would also go some way in allaying residents' fears.

8.3 Cabinet noted the Secretary of State had been lobbied in the past on this issue and this was still being pursued. The numbers on pages 27 and 28 of the report were queried. The Corporate Manager explained these had been taken from the annual monitoring report and was the core strategy target.

8.4 Cabinet wished to endorse the report and felt it was useful to see the figures laid out in this way. Parishes were to be encouraged in the importance of having developments in the right areas for their wards.

By a unanimous vote.

It was RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the 5 Year Housing Land Supply be formally published on an annual basis unless it can be demonstrated robustly that the requirements have been met earlier.
- (2) That planning permissions and commencements be reviewed half yearly

and if there is significant variation from expectations that a report be provided to the Babergh Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the Autumn.

- (3) That the subjective and objective variables that contribute to the Five Year Housing Land Supply calculation be monitored periodically throughout the year.
- (4) That the annual Five year Housing Land Supply assessment be published in June and that a brief "Information Bulletin" be presented to the Babergh Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2018.
- (5) That report BOS/17/36 be circulated to all Members.

Reason for Decision: To provide the Council with more detailed information relating to the five year Housing Land Supply on a more regular basis.

9 BCA/18/04 - END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE OUTCOME REPORTING

- 9.1 Councillor Davis, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Organisational Delivery introduced report BCa/18/04 and moved the recommendation. This was seconded by Councillor Lawrenson.
- 9.2 The number of staff leavers and the current vacancy rate was queried. Councillor Davis, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Organisational Delivery, explained he would circulate definitive figures, however, he pointed out both Corporate Managers and Assistant Directors were currently looking at better utilising the resources they had. However, members did wish to see further clarity on this issue especially as the public could view the document and the last update had been within October 2017.
- 9.3 It was noted the number of planning approvals had increased from 940 to 1844 which was a considerable increase, as was the number of new homes completed this year. Members were very pleased with the progress made.
- 9.4 Cabinet were happy to see new measures being put in place around Governance particularly in terms of the time it took to publish minutes which would now be tracked.
- 9.5 Councillor Davis gave thanks to the Corporate Manager for Business Improvement and her team for producing a very thorough report.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the performance report and the performance outcome information tabled at Appendices A to E be agreed as adequately reflecting Babergh District Council's performance for April 2017 to March 2018.

Reason for Decision: to provide assurance that the Council is meeting its performance objectives.

10 BCA/18/05 - SUDBURY VISION FOR PROSPERITY

- 10.1 Councillor Ward, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economy introduced report BCa/18/05 and moved the recommendation. This was seconded by Councillor Lawrenson.
- 10.2 Members were pleased to see timelines had been included which helped give a sense of purpose and gave confidence in delivery. It was also good to see partnership working with the Town Council. It was very important to provide evidence in order to demonstrate what would be achieved. It was thought an additional chart could be added within the appendix to capture more detailed timelines where they were known for individual proposals.
- 10.3 Some members had concerns as to whether enough emphasis and strength had been placed and remained unconvinced it would be delivered. It was imperative car parking facilities were provided.
- 10.4 Cabinet were committed to providing car parking and a car parking strategy would be produced at the end of the year. The public would be engaged in this process and evidence would be provided both for and against car parking charges. Members recognised at present there was not sufficient parking.
- 10.5 It was questioned as to whether the introduction of the report was out of kilter with the rest of the document as it spoke about Sudbury being in the 10% of the most deprived places in the country. However, it also spoke about Sudbury being in one of the top quartiles as a location to live. If this statistic was relevant, then further commentary should be included as well as future job creation.
- 10.6 The Economic Development Officer explained it was “deprived” as it was within a rural area without town/city facilities, not because of crime. He would provide additional information.
- 10.7 The majority of people within Sudbury could see having a by-pass would be a good thing. This would be the biggest challenge if this was not achieved. Members would keep pushing.
- 10.8 Members wished to convey their thanks to the Economic Development Officer and his team for all of their hard work and long hours spent on the project.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED:-

- (1) To endorse the draft Sudbury VfP Action Plan and background paper for publication.
- (2) To delegate authority to the Strategic Director (with responsibility for Sudbury), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Economy to make minor updates/amendments prior to formal publication.

Reason for Decision: The publication of the documentation will bring the first phase of VfP to a close by responding to the issues raised, and by setting out the action plan that will bring the community together and deliver positive changes in the Sudbury area, and pave the way for further VfP projects and interventions.

11 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC (WHICH TERM INCLUDES THE PRESS)

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED:

That pursuant to Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public should be excluded from the meeting for the business specified below on the grounds that if the public were present during these items, it was likely there would be the disclosure to them of exempt information as indicated against each item. The authors of the reports proposed to be considered in Part II of the agenda were satisfied that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

12 BCA/18/06 - BMBS REVIEW OF YEAR TO DATE

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED:-

(1) That the recommendations set out in report BCa/18/06 be approved subject to an amendment.

Reason for Decision: To ensure that BMBS can focus on achieving the ambitious targets set out in the revised Business Case.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 11:45am

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Chair (date)

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Forthcoming Decisions list (KEY, EXEMPT AND OTHER EXECUTIVE DECISIONS)

July to March 2019 (Published 25 June 2018)

Unique Ref No:	Decision Maker & Decision Date	Subject	Summary	Contacts:		Key Decision ?	Confidential?
				Cabinet Member(s)/MSR	Officer(s)		
CAB11	Cabinet 9 July 2018	Regeneration Proposal – Former Mid Suffolk District Council Headquarters Site, Hurstlea Road, Needham Market	For debate by Council, determination by Cabinet	Nick Gowrley	Jonathan Stephenson 01449 724704 Jonathan.stephenson@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	Yes	<i>This report will be heard in private as per Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council) with regards to detailed financial information to enable negotiated acquisitions.</i>
CAB35	Cabinet 9/12 July 2018	Customer Strategy Refresh	To approve and agree the approach as set out in the refreshed Customer Strategy. To include the Hadleigh Public Access point.	Glen Horn Derek Davis	Sara Wilcock 01473 296473 Sara.wilcock@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	No	No
CAB43	Cabinet 9/12 July 2018	Public Convenience Policy (Public Realm Review)	To agree the public convenience policy and action plan to implement the policy.	David Burn Margaret Maybury	Jonathan Free 01449 724859 Jonathan.free@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	No	No
CAB53	Cabinet 12 July 2018	South Suffolk Leisure and Abbeycroft Leisure and Formal Partnership Proposal	To approve the novation of the current management agreements for the management of the Council's leisure facilities to Abbeycroft Leisure as part of a merger with South Suffolk Leisure.	Margaret Maybury	Chris Fry 01449 724805 Chris.fry@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	Yes	No
CAB51	Cabinet 12 July 2018	Local Tourism Strategy (Babergh Visitor Information Options)	To approve the Local Tourism Strategy	John Ward	Lee Carvell 01449 724685 lee.carvell@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	No	Yes in part. as per Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act

CAB36	Cabinet 12 July 2018	Belle Vue Development	To make a decision for the agreement of the development proposal for Belle Vue.	Frank Lawrenson	Jonathan Stephenson/ Ian Winslett 01449 724704 Jonathan.stephenson@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	Yes	Yes as per Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act
CAB12	Cabinet 12 July 2018	Regeneration Proposal – Former Babergh District Council Headquarters Site, Corks Lane, Hadleigh	For debate by Council, determination by Cabinet	Frank Lawrenson	Jonathan Stephenson 01449 724704 Jonathan.stephenson@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	Yes	<i>This report will be heard in private as per Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council) with regards to detailed financial information to enable negotiated acquisitions</i>
CNL15	Council 24 July 2018	Belle Vue Development	Subject to Cabinet Decision to agree to the funding of the development	Frank Lawrenson	Jonathan Stephenson/ Ian Winslett 01449 724704 Jonathan.stephenson@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk		Yes as per Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act
CNL11	Council 24/26 July 2018	Local Development Scheme	To introduce a revised timetable for the preparation of the Joint Local Plan to reflect further consultation on the document, to be able to incorporate changes to national planning policy, and broadly align the timetable with Local Plan preparation in neighbouring local authorities.	David Whybrow Nick Ridley	Robert Hobbs 01449 724812 robert.hobbs@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	No	No
CNL03	Council 24/26 July 2018	CIFCO Capital Ltd Business Plan 18/19	To comment on the robustness of the business plan 18/19	Gerard Brewster Frank Lawrenson	Jonathan Stephenson 01449 724704 Jonathan.stephenson@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	No	No
CAB54	Cabinet 6 August 2018	Stradbroke Neighbourhood Plan	To seek Cabinet approval for the Stradbroke Neighbourhood Plan to proceed to a local referendum	David Whybrow	Robert Hobbs 01449 724812 robert.hobbs@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	No	No

CAB27	Cabinet 6/9 August 2018	Quarter One Budgetary Control 2018/19	To approve the Quarter One Budgetary Control	John Whitehead Peter Patrick	Melissa Evans 01473 296320 Melissa.evans@babergh midsuffolk.gov.uk	Yes	No
CAB41	Cabinet 6/9 August 2018	Update to the Joint Policy dealing with compliments, comments and complaints	That Cabinet agree the change and delegate authorisation for future minor changes to the Senior Leadership Team and Leaders	Glen Horn Derek Davis	Sara Wilcock 01473 296473 Sara.wilcock@baberghmi dsuffolk.gov.uk	No	No
CAB63	Cabinet 6/9 August 2018	Houses in Multiple Occupation License Fees	To obtain approval of the fees landlords will pay to obtain a license	Jill Wilshaw Jan Osborne	Heather Worton 01473 296428 Heather.worton@babergh midsuffolk.gov.uk	No	No
CAB72	Cabinet 6/9 August 2018	Developing a Suffolk Chamber of Commerce in Central Suffolk	To approve the support needed to develop the scheme and a linked delegation, including funding approval. To agree support for Suffolk Chamber Branch in Central Suffolk	Gerard Brewster John Ward	Lee Carvell 01449 724685 lee.carvell@baberghmids uffolk.gov.uk	No	No
CAB34	Cabinet 10/13 September Cabinet 10/13 December	Joint Housing Strategy	To agree the draft strategy prior to wider consultation, in September, before endorsing the final version and its associated action plan in December.	Jill Wilshaw Jan Osborne	Gavin Fisk 01449 724969 Gavin.fisk@baberghmids uffolk.gov.uk	No	No
CAB64	Cabinet 10/13 September 2018	Orbit Home Improvement Agency Update	To update members on the performance of Orbit Housing Industry Association	Jill Wilshaw Jan Osborne	Heather Worton 01473 296428 Heather.worton@babergh midsuffolk.gov.uk	No	No
CAB65	Cabinet 10/13 September 2018	Quarter One Performance Update	To seek agreement that the performance report and the performance outcome information adequately reflects the Councils performance	Glen Horn Derek Davis	Karen Coll 01449 724566 Karen.coll@baberghmids uffolk.gov.uk	No	No

CAB69	Cabinet 10/13 September 2018	BMS Invest Annual Performance and Risk Management	To provide an update across the Council's Investment Portfolio and Commercial Activities for the period of June 2017 to March 2018	Nick Gowrley Nick Ridley	Jonathan Stephenson 01449 724704 Jonathan.stephenson@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	No	In Part. <i>as per Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act</i>
CNL13	Council 25/27 September 2018	BMS Invest Annual Performance and Risk Management	To provide an update across the Council's Investment Portfolio and Commercial Activities for the period of June 2017 to March 2018	Nick Gowrley Nick Ridley	Jonathan Stephenson 01449 724704 Jonathan.stephenson@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	No	In Part. <i>as per Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act</i>
CNL04	Council 25/27 September 2018	Localism Act 2011 – Appointment of Independent Persons	To approve the appointments	Nick Gowrley John Ward	Emily Yule 01449 724694 Emily.yule@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	No	No
CAB37	Cabinet September/ October 2018	Assets Strategy	To approve the approach set out in the Asset Strategy document	Nick Gowrley Frank Lawrenson	Jill Pearmain 01449 724802 Jill.pearmain@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	No	No
CAB33	Cabinet September /October 2018	Hamilton Road	To make a decision to review the developmental appraisal and agree the way forward.	Frank Lawrenson	Jonathan Stephenson 01449 724704 Jonathan.stephenson@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	Yes	Yes <i>as per Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act</i>
CAB60	Cabinet 8/11 October 2018	The Suffolk Waste Partnership Inter Authority Agreement	To discuss and agree the Suffolk Waste Partnership Inter Authority Agreement	Roy Barker (Lead Member) Tina Campbell	Chris Fry 01449 724805 Chris.fry@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	No	No
CAB42	Cabinet 8/11 October 2018	Tree Policy (Public Realm Review)	To adopt and agree	David Burn Margaret Maybury	Jonathan Free 01449 724859 Jonathan.free@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	No	No
CAB44	Cabinet 8/11 October 2018	Open Space Transfer Policy (Public Realm Review)	To adopt and agree	David Burn Margaret Maybury	Jonathan Free 01449 724859 Jonathan.free@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	No	No

CAB28	Cabinet 8/11 October 2018	Homelessness Prevention Fund Policy	To ensure the Councils are able to fulfil their new statutory obligations under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 to prevent homelessness wherever possible.	Jill Wilshaw Jan Osborne	Heather Sparrow 01449 724767 <a href="mailto:Heather.sparrow@baberg
hמידsuffolk.gov.uk">Heather.sparrow@baberg hמידsuffolk.gov.uk	Yes	No
CAB46	Cabinet 5/8 November 2018	Leisure Centre Redevelopment	For comment and agreement	Julie Flatman Margaret Maybury	Chris Fry 01449 724805 <a href="mailto:Chris.fry@baberg
hמידsuffolk.gov.uk">Chris.fry@baberg hמידsuffolk.gov.uk	Yes	No
CAB55	Cabinet 5/8 November 2018	Quarter Two Budgetary Control 2018/19	To approve the Quarter Two Budgetary Control	John Whitehead Peter Patrick	Melissa Evans 01473 296320 <a href="mailto:Melissa.evans@baberg
hמידsuffolk.gov.uk">Melissa.evans@baberg hמידsuffolk.gov.uk	Yes	No
CAB47	Cabinet 10/13 December 2018	As at Quarter 2 Performance Update	To seek agreement that the performance report and the performance outcome information adequately reflects the Councils performance	Glen Horn Derek Davis	Karen Coll 01449 724566 <a href="mailto:Karen.coll@baberg
hמידsuffolk.gov.uk">Karen.coll@baberg hמידsuffolk.gov.uk	No	No
CAB48	Cabinet 10/13 December 2018	A Review of the First Two Quarters of the Homeless Reduction Act	To review how the Councils have managed the roll out of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 (HRA 2017)	Jill Wilshaw Jan Osborne	Heather Sparrow 01449 724767 <a href="mailto:Heather.sparrow@baberg
hמידsuffolk.gov.uk">Heather.sparrow@baberg hמידsuffolk.gov.uk	No	No
CAB38	Cabinet 10/13 December 2018	Community Strategy	To adopt and agree.	Julie Flatman Margaret Maybury	Jonathan Free 01449 724859 <a href="mailto:Jonathan.free@baberg
hמידsuffolk.gov.uk">Jonathan.free@baberg hמידsuffolk.gov.uk	No	No
CAB39	Cabinet 10/13 December 2018	Joint Parking Policy	To adopt and agree	David Burn Tina Campbell	Chris Fry 01449 724805 <a href="mailto:Chris.fry@baberg
hמידsuffolk.gov.uk">Chris.fry@baberg hמידsuffolk.gov.uk	No	No
CAB56	Cabinet 10/13 December 2018	2019/20 Budget Report	To review the 2019/20 Budget	John Whitehead Peter Patrick	Melissa Evans 01473 296320 <a href="mailto:Melissa.evans@baberg
hמידsuffolk.gov.uk">Melissa.evans@baberg hמידsuffolk.gov.uk	Yes	No

CAB69	Cabinet 10/13 December 2018	Gambling Act 2005 – Statement of Principles Statutory Three-Yearly Revision and Simultaneous Fee Review	To endorse the statutory revision and re-adoption of the Policy and Fees	Gerard Brewster John Ward	Lee Carvell 01449 724685 lee.carvell@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	Yes	No
CAB70	Cabinet 10/13 December 2018	BMS Invest Half Year Performance and Risk Management	To provide an update across the Council's Investment Portfolio and Commercial Activities for the period of April 2018 to September 2018	Nick Gowrley Frank Lawrenson	Jonathan Stephenson 01449 724704 Jonathan.stephenson@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	No	In Part. <i>as per Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act</i>
CAB71	Cabinet 10/13 December 2018	End of Year Performance	To seek agreement that the performance report and the performance outcome information adequately reflects the Councils performance	Glen Horn Derek Davis	Karen Coll 01449 724566 Karen.coll@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	No	No
CNL14	Council 18/20 December 2018	BMS Invest Half Year Performance and Risk Management	To provide an update across the Council's Investment Portfolio and Commercial Activities for the period of April 2018 to September 2018	Nick Gowrley Frank Lawrenson	Jonathan Stephenson 01449 724704 Jonathan.stephenson@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	No	In Part. <i>as per Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act</i>
CNL11	Council 18/20 December 2018	Gambling Act 2005 – Statement of Principles Statutory Three-Yearly Revision and Simultaneous Fee Review	To endorse the statutory revision and re-adoption of the Policy and Fees	Gerard Brewster John Ward	Lee Carvell 01449 724685 lee.carvell@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	No	No
CAB57	Cabinet 7/10 January 2019	2019/20 Budget report	To finalise the 2019/20 Budget	John Whitehead Peter Patrick	Melissa Evans 01473 296320 Melissa.evans@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	Yes	No
CAB58	Cabinet 4/7 February 2019	2019/20 Budget report	To approve the 2019/20 Budget and recommend to Council.	John Whitehead Peter Patrick	Melissa Evans 01473 296320 Melissa.evans@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	Yes	No

CNL08	Council 5/8 February 2019	2019/20 Budget report	To approve the 2019/20 Budget	John Whitehead Peter Patrick	Melissa Evans 01473 296320 Melissa.evans@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	No	No
CAB40	Cabinet 4/7 February 2019	Environment Strategy	To adopt and agree	David Burn Tina Campbell	Chris Fry 01449 724805 Chris.fry@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	No	No
CAB59	Cabinet 4/7 March 2019	Quarter 3 Budgetary Control	To approve the Quarter 3 budgetary control	John Whitehead Peter Patrick	Melissa Evans 01473 296320 Melissa.evans@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	Yes	No

Key:

 Babergh District Council Only
  Mid Suffolk District Council Only
  Joint – Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils

If you have any queries regarding this Forward Plan, please contact Sophie Moy on 01449 724682 or Email: Sophie.moy@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

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 If you wish to make any representations as to why you feel an item that is marked as an “exempt” or confidential item should instead be open to the public, please contact the Monitoring Officer on 01449 724694 or Email: emily.yule@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk. Any such representations must be received at least 10 working days before the expected date of the decision.

Arthur Charvonia - Chief Executive

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Agenda Item 8

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: Cabinet	REPORT NUMBER: BCa/18/09
FROM: Cllr Margaret Maybury, Cabinet Member for Communities	DATE OF MEETING: 12 JULY 2018
OFFICERS: Peter Garrett – Corporate Manager, Countryside and Public Realm	KEY DECISION REF NO: CAB43

PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of the joint Public Realm Member Advisory Task & Finish Group specifically in relation to public conveniences. It proposes a new Public Convenience Policy (attached at **Appendix One**), which contains a set of principles to guide the Council's decisions about existing and future provision.
- 1.2 The recommendations in this report will ensure: that the main town centres, key tourism locations and large parks have appropriate public convenience provision in place to meet the needs of all; that capacity will be extended by working in partnership with local businesses to establish a Community Toilet Scheme that will add to existing council-funded provision; that local control will be increased by offering town and parish councils the opportunity to manage public convenience provision directly, where they wish to do so; that, where appropriate, the provision or refurbishment of public conveniences will be integrated into other wider development and regeneration plans; and, where needed, basic repairs and improvements will be made to council-run public conveniences in this financial year.

2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The following options were considered:
 - (a) To maintain the current situation whereby most public conveniences are managed by the District Council.
 - (b) To offer the management of public conveniences to town and parish councils, or other community groups that wish to take them on.
 - (c) To close all public conveniences run by Babergh District Council.
 - (d) To increase the provision of public conveniences by developing a Community Toilet Scheme.

Option 2.1 (a) is recommended in the event that town or parish councils or other community groups do not wish to manage public convenience provision.

Option 2.1 (b) is recommended because it provides the opportunity for facilities to be managed at the most local level and as part of wider area provision.

Option 2.1 (c) is not recommended because it may lead to inadequate provision of public conveniences, which could impact disproportionately on certain groups, including older people, families with young children, people with disabilities or those with particular health issues.

Option 2.1 (d) is recommended because it will increase the provision of public conveniences.

<p>3. RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>3.1 To note the findings of the Public Realm Member Advisory Task & Finish Group in respect of public conveniences.</p> <p>3.2 To agree the Public Conveniences Policy (attached at Appendix One) to guide the Council's decisions about existing and future provision.</p> <p>3.3 To agree to establish a Community Toilet Scheme.</p> <p>3.4 To note the expenditure of £13,000 from the Public Realm budget to carry out basic repairs and improvements to existing public convenience provision.</p> <p>3.5 To ask the Corporate Manager for Public Realm to further engage town and parish councils, or other community groups, with a view to devolving public conveniences to those who wish to take them on.</p>
<p>REASON FOR DECISION</p> <p>To put in place a policy to guide decisions about the future of existing provision of public conveniences in Babergh.</p>

4. KEY INFORMATION

The Member Advisory Task & Finish Group

- 4.1 In March 2018, Mid Suffolk and Babergh Cabinets agreed to establish a joint cross-party Member Advisory Task and Finish Group to:
- (i) Develop a policy on public conveniences;
 - (ii) Develop standards and performance measures for Public Realm Services;
 - (iii) Establish a policy for the adoption of open spaces and other public realm assets; and
 - (iv) Review and extend the policy on trees.
- 4.2 The Task and Finish Group meetings are chaired alternately by Cllr Margaret Maybury, Cabinet Member for Communities and Cllr David Burn, Cabinet Member for Environment in Mid Suffolk.
- 4.3 The Task & Finish Group has now completed its work on public conveniences and its findings and recommendations in relation to this area of work are the focus of this report to Cabinet today. The Group continues its work on the other three areas referenced at paragraph 4.1, which will be reported to Cabinet in October 2018.

Scope and Process for the Review of Public Conveniences

- 4.4 Both Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils acknowledge the importance of public conveniences and their implications, not only for public health, personal health and well-being, and accessibility, but for tourism and the local economy too. In recognition of these factors, and the need to focus resources on locations with higher footfall, the review focussed on the provision of public conveniences in main town centres, key tourist hotspots and the largest parks and open spaces.
- 4.5 The Terms of Reference for the joint Member Advisory Task & Finish Group in relation to public conveniences are as follows:
- (i) To assess current provision;
 - (ii) To understand the costs of the provision;
 - (iii) To understand current management arrangements for public conveniences;
 - (iv) To look at what other councils are doing; and
 - (v) To propose a set of principles to guide the councils' existing and future provision of public conveniences in the two districts.
- 4.6 The Task & Finish Group considered public convenience provision in detail on two occasions. In advance of those meetings, officers from Public Realm carried out site visits to all existing public conveniences where the Council either directly runs the provision or contributes to it financially. During these site visits an assessment was made of current condition, standards and accessibility. Alongside this, a full analysis of the annual expenditure for each facility was provided to the group and included costs of utilities, business rates, supplies, cleaning, grounds maintenance and other running costs. Officers from Property Services also assessed the cost of basic repairs and redecoration for public conveniences owned by the Council, except where these were already part of wider development projects.

Background

- 4.7 The provision of public conveniences has implications for public health, tourism, the local economy, transportation, crime prevention, urban design, social equity and accessibility.
- 4.8 Public conveniences matter to everybody. They are, however, even more important to certain groups, including: older people; families with young children; people with disabilities or with particular health issues such as bladder, bowel or prostate related conditions; as well as visitors to the area.
- 4.9 The potential impact of the lack of public conveniences on health and wellbeing can result in some people feeling anxious about going out. This can have a negative impact on, for example, older people or those with health conditions, as they do not readily leave their homes without the reassurance that they will have access to public convenience provision. This can add to the impact of isolation for older people and those with health conditions, and affect physical, social and mental wellbeing. Indeed, the Help the Aged paper, 'Nowhere to Go', evidenced that lack of public convenience provision is significant with respect to isolation in older people.
- 4.10 People with disabilities and their carers also lack the freedom to leave their homes without the reassurance of adequate public conveniences being available. The Changing Places Consortium explains that absence of suitable provision prevents

those with disabilities being able to confidently leave their homes, travel and spend money in the local economy.

The Findings of the Review

4.11 **Overview**

Babergh District Council recognises that it needs to consider existing and future provision of public conveniences in the light of housing and population growth, regeneration opportunities and an aging population.

4.12 **Number, Location and Management Arrangements for Public Conveniences**

In Babergh there are currently nine public conveniences where the District Council either runs the facility directly or contributes financially. These are located in the main towns, at key tourism sites and larger parks. They are listed below at **Table One**, along with details of their management arrangements. All the buildings are owned by Babergh District Council.

Table One – Location and management arrangements for public conveniences in Babergh that are funded in full or in part by the Council

Location of public convenience	Management Arrangements
Pin Mill, Chelmondiston	Managed by BDC through ID Verde contractor
Magdalen Road, Hadleigh	Managed by BDC through ID Verde contractor
Belle Vue Park, Sudbury	Managed by BDC through ID Verde contractor
Gaol Lane, Sudbury	Managed by Sudbury Town Council
Burkitt's Lane, Sudbury	Facilities closed and building empty of sanitary ware
Hamilton Road (Bus Station), Sudbury	Managed by BDC through ID Verde contractor
Church Street, Lavenham	Managed by Lavenham Parish Council
Prentice Street, Lavenham	Managed by Lavenham Parish Council
The Green, Long Melford	Owned by Long Melford Parish Council, was leased by BDC, now managed by Long Melford Parish Council

4.13 In addition, Babergh District Council leases the public conveniences and adjacent car park at Flatford Mill, East Bergholt, to the National Trust.

4.14 The management of public conveniences at Cordell Place, Long Melford, is being transferred to the parish council. The Council has been working closely with Long Melford on this transfer and it is expected that this will be ratified at their next parish council meeting on 5th July 2018. The public conveniences have been closed for over 10 years and it is planned to re-open this provision along with office space for the parish council.

4.15 Public conveniences at Bristol Hill, Shotley are now owned and managed by the parish council, having been transferred more than 10 years ago.

4.16 **Costs**

The total annual revenue budget for public conveniences is £110,492. This includes an annual revenue sum for repairs, a contingency for variable costs of utilities and payment of £34,000 to the external contractor, ID Verde, to manage and maintain the

council-managed public conveniences and the grounds around them. The largest revenue costs relate to the contractor charge and business rates. The detailed revenue costs are summarised in **Table Two** below.

Table Two – Details of annual revenue costs for public conveniences

Location of public convenience provision	Business Rates	Water Rates	Electricity	Legionella Testing	Misc.	Total annual revenue cost
Magdalen Road, Hadleigh	£1,165	£403	£710	£164	£0	£2,442
Belle Vue Park, Sudbury	£0	£1,364	£865		£0	£2,229
Hamilton Road (Bus Station), Sudbury	£1,118	£1,986	£621	£164	£0	£3,889
Gaol Lane, Sudbury	£1,304	£1,008	£464	£164	£20,000*	£22,940
Burkitt's Lane, Sudbury	£1,796	£0	£0	£0	£0	£1,796
Pin Mill, Chelmondiston	£1,421	£2,727	£527	£54	£0	£4,729
Church Street, Lavenham	£9,441 (includes the business rates on the car park as they were assessed together)	£0	£0	£164	£0	£9,605
Prentice Street, Lavenham	£1,488	£0	£0	£164	£0	£1,652
The Green, Long Melford	£1,957	£0	£502	£164	£0	£2,623
Flatford Mill, East Bergholt	£0	£0	£0	£164	£0	£164
Total	£19,690	£7,488	£3,689	£1,202	£20,000	£52,069

*The payment of £20k per annum covers Sudbury Town Council's costs with respect to the running of the public conveniences. Staff are employed to clean and complete minor repairs at Gaol Lane and Hamilton Road. Gaol Lane used to be an attended service but over the last year the staff have been completing street cleansing duties in the town when not on cleaning duty in the two public conveniences.

In addition, Babergh District Council spent £3,900 on repairs to public conveniences in 2016/17 and £1,500 in 2017/18, with expenditure focussed on the three public conveniences in Sudbury located at Gaol Lane, Hamilton Road and Belle Vue Park.

The Council receives an annual income of £4,200 from leasing the public conveniences and the adjacent car park to the National Trust at Flatford Mill in East Bergholt. The contract expires in 2021.

4.17 **Business Rates**

Public conveniences are liable for business rates in the same way as other non-domestic premises. Both the Member Task & Finish Group, and local councils who may be interested in taking on the running of public conveniences from the District, were concerned that the financial burden of paying business rates was a prohibitive factor in local town and parish councils assuming responsibility for this provision. This was explored as part of the Group's work.

4.18 Local Authorities' discretionary powers are set out in the Local Government Act 1988. Section 47 gives billing authorities the power to grant discretionary relief against business rates liability. However, a Local Authority cannot grant discretionary relief to properties that it owns or occupies itself or to other precepting authorities such as town and parish councils.

4.19 There has, however, been significant lobbying of Government nationally to encourage the removal of business rates on public conveniences due to concern that this additional financial demand was contributing to the closure of some facilities. In response to that, the new Local Government Finance Bill, if enacted, will provide principal councils (county, unitary, district and borough) with the discretion to grant full business rate relief on all public conveniences that are all or part-owned by themselves or town or parish councils.

4.20 Local Authorities already have powers to provide business rate relief to private companies or charities that run public conveniences that are available for public use without any obligation to make a purchase.

4.21 **Accessibility**

All the existing public conveniences in Babergh have disabled facilities, but few have baby changing facilities.

4.22 The majority of the disabled toilets in the district are accessed using a RADAR key. The RADAR key is part of a National Key Scheme giving people with disabilities and health conditions independent access to locked public conveniences around the country. The RADAR scheme enables disabled toilets to be locked to prevent vandalism and misuse. It also ensures that they are more readily available to those who need them 24 hours a day, rather than being restricted to more traditional opening times. RADAR keys can be purchased from many different retailers of disability products or from organisations such as Age UK or Disability Rights UK. They cost approximately £5.

4.23 **Condition of current public conveniences**

Generally public convenience provision in Babergh is of the older traditional style. While provision varies in terms of aesthetics and the degree of wear and tear, all locations are functional.

4.24 As part of this review, officers from the Council's Property Services have recently assessed individual public conveniences and recommended a schedule of basic repairs and improvements, which can be carried out within existing budgets.

4.25 **What do other councils do?**

Nationally there is a mixed picture with regard to provision of public conveniences. Some councils have closed all their public conveniences and invested in Community Toilet Schemes, others have retained the direct ownership and management of all their provision, while many have devolved the running of public conveniences to town or parish councils on a variety of different terms and conditions. It is recognised that there is no single solution that fits all and that the right outcome will need to be guided by local circumstances.

4.26 **Community Toilet Schemes**

These schemes are now widely used across the country either instead of council-provided public convenience provision or in addition to it. Councils invite local businesses, including public houses, restaurants, cafés, shops and other outlets to register their interest in allowing the general public to use their toilets during their usual opening hours, without the need to make a purchase. Businesses taking part would be asked to display a sticker in their windows to promote the scheme and location signage would ensure the same.

4.27 In return councils usually offer businesses, for example, a standard annual payment of a few hundred pounds, a reduction in their commercial waste rates or discretionary relief of business rates. Businesses also benefit from increased publicity and advertising through the Council's marketing of the Community Toilet Scheme through, for example, signage in the town, listing and links on social media and on council and other websites. In turn, businesses will benefit from the potential to generate increased business from residents and visitors using their facilities.

4.28 Councils usually set an approximate number of businesses that they are seeking for a Community Toilet Scheme and can also indicate the areas of a town or tourist location where they require more provision. Participating businesses need to be able to meet standards of accessibility and to uphold good basic cleanliness and quality of provision. The wider use of facilities meeting the full Changing Places standards can also be encouraged through this scheme.

4.29 The Member Task & Finish Group was keen for Babergh District Council to pursue the introduction of this scheme locally, seeing it as mutually beneficial for both the public and businesses and a means of not only maintaining but expanding local provision.

Proposed principles to guide the Council's existing and future provision of public conveniences in the district.

4.30 The key role of the Public Realm Task & Finish Group in respect of public conveniences was to develop and propose a set of principles to guide the Council's existing and future provision in the district. After considerable deliberation the Group proposed the following principles:

- a. Public convenience provision will be prioritised in town centres, tourism destinations and key parks and open spaces.

- b. Public conveniences will be located in accessible locations that maximise visibility from the street/public space and will be near to central community facilities.
 - c. Provision of public conveniences in tourist locations will take into account the need to accommodate increased visitor numbers in line with seasonal adjustments.
 - d. All public conveniences will be clean, of a good standard and accessible to all users.
 - e. The Councils aim to include baby changing facilities and achieve Disability Discrimination Act compliance in all public conveniences managed directly or as part of any agreement to transfer the provision.
 - f. New, replacement or significantly refurbished public conveniences will contain features that promote environmental sustainability, where possible.
 - g. They will be sited and designed to meet safety and crime prevention standards.
 - h. Provision of new public conveniences or significant refurbishment of existing ones, will be secured through the planning process where this is needed and feasible.
 - i. Provision of public conveniences will be considered as part of all major regeneration programmes in town centres, open spaces and tourist destinations.
 - j. Adequate public convenience provision will be achieved by working in partnership with local town and parish councils, communities, businesses and other providers.
 - k. The ownership and management of public conveniences will be transferred to town and parish councils and other appropriate community organisations where there is local interest in taking these on.
 - l. The Councils will instigate, promote and, where relevant, support the use of Community Toilet Schemes as a means of increasing the supply of public convenience provision in local areas; standardised signage will be adopted for Community Toilet Schemes across both Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts so that these businesses are readily identifiable.
 - m. Public conveniences will be clearly signposted and directional signage will be provided where required to improve access.
 - n. Signage for public conveniences will show opening hours and contact details for maintenance.
 - o. Public conveniences will be well publicised, including on the Councils' website and through social media.
 - p. Where the Councils provide public conveniences directly or transfer provision, that facility will continue to be free for residents and visitors to use.
- 4.31 These principles form the basis of the proposed policy on public conveniences for Babergh and Mid Suffolk councils, which is attached as **Appendix One** of this report.
- 4.32 Subject to Cabinet's agreement, these will be the principles used to determine decisions about existing and future provision of public conveniences.

5. LINKS TO JOINT STRATEGIC PLAN

- 5.1 The continued provision of public conveniences and the principles within the policy support all three of the main priority areas within the Joint Strategic Plan, namely, the economy and the environment, housing growth and strong and healthy communities.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Details of existing annual revenue costs of public conveniences are set out at paragraph 4.16 of this report, along with details of actual capital asset maintenance costs for 2016/17 and 2017/18.
- 6.2 With regard to any potential new future financial implications, these arise from any contribution that Babergh District Council would make to businesses joining a Community Toilet Scheme, estimated as no more than £300 per business per year.
- 6.3 During this financial year a schedule of basic repairs and improvements will be carried out to local public conveniences, owned by Babergh District Council. This is at a cost of approximately £13,000 and this money is included in the Public Realm budget for 2018/19.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The provision of public conveniences is not a legal requirement for local authorities, rather it is a discretionary service for which councils may charge if they so choose.
- 7.2 This report proposes that Babergh District Council should offer town and parish councils the opportunity to manage public conveniences, if they wish to. This transfer of responsibilities can be managed under S.123 of the Local Government Act 1972 (disposal of land by principal councils) and would require a legal agreement under S.1 of the Local Authorities (Goods and Services) Act 1970 (supply of goods and services by local authorities).
- 7.3 Currently it is not possible for district councils to award discretionary business rate relief to town or parish councils running public conveniences. This is likely to change if the new Local Government Finance Bill is enacted.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 This report is most closely linked with the Council's Corporate / Significant Business Risk No.s 1(d); 2(b); 3 (a); and 4(c). These, along with mitigation, as they relate specifically to public conveniences are set out in **Table Four** below.

Table Four – Impact of public conveniences on corporate risks

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
1(d) If we do not secure investment in infrastructure, then development	2 (unlikely)	2 (noticeable)	Provision of public conveniences will be secured through the

will be stifled and/or unsustainable.			planning process where this is required and included in the supporting policies underpinning the Local Plan.
2 (b) If we do not engage the communities of Sudbury to develop a vision supported by a programme of projects, activities and initiatives (including regeneration) which will deliver the vision, we may not maximise the economic potential of the largest market towns.	1 (highly unlikely)	2 (noticeable)	Future provision of public conveniences in Sudbury will be integrated into the 'Vision for Sudbury', which was agreed at Cabinet in June 2017, and into the proposed developments at Hamilton Road and Belle Vue.
3 (a) If we do not effectively engage communities about future needs, then we will not be able to help them become more sustainable.	1 (highly unlikely)	2 (noticeable)	Engagement has already begun with town and parish councils and will continue; the management of public conveniences will be offered to all towns, parishes or other community groups that wish to take them on.
4 (c) If the Council does not manage its asset portfolio effectively, it may result in lost opportunities, loss of capital value, increased revenue costs and loss of public confidence.	2 (unlikely)	2 (noticeable)	Property Services have carried out an appraisal of existing public convenience assets and recommended improvement works, which are

			being considered as part of this report.
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9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 Consultation has taken place with elected Members through the Member Advisory Task & Finish Group that has developed the new proposed principles for future provision of public conveniences.
- 9.2 There has been consultation with internal teams within Babergh and Mid Suffolk councils, namely Property Services, Assets, Communities, Planning, Economic Development, Finance and Law and Governance.
- 9.3 Cllr Margaret Maybury has lobbied James Cartlidge the Member of Parliament for South Suffolk regarding business rate removal from public convenience provision and reduced utility costs.
- 9.4 There has been no formal consultation with communities regarding the provision of public conveniences at this stage. A range of voluntary discussions have, however, taken place with representatives from town and parish councils and these are on-going.
- 9.5 Where there are potential significant changes to, or relocation of, public conveniences as a result of wider development plans (for example, in the case of Sudbury), communities will be consulted as part of the Planning process and through other engagement events.

10. EQUALITY IMPACT ANALYSIS

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment screening has been completed to determine whether the proposals within this report are likely to have a negative impact on one or more of the nine protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, and require mitigation. These characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief (including lack of belief); sex; and sexual orientation.
- 10.2 No impacts have been identified. All existing public conveniences have accessible provision. There is no proposed change to the current number of public conveniences and the principles proposed by the Advisory Member Task & Finish Group enhance rather than reduce the quality and accessibility of provision. There is therefore no requirement to complete a full Equality Impact Assessment.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The policy on public conveniences states that new, replacement or refurbished public conveniences will contain features that promote environmental sustainability, where possible, and will be sited and designed to meet safety and crime prevention standards.

12. APPENDICES

Title	Location
Appendix One - Public Convenience Policy	Attached

13. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

13.1 Equality Impact Screening

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils Joint Public Convenience Policy

Purpose of the Policy

To establish a set of principles to guide Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils in decision-making about existing and future provision of public conveniences.

Why are Public Conveniences Important?

The provision of public conveniences has implications for public health, tourism, the local economy, transportation, crime prevention, urban design, social equity and accessibility. These are all areas of key importance for the two councils where the Joint Strategic Plan defines the primary strategic priorities as economy and the environment, housing growth and strong and healthy communities.

This Public Conveniences Policy therefore also has key linkages and interdependencies with the following other policies and strategies in Babergh and Mid Suffolk:

- The Health and Well-Being Strategy;
- The Joint Local Plan;
- The Open for Business Strategy;
- The Communities Strategy; and
- The Environment Strategy.

Who will the Policy Affect?

Public conveniences matter to everybody. They are, however, even more important to certain groups, including: older people; families with young children; people with disabilities or with particular health issues such as bladder, bowel or prostate related conditions; and visitors to the area.

The potential impact of the lack of public conveniences on health and wellbeing can have a negative impact on, for example, older people or those with disabilities or health conditions, as they do not readily leave their homes without the reassurance that they will have access to adequate public convenience provision. This can add to the impact of isolation for these groups and affect physical, social and mental wellbeing. It also means that they will not spend money in the local economy.

These considerations are particularly relevant to Babergh where there are nearly 6,500 people with limited day-to-day mobility and over 4,200 0-4 year olds resident in the district. The Office of National Statistics estimated in 2016 that 11.3% of the population in Babergh is 75 years or above, which is higher than the national average of 8.1%; this equates to about 10,200 residents.

The Role of District Councils in the Provision of Public Conveniences

There is no statutory duty for councils to provide public conveniences, it is a discretionary service.

Councils can, however, require any business classed as a place of entertainment, or selling food and drink to the public for consumption on the premises, to ensure that public conveniences are provided and maintained for public use. This includes both permanent provision and short-term events.

Councils can also place requirements on developers to provide or refurbish public conveniences as part of Section 106 Agreements or to resource this through the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Principles to guide the councils' existing and future provision of public conveniences in the districts

- a. Public convenience provision will be prioritised in town centres, tourism destinations and key parks and open spaces.
- b. Public conveniences will be located in accessible locations that maximise visibility from the street/public space and will be near to central community facilities.
- c. Provision of public conveniences in tourist locations will take into account the need to accommodate increased visitor numbers in line with seasonal adjustments.
- d. All public conveniences will be clean, of a good standard and accessible to all users.
- e. The Councils aim to include baby changing facilities and achieve Disability Discrimination Act compliance in all public conveniences managed directly or as part of any agreement to transfer the provision.
- f. New, replacement or significantly refurbished public conveniences will contain features that promote environmental sustainability, where possible.
- g. They will be sited and designed to meet safety and crime prevention standards.
- h. Provision of new public conveniences or significant refurbishment of existing ones, will be secured through the planning process where this is needed and feasible.
- i. Provision of public conveniences will be considered as part of all major regeneration programmes in town centres, open spaces and tourist destinations.
- j. Adequate public convenience provision will be achieved by working in partnership with local town and parish councils, communities, businesses and other providers.
- k. The ownership and management of public conveniences will be transferred to town and parish councils and other appropriate community organisations where there is local interest in taking these on.
- l. The Councils will instigate, promote and, where relevant, support the use of Community Toilet Schemes as a means of increasing the supply of public convenience provision in local areas; standardised signage will be adopted for Community Toilet Schemes across both Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts so that these businesses are readily identifiable.
- m. Public conveniences will be clearly signposted and directional signage will be provided where required to improve access.
- n. Signage for public conveniences will show opening hours and contact details for maintenance.
- o. Public conveniences will be well publicised, including on the Councils' website and through social media.
- p. Where the Councils provide public conveniences directly or transfer provision, that facility will continue to be free for residents and visitors to use.

Equalities' Impacts of this Policy

An Equality Impact Assessment screening has been completed to determine whether this policy is likely to have a negative impact on one or more of the nine protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, and requires mitigation. These characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief (including lack of belief); sex; and sexual orientation.

No negative impacts have been identified. The principles that form the basis of this policy will enhance rather than reduce the quality and accessibility of provision.

DATE: JUNE 2018

REVIEW DATE: JUNE 2020

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Agenda Item 9

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: Cabinet	REPORT NUMBER: BCa/18/10
FROM: Cabinet Member for Organisational Delivery, Councillor Derek Davis	DATE OF MEETING: 12 July 2018
OFFICER: Sara Wilcock, Assistant Director for Customer Services	KEY DECISION REF NO. CAB35

REFRESHED CUSTOMER STRATEGY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report introduces and provides supplementary information to consider, alongside the refreshed Customer Strategy at Appendix 1.

2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The options that have been considered are:

- a) Continue to work to the emerging Public Access Strategy as set out in the Council papers of September 16 titled "Future Model for Public Access including Accommodation".
- b) Develop an alternative Public Access Strategy that does not focus on our customers.
- c) To update and refresh the strategy in line with the progress that has already been made but taking into consideration, how we embed a customer centric culture.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The refreshed Customer Strategy is agreed.
- 3.2 In consultation with the Cabinet Member and Lead Member, minor amendments to the strategy be delegated to the Assistant Director for Customer Services to ensure the strategy is kept up to date, and reflective of emerging strategies which overlap.
- 3.3 That an action and communication plan is developed, which will ensure the Customer Strategy is widely shared across the organisation and provides for an opportunity to engage with our staff, embedding a customer focused organisational culture.

REASON FOR DECISION:

To provide an updated and refreshed Customer Strategy that states our organisational aim to put the customer at the heart of the organisation, and by doing so, improves our ability to better deliver our customer need.

4. KEY INFORMATION

- 4.1 In 2016 we set out in a Council report titled “Future Model for public access including accommodation”, a public access strategy. The public access strategy focused on five key access channels, face to face, telephony, email, online digital services, web chat/SMS and stated the intent to work collaboratively in place based teams to support our most vulnerable customers.
- 4.2 During the past 2/3 years progress has been made with notable achievements including the opening of two new public access points in Stowmarket and Sudbury where customers can access our services in person. We have also implemented a new call centre telephony system as well as consolidated two websites into one.
- 4.3 Progress against our priorities has been as a result of the decision made in 2016 regarding public access and accommodation, and so now seems an opportune moment to refocus and update the public access strategy
- 4.4 The refreshed Customer Strategy outlines 9 key principles across 4 themes which will enable us to have a customer centric approach, so that we place the customer at the heart of our organisation.
- 4.5 The strategy is deliberately titled, more simply, the Customer Strategy. This is in an attempt to focus on wider aspects of how we deliver a customer centric approach across the organisation, rather than associating ‘public access’ just with locations and specific channels. The refreshed Customer Strategy places a greater emphasis on how organisationally we will create a culture that considers and put the customer first.
- 4.6 There has often been debate around the use of the term ‘customer’ as opposed to various alternatives such as citizen or resident. Local Authorities provide a range of diverse services; some of which are statutory services, some of which are focused on particular groups e.g. Housing tenants, others where individuals can express a choice of whom to contract a service from e.g. Building Control. An important element of the strategy is continuing to confirm our priority, of understanding the needs of a wide range of groups and individuals, and appreciating that they will be different, depending on a range of factors including the types of services they need or would like to access.
- 4.7 In this sense our use of the term ‘customer’ helps us maintain a level of consistency and common understanding; in that irrespective of the services provided, our ethos is to provide positive experiences and relationships with high levels of satisfaction.
- 4.8 Following our commitment to keep under review a customer service provision in Hadleigh, a Cabinet report in April 2018 recommended that the refreshed Customer Strategy give consideration to an approach whereby the Council works in partnership with existing organisations in Hadleigh to provide self-service facilities.
- 4.9 The strategy states that we will continue this approach and it will be updated to reflect the outcome of a pilot we are developing with Suffolk Libraries. Suffolk Libraries provide a range of opportunities for us to tailor our provision, considering the use of static locations as well as pop-up libraries. Further detail on this pilot will be provided during the summer

5. LINKS TO JOINT STRATEGIC PLAN

- 5.1 The refreshed Customer Strategy particularly aligns with two of the key strategic themes or outcomes; Community Capacity Building and Engagement as at 6.0, and an Enabled and Efficient Organisation. The Customer Strategy directly links to taking advantage of modern technology, so that residents can access our services at times and in ways to suit themselves, which will ensure that our reducing resources can be aimed at assisting those most in need.

6. SHARED SERVICE / PARTNERSHIP IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no shared service implications. However one of the strategies guiding principles is that we will support all of our customers to become self-serving where ever possible and work in partnership with other like-minded organisations to deliver this. It is important to recognise that we cannot deliver more strategic objectives like digital inclusion alone and that there are wider benefits to be realised from having a partnering approach, both for our customers and us. Working in partnership in this way would also be in line with the Joint Strategic Plan ambitions of building our communities capacity

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Customer Strategy suggests a number of initiatives and activities that as implemented will change the culture of the organisation as well as deliver improved customer services. Some of these activities are considered as business as usual and within our current gift to deliver within our existing budgets. However the development of business cases and more detailed project plans will be required setting out key financial considerations for some of the initiatives, for example the implementation of a Customer Record Management system. Substantial organisational projects like this will be subject to a comprehensive business case, and will follow the Councils normal governance processes, to gain sign off prior to implementation.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None identified

9. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 9.1 This report is most closely linked with the Council's Significant Risk Register No 5f, as set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
If we do not have more efficient and effective public access and agile working arrangements then we will not be able to tailor the services our customers need and target those in need	2 Unlikely	2 Noticeable/ Minor	New public access points are up and running in both Stowmarket and Sudbury. Services can be accessed through both; with a range of assisted/self-serve/telephony support available. Further development and review is on-going. We are also

			developing regular feedback mechanisms to develop customer satisfaction measures. We have undertaken a staff survey which will inform an action plan in the future, tackling areas of concern
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10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 As part of wider public engagement activities on the proposal to create a single council to replace Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils, a market research company carried out an independent telephone survey of 4000 residents. The survey showed high support from electors for a number of key objectives, one of which was “delivering services that are better tailored to the needs of local residents”. This directly links to the Customer Strategy aims, of understanding the needs of our customers and focussing on their priorities.

11. EQUALITY ANALYSIS

11.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment was carried out as part of the Future Model for Public Access in September 2016. It is envisaged that the refreshed strategy and ensuing initiatives would be an enhancement to our current service, and would have a positive effect. A further assessment will be carried out to understand if the refreshed strategy will have any increased impact

12. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Increases in online contact should impact positively; reducing print and paper costs across the organisation, and reducing the Councils carbon footprint

13. APPENDICES

Title	Location
(a) Customer Strategy	Attached

14. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

14.1 None

Babergh & Mid Suffolk

District Councils

CUSTOMER STRATEGY



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Introduction

The Councils Joint Strategic Plan (2016 – 2020) sets out how the Council’s aim to deliver enduring and positive changes for our many and diverse communities and businesses.

The plan reshapes our role ensuring we deliver good quality services but also encourages and empowers communities, making it easier for them to do more for themselves.

In order to deliver our strategic outcomes we need an enabled and efficient organisation – the right people, doing the right things, in the right way, at the right time, for the right reasons.

In 2016 we set out in a Council report titled “Future Model for public access including accommodation”, a public access strategy that took a whole system approach. The basis for the report still holds firm in the aim; to support collaborative work with partners and communities to do more where they can and wish to, so we can focus on our more vulnerable customers or those with more complex needs. Coupled with transforming services to be more efficient and reduce cost, the report specifically sought agreement on this approach as well as recommending accommodation options. The paper focused on five key access channels, face to face, telephone, email, online digital services, webchat/SMS, and stated the intent to work more collaboratively in place based teams to support our most vulnerable customers.

Having now moved into our new HQ location, opened two customer access points (one in each district), implemented a new call centre telephony system and website, now is an opportune moment to update and refresh our customer access strategy.

The focus and underlying aim is to put the customer at the heart of our organisation. By doing so, we will better understand and be able to deliver their needs. This refreshed Customer Strategy will outline our direction over the next 3 years across 4 main themes supported by some underlying principles. We will state where we will improve and transform our services, ensuring our customers can gain information and access to our services through a variety of channels, and how we will embed in our organisational culture a customer centred approach.



Cllr Derek Davis

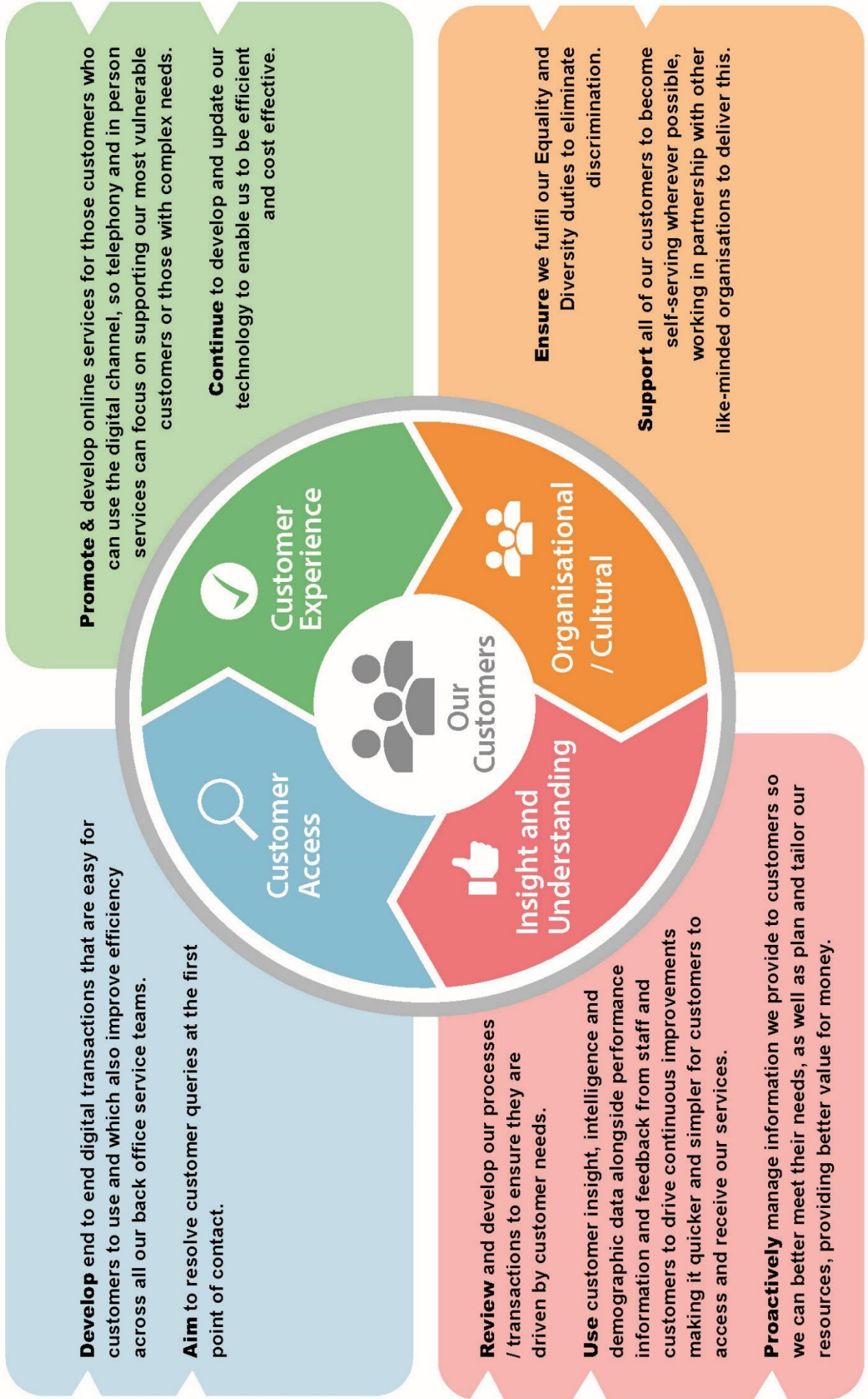
Cabinet Member for
Organisational Delivery
Babergh District Council



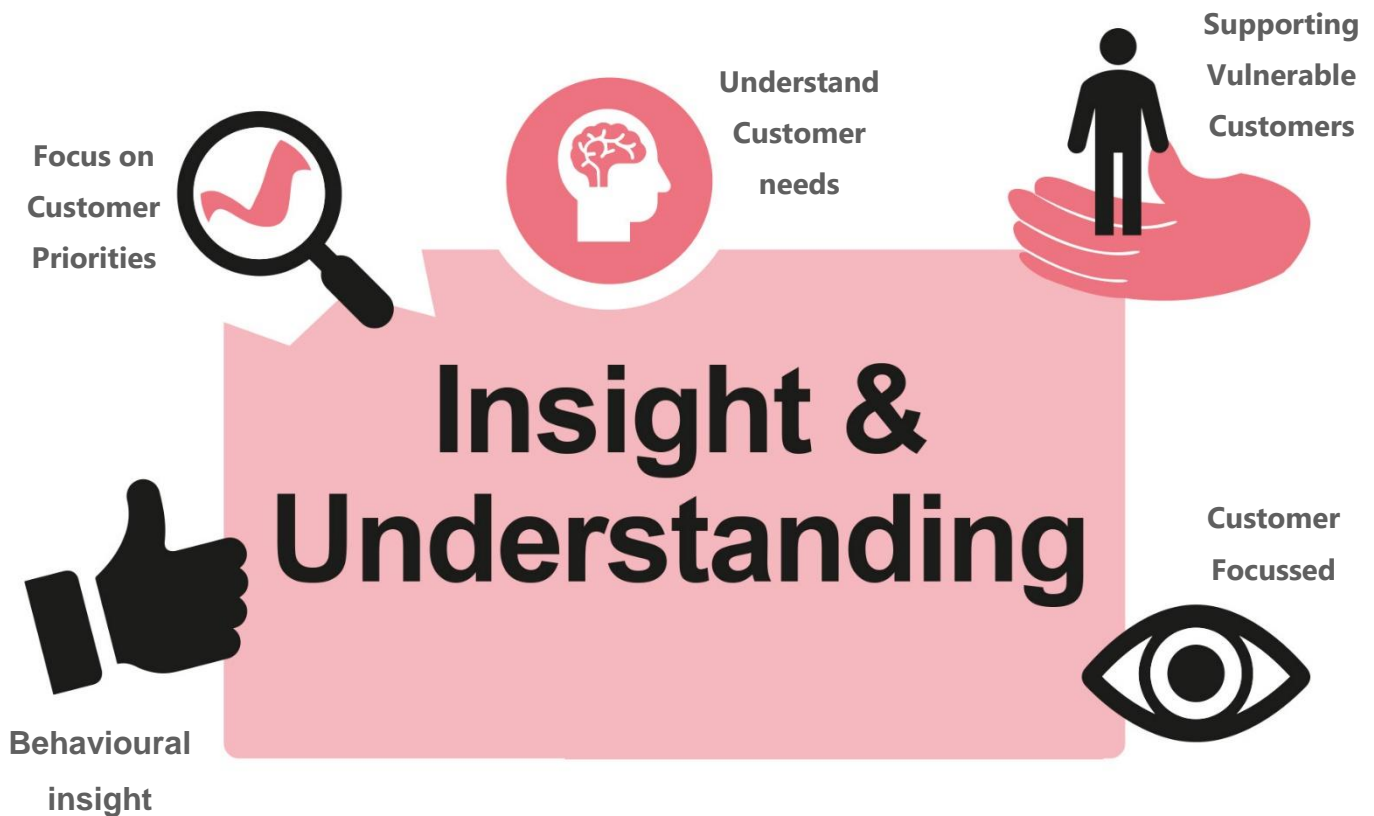
Cllr Suzie Morley

Lead Member for
Customer Services
Mid Suffolk District Council
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Principles of the strategy:



Our Customer Strategy Aims:



Insight and Understanding

- **Understand the needs of our customers**

Our Councils have a wide variety and breadth of customers, including residents, businesses, and visitors.

We therefore need to ensure we use customer insight and evidence to inform our decision making when providing customer focused solutions. External data sources can help us understand our customers in more depth, helping us communicate in a relevant way and understanding the channels they are most likely to use, which in turn will help us understand their barriers to going online and what changes we can make to support them.



We also hold a plethora of rich information from our own data sources such as compliments and complaints data; we will record this in a way which is easy to interrogate to provide insight and trends which can form a continual cycle of feedback and improvement.

- **Understand the needs of our more vulnerable customers**

Some of our customers have more complex needs; we need to be able to understand the barriers they experience trying to access our services. We can then tailor how we provide services through the most appropriate channels to support our more vulnerable customers. Our more traditional telephony and in person service provision needs to be equipped to particularly support them.

- **Focus on customer priorities**

Fundamentally we need to improve our understanding of what our customers need, and allocate our resources and effort accordingly. We will use data routinely (e.g. web analytics, telephony and in person visitor information) to understand our customer queries, and use this to plan process reviews and improvements. We will also seek more direct feedback through the use of customer forums/focus groups, and user testing.



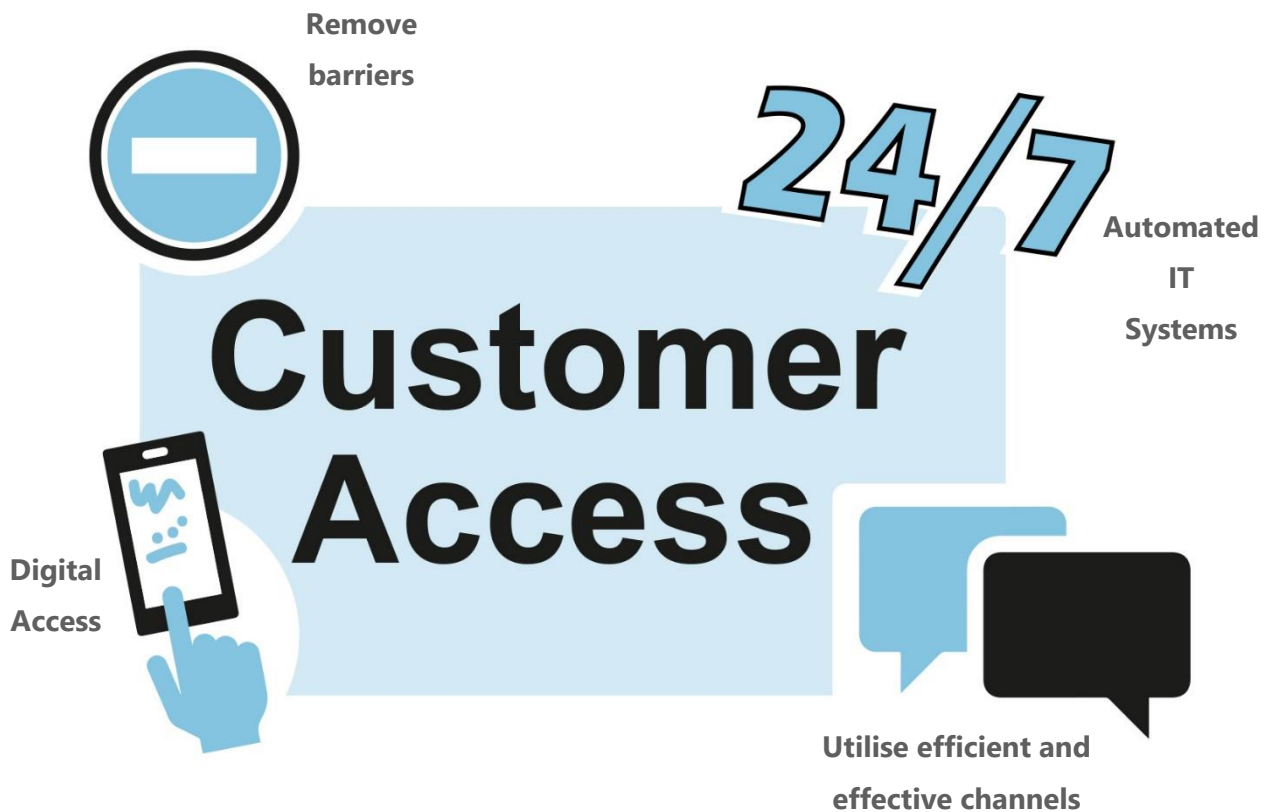
- **Review processes from customers perspective**

When fundamentally reviewing our processes, we need to ensure this is from a customer first perspective, and applying the principles outlined above. Our customer service team often operates with little connection to all other service teams, and can feel disparate and isolated. We will change these relationships so all teams understand the value of proactively working with our customer service team to improve processes, which in turn will support customer services provide support to our most vulnerable customers.

- **Using behavioural insights**

There are a variety of ways in which customers behaviours can be influenced; ranging from the more subtle strategies of encouraging and incentivising by providing a 'guiding hand', through to more direct approaches by restricting choice. As part of any changes we make to service processes we will support and encourage service teams to consider different approaches, such as behaviour change or nudge theory approach. These approaches are not about imposing penalties, but encouraging people to make small changes, which will enable customers to make better choices for themselves and help us provide cost-effective services.





Customer Access

- **Utilise most efficient and effective channels**

Since 2016 we have seen fundamental changes to our core access channels; including a dedicated customer service telephony number, provided by a new telephony system, a single rationalised website, and in-person services provided from one location in each district. Technology is changing rapidly, and what was ‘emerging’ is now becoming common place. For example web chat has developed significantly with the introduction of a more automated response in the form of chat bots, which can provide instant answers to questions on websites as well as in our homes. We will focus on emerging technologies and move away from inefficient channels such as email, which is difficult to automate, causes duplication and provides inconsistent data.

We will also explore opportunities to work in partnership with existing organisations to provide self-service facilities including the provision of scanning information. Initial discussions have been held with Suffolk Libraries

to pilot an approach whereby self service facilities could be provided from Library locations where a customer need has been identified. In tandem with the provision of self service facilities we would also provide a form of assisted support to work with customers and organisations across our communities to improve our customer's access to digital skills.

- **Digital Services**

There is much debate surrounding the meaning of the terms 'digital by default' and 'digital by design'. Neither mean simply replacing traditional channels with just digital ones at the exclusion of certain customer groups. Irrespective of the terminology used we will; seek to understand which customers are not online and the barriers to accessing our services, improve online services so the customer has a reason to want to interact with us in a digital way, and to also improve our staffs digital knowledge and skills, so they can truly be ambassadors for our digital services.

- **Aim to resolve at first point of contact**

Customers do not want to be handed off from one officer to another in order for their enquiry to be resolved. Our ethos throughout the organisation will be to avoid duplicate handling and to develop processes that are so simple, that irrespective of whether the customer is online, on the phone or visiting in person, it is the same process accessed, primarily digitally through our website.



We will review, and develop new processes, focused on reducing wasteful activities whilst improving customer satisfaction and providing solutions that are cost effective. Our processes will also make best use of technology and our data, enabling us to answer our customer enquiries at the earliest opportunity. We will build a business case to identify associated costs and benefits of using an 'enterprise' system. An 'enterprise' system could form the foundation of a customer record management database, but provides the

potential to expand and improve; our document and information workflows, our reporting and data analytics information, facilitate cross organisational working and improve communication and collaboration across different teams,

We will also improve the skills and knowledge of our customer service staff, so that they can resolve and add value when a customer contacts us, rather than simply pushing information from one team to another. By developing these areas we will improve customer satisfaction levels as well as create efficiencies.

- **Automate as much as possible to provide 24/7 services**

There are a whole host of different IT systems used across the Councils to deliver the wide variety of services we offer. Single customer transactions can touch on multiple IT systems; we must ensure that where possible these are joined up, and information is passed seamlessly between them to avoid re-keying of data. We will also look at opportunities as IT contracts expire, to review our system requirements in line with our customer's needs, and rationalise IT systems where possible.



Customer Experience

- **Best Practice**

We will look to develop our customer services in line with best practice, not just benchmarking against Local Authorities but also across the private sector. We will work in partnership particularly with other Suffolk authorities to share knowledge and explore opportunities to work more closely together for the benefit of all our customers.



- **Business Process Improvement**

We will take a systematic approach to cataloguing our business processes and to review them in line with the principles and aims of this strategy. This will enable us to focus on our customer priorities and report and manage performance transparently.

- **Organisational Values**

The Senior Leadership Team has empowered a team of colleagues to start work on developing our organisational values. We will ensure that we tie together any emerging customer focussed values with our Customer Strategy. Following this work we will produce a customer commitment or charter which will clearly set out for customers what they can expect from us as an organisation when they need to contact or access our services.

Where customers come into contact with our dedicated Customer Service team we will look to introduce a simple measure of satisfaction, which in line with other corporate measures of satisfaction and engagement will help us identify areas to improve upon.

- **Complaints**

We will be improving our process to make it much easier to analyse the type and frequency of complaints as well as to capture lessons learned which can be more easily shared across the organisation.



Organisational / Cultural

- **People development – customer focussed and digitally enabled**

Our people are the Councils most valuable asset. In order for our people to think customer first we will embed a culture of listening and engagement using a range of communication and engagement tools including social media. Our ethos of resolution at first point of contact will empower everyone to care and take an active interest in developing ideas and solutions that will make a positive difference to our customers and us.

To be truly customer focussed we must invest in our people from the inception of any recruitment, and throughout their time working for us. Our expectations, to provide high quality customer service skills including being able to promote and use digital services will be reflected in the training and development we provide as well as coaching and objective settings.

- **Partnership Working**

We will work closer with both internal and external teams and organisations to make the best use of our resources to further our strategic aims. We will continue to develop the links we have with our Suffolk, County, District and Town and Parish Councils. We will work with service teams to understand their specific customer service requirements where they are not currently part of the corporate customer service team, so we can bring about a consistent approach to customer service across the organisation. We will also take a collaborative approach to increase our districts digital skills, by taking advantage of existing digital partnerships as well as actively seeking new ones.

- **Achieving excellence**

We have undertaken a programme of work to introduce a new telephony system (Genesys telephony system) as well as update our website and electronic forms package. Monitoring performance across all of our access channels is crucial to be able to assess the impact we are having, moving from our most expensive contact methods to more cost effective contact methods, for the benefit of the customer and us, commonly referred to as channel shift. We will therefore provide regular performance information which will illustrate our move from our most expensive channels to our most efficient channels, also highlighting a better understanding of our customer requirements and how we can tailor access accordingly.



- **Customer first service delivery versus silo working**

Our customers do not distinguish between service teams or officers whom work within our organisation. We are simply 'the Councils' and as such the way we work, handling customer enquiries should reflect the approach and expectations our customers have.

Our customer service officers will consistently spend time liaising, integrating and building relationships with back office service teams to break down traditional silo working barriers. This will then enable the Customer Services team to better influence and play a proactive role informing and re-designing business processes from a customer perspective in partnership with other teams

Digital Agenda

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils operate a collaborative agreement with Suffolk County Council to provide IT that supports the needs of our users. We share a common intention to support joint public sector working as well as recognition that IT should support fundamental business transformation.

We both aspire to “become modern, information orientated organisations maximising the benefits for the people of Suffolk from the use of technology”. In order to enable IT to support our customer first approach we will continue to work in collaboration with SCC IT with respect to the following:



Cloud: Secure, resilient, and agile infrastructure platforms on which to run systems and applications



Mobility: New ways of working matched with role based work styles.
Ability to capture data more efficiently to drive quality and productivity



Big Data: Ability to integrate disparate lines of business system data, into holistic information records, that provide real insight to inform intelligent and effective decision making. Ability to predictively model service demand based upon different variables



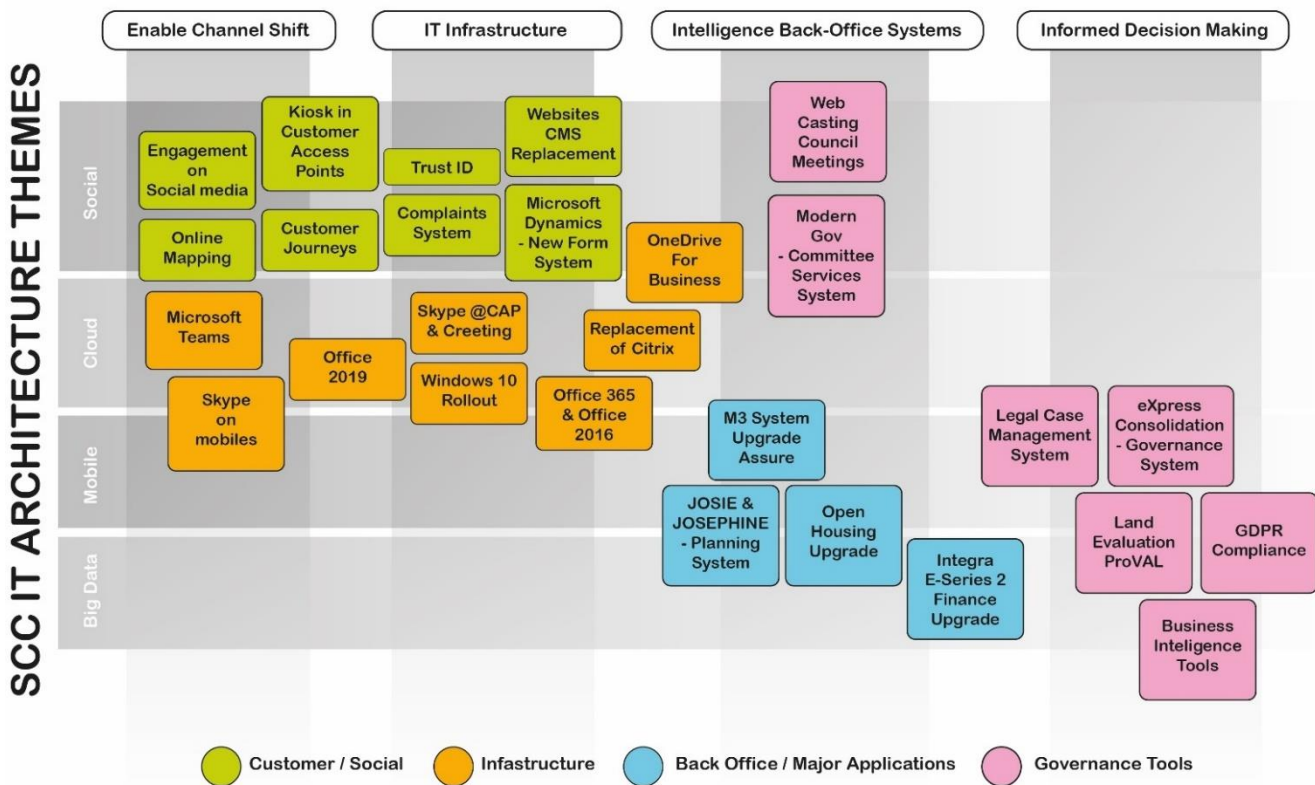
Social: Harnessing new collaboration and communication channels to drive social productivity and connected experiences between both colleagues internally and also with partner organisations and customers.



Particularly over the last 2/3 years in preparation for the All Together programme of work culminating in the move to Endeavour House and a more agile work force, we have made progress across the following areas:

- Improved and consolidated website with less pages for customers to navigate.
- Single Call Centre telephony system, able to channel customers to speak with advisors in a quicker more efficient way.
- Integrated Planning, Building Control and Enforcement system allowing for more efficient interrogation and management of data.
- Exacom system which enables our customers to view online how the Community Infrastructure Levy is spent, enabling greater transparency and engagement.
- Introduction of case management tools to our Shared Legal Services and Modern.Gov system which ensure information is stored routinely, it is more accessible and therefore promotes informed decision making.

BMSDCs DIGITAL REQUIREMENTS



Above are some of the projects we will progress that directly link to our customers and organisations digital requirements of; enabling channel shift, providing modern and sound IT infrastructure, optimising and keeping up to date our intelligent back-office systems as well as ensuring our IT systems and frameworks support informed decision making.

In order for these projects to fundamentally improve the ways in which we work, we are introducing a new governance structure which will facilitate a more joined up approach to project management and information sharing. We have created a strategic and operational group consisting of officers across both Suffolk County IT and Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils whom will meet regularly to plan, share and monitor progress across a range of IT projects and initiatives which will engender transparency and wider benefits realisation across the organisation.

Working towards a more digitally enabled workforce, we will also develop a framework for the roll out of new technological changes, so that everyone has the opportunity to learn, benefit and work in new ways from the investment we make in new and updated IT.

Executive Summary

The overriding purpose of the refreshed Customer Strategy is to put the customer at the heart of our Councils, creating a culture and environment whereby our people feel empowered, and have the necessary skills, tools, and techniques to take responsibility for providing positive experiences for our customers.

As a Local Authority we recognise the range of diverse services we provide. Some of which are statutory services, some of which are focused on particular groups e.g. Housing Tenants, others where individuals can express a choice of whom to contract a service from e.g. Building Control. We acknowledge the debate around the use of the term 'customer' as opposed to various alternatives such as citizen or resident. An important element of this Strategy is continuing to confirm our priority, of understanding the needs of a wide range of groups and individuals, and appreciating that they will be different, depending on a range of factors including the types of services they need or would like to access.

In this sense our use of the term 'customer' helps us maintain a level of consistency and common understanding; in that irrespective of the services provided, our ethos is to provide positive experiences and relationships with high levels of satisfaction.

Our Customer Strategy principles and the four themes within it:

Insight/Understanding, Access, Experience and **Culture** demonstrate our commitment to appreciating the diverse needs of our customers, providing appropriate solutions, delivering high quality services based on customer needs and creating an organisation and culture that can deliver a customer-centric approach.

Babergh & Mid Suffolk
District Councils

CUSTOMER STRATEGY



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Agenda Item 10

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: Cabinet	REPORT NUMBER: BCa/18/11
FROM: Margaret Maybury, Cabinet Member for Communities	DATE OF MEETING: 12 JULY 2018
OFFICER: Chris Fry, Assistant Director Environment and Commercial Partnerships	KEY DECISION REF NO. CAB53

MERGER PROPOSAL SOUTH SUFFOLK LEISURE AND ABBEYCROFT LEISURE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval for the novation of the current agreement for the funding and management of the Council's leisure facilities at the Kingfisher Leisure Centre and Hadleigh Pool & Leisure to Abbeycroft Leisure as part of a merger with South Suffolk Leisure.

2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 South Suffolk Leisure to continue operating as a small local Trust for Babergh District Council.
- 2.2 South Suffolk Leisure to merge with Abbeycroft Leisure to create a larger more resilient and sustainable Trust that works across Suffolk. This change will not affect the local delivery and relationship that Babergh have with South Suffolk Leisure and will continue to honour existing arrangements.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the Cabinet approve the merger of South Suffolk Leisure with Abbeycroft Leisure. This can be completed through a novation of the current lease allowing South Suffolk Leisure to assign the management agreement to Abbeycroft Leisure, the merged partner.
- 3.2 That delegation be given to the Assistant Director for Environment and Commercial Partnerships in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities to make the necessary changes to any legal documentation and any appropriate revisions to existing legal agreements as part of the novation process.

REASON FOR DECISION

To strengthen the resilience of the partner operator of our leisure facilities. Taking into account the proposed £3.4million capital investment for the refurbishment of the Kingfisher Leisure Centre and replacement of Hadleigh Swimming Pool. If approved this would allow the formal merger to be completed on 1st October 2018.

4. KEY INFORMATION

- 4.1 SSL is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. Set up to provide or assist in the provision of facilities and services for recreational, sporting or other leisure time occupation in the interests of social welfare, such facilities being provided to the public at large save that special facilities may be provided for persons who by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disability, poverty or social or economic circumstances may have need of special facilities and services; and/or promote community participation in healthy recreation; and/or advance the education of the public of the benefit of active lifestyle and in particular the value of physical activity for young people as part of the school curriculum; and/or such other charitable purposes beneficial to the community consistent with the objects above as the Trustees shall in their absolute discretion determine (the 'objects').
- 4.2 SSL currently manages and operates the key assets owned by Babergh District Councils, these are the Kingfisher Leisure Centre and Hadleigh Pool & Leisure, the Trust also operates four dual use facilities in the district. The financial turnover of the Trust is circa £2.9 million per year.
- 4.3 Abbeycroft Leisure is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. Its primary charitable purpose is to provide or assist in the provision of facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals available to the public at large, save for special facilities being provided for those who have need of such by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disability, poverty, or social circumstances with the object of improving their conditions of life.
- 4.4 Abbeycroft Leisure currently manages and operates the St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath leisure portfolio, operating 13 facilities across the county. The financial turnover of the Trust is circa £8.4million.
- 4.5 On the 15th and 16th May 2018 respectively, the South Suffolk Leisure and Abbeycroft Leisure Boards approved the merger between SSL and ACL with a target date of 1st October 2018 by the transfer of the assets and liabilities from SSL to ACL being, in the view of the Trustees, the most effective means of fulfilling the objects of both SSL and ACL in the future.
- 4.6 The benefits of merger have been explored by both trusts through a comprehensive due diligence exercise that was set out in line with the Charities Commission 'Checklist for Mergers between Charities'. Boards have reported that this process has been clear and transparent. In addition to this the early phases of this process was also informed by an independent feasibility study, which included views from Babergh District Council officers.
- 4.7 It is important to note that it is South Suffolk Leisure's intention to merge with Abbeycroft Leisure, this is not a takeover, but the new Trust will adopt the Abbeycroft Leisure name as it is the larger organisation.
- 4.8 Based on this work Trustees have identified the following as benefits of merging Abbeycroft Leisure with South Suffolk Leisure.
- 4.9 Creating a leisure Trust that is large enough to ensure quality and efficiency in the delivery of leisure contracts within the county, but 'local' enough to be genuinely responsive and proactive in terms of community need. It is believed that this would

be a unique, effective and sustainable model ideal for Suffolk, a county that is recognized nationally for effective collaborative working that delivers innovative and effective outcomes for its communities.

- 4.10 The ability, with greater scale and geography, to engage more effectively with commissioners in the health sector as well as other stakeholders, which in turn opens up the opportunity to create innovative partnerships that have a positive impact on local communities due to the ability to deliver these at scale.
- 4.11 Creation of some economies of scale, around greater purchasing power, size of outsourced contracts and internal processes.
- 4.12 Staff benefits in terms of increasing the ability to employ high calibre staff across a broad and interesting portfolio, which would not be effective or affordable in smaller organisations, backed up by enhanced career progression opportunities, greater flexibility, higher value and satisfying job roles and so, potentially, improved staff recruitment, productivity and retention.
- 4.13 This work has considered the most significant potential risks and challenges to the merger. There were no potential risks found around the issues of HR, finance or operations.
- 4.14 Operationally the customer facing elements of the day-to-day operation will continue within the community. South Suffolk Leisure's Chief Executive will continue to operate the Babergh contract. This means that all of the relationships that have been developed will remain along with the continuation of the initiatives and programmes that are already in place. There are no planned redundancy requirements as part of this merger.
- 4.15 Performance reporting would continue under the current arrangements and continue to be flexible and reactive to the authorities developing and changing agenda for leisure. The trust welcomes the opportunity to develop both formal and informal opportunities to engage in the council's leisure, community and broader agenda.

5. LINKS TO JOINT STRATEGIC PLAN

- 5.1 Strategically the organisation will work to ensure that physical activity in Babergh is seen as a priority at a county level and work to bring initiatives to the area. Supporting the Council's strategic plan to build active, healthy, safe, self-sufficient and strong communities.
- 5.2 The new trust aims to expand and develop their work to offer an even greater impact on the authorities' top six priorities. It will reach across the county working in 13 communities including; Brandon, Bury St Edmunds, Hadleigh, Haverhill, Mildenhall, Newmarket, Sudbury, East Bergholt, Holbrook, Trumpington, Felixstowe and Ipswich. There will be far greater opportunity to expand work with the CCGs and Public Health.
- 5.3 Increase the number and frequency of children, young people (1-18 years) and families across the district taking part in physical activity.
- 5.4 Increase the number and frequency of older people regularly taking part in traditional and non-traditional sport and physical activity to reduce social isolation and to improve health and wellbeing.

- 5.5 Increase the volunteer base of sport and physical activity clubs and groups to build capacity and resilience and support growth in participation levels.
- 5.6 Increase active participation and benefits to participants with mental health issues through sport and physical activity.
- 5.7 Improve the engagement and uptake of those with physical and learning disabilities into community and leisure facilities, ensuring facilities are accessible and activities are available to all.
- 5.8 Support the provision of sustainable community sport and leisure facilities and the spaces and infrastructure that individuals, clubs, schools and groups use to take part.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no financial implications for the council in relation to the merger as the existing financial commitments will continue to be honoured. The merged entity will create an organisation that is financially resilient better placed to deal with financial challenges which in turn provides a stronger platform to achieve the council's future plans.
- 6.2 The changes to the funding and management agreement will include reassurances that the investment benefits will be guaranteed for the council and the management fee reduction plan.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The current funding and management agreement is under review as part of the capital investment plan for the Kingfisher Leisure Centre redevelopment and replacement of Hadleigh Swimming Pool. Finance officers are currently working with South Suffolk Leisure relating to this point which will allow the Trust to merge by 1st October 2018.
- 7.2 Changes to the legal framework will need to be addressed; this includes allowing South Suffolk Leisure to novate their contract to Abbeycroft Leisure.
- 7.3 Abbeycroft Leisure's Memorandum and Articles of Association do not allow for appointed councillor representation on the board. This does not preclude a councillor being appointed to the board in a personal capacity and subject to the normal recruitment process and a vacancy existing. This would mean that the two existing Councillor Representatives would not have a seat on the Abbeycroft Leisure board, but a regular meeting and communication schedule would be introduced with the Cabinet Member for Communities. This would be accompanied by the formal reporting arrangements already provided within this paper.
- 7.4 The proposal may require consent from organisations such as Sport England especially when they have provided funding/grant. Significant work on the legal arrangements will be required including entering into new arrangements for the provision of services, new leases and license agreements as well as specialist legal support in respect of Employment/TUPE and Pension.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 Key risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
Financial resilience.	Unlikely (2)	Bad (3)	South Suffolk Leisure are a relatively small Leisure Trust and could face financial pressures in the competitive market place. By merging with another leisure trust they gain economies of scale and financial resilience.
Loss of key staff	Unlikely (2)	Bad (3)	Through merger with another organisation greater opportunities for staff development, the recruitment and employment of specialist staff and therefore retention are enhanced.
Operational risks	Unlikely (2)	Notice-able (2)	Operating a relatively small leisure trust resources can be stretched when dealing with unexpected operational issues. The economies of scale achieved by operating within a larger organisation reduce this risk.

9. CONSULTATIONS

9.1 South Suffolk Leisure and Abbeycroft Leisure appointed Eastside Primetimers to complete the primary scoping work for this due diligence exercise.

9.2 Eastside Primetimers is a management consultancy with a difference. Working exclusively on behalf of not-for-profits, they provide professional support for Chief Executives and Boards who are seeking to transform their organisations to be fit for the future. Dedicated to supporting the growth of a strong social sector that has the capacity and resources to play an even greater role in delivering services in communities. They promote a business-like approach because they believe not-for-profit organisations can achieve greater sustainability and impact by combining their knowledge of the needs of their beneficiaries with business thinking.

10. EQUALITY ANALYSIS

10.1 There is no equality analysis required for this decision as the service will continue as before and the proposal is largely a governance issue.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no environmental implications to this decision.

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Agenda Item 11

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: Cabinet	REPORT NUMBER: BCa/18/12
FROM: Cabinet Member for Assets and Investments	DATE OF MEETING: 12 JULY 2018
OFFICER: Jonathan Stephenson Strategic Director & Anne Bennett Corporate Manager	KEY DECISION REF NO. CAB12

BABERGH DC FORMER HQ REGENERATION PROJECT – APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDED OPTION

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 In September 2016 Full Council made the decision to relocate from the HQ buildings in Corks Lane, Hadleigh to Endeavour House as the current HQ was not fit for purpose to fulfil modern local government functions with Mid Suffolk District Council.
- 1.2 In April 2017 Strategy Committee gave approval for the appointment of a design and planning team following a full and compliant procurement process. The appointment of the design and planning team was required to support with developing options for the future use of the existing headquarter building at Corks Lane and the associated Corks Lane and Bridge House Car parks; and to develop a programme of work which would ensure the successful delivery of a developed design, that would enable the determination of a detailed planning application for the site.
- 1.3 This report sets out the options that have been considered and explain the rationale for the recommended option.
- 1.4 The purpose of the report is to provide information on the proposed option for the sites development, to Cabinet, prior to a decision being taken to submit a full planning application for the proposed option set out within 2.1 of this report (option 2) and within Appendix A.

2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Carter Jonas carried out an initial soft assessment of the site in February 2016 to indicate what uses might be targeted. These options were further explored by Ark consultancy and Carter Jonas has updated their Employment Viability Report and this can be found at appendix D:
- 2.2 COMMERCIAL OFFICE SPACE: Within a 7-mile radius of the site the office space that is available is significantly smaller than the council offices. Offices are taking on average 43 months to let and the demand for commercial office space in this location is extremely limited. If the building was to remain as commercial use, then a significant sized organisation would need to be attracted to the town. The likelihood of this being achieved is very small.

- 2.3 Ark contacted commercial agents who all confirmed this summary is correct. A Chartered Surveyors at Bury St. Edmunds who are a commercial agent specialising in finding clients for Class A and Class B use said that they had no suitable clients for the building and would find it extremely difficult to find one.
- 2.4 RETAIL: There would be very little demand for retail in this location. Shops in the High Street are regularly available to rent and local agents confirmed that Retail space at the Hadleigh office site was too far out of the town centre to be of any interest to potential clients. Class A use would not be attractive to their client base.
- 2.5 LEISURE USE: The location has the potential to take a small boutique hotel as part of a wider mixed-use development of the site, however the market for such hotels is weak with several recent bankruptcies in the sector. Ark contacted agents who specialise in finding sites for this type of use confirmed that the market for a Boutique Hotel would be small and currently they said it would be difficult to find a client for the site.
- 2.6 RESIDENTIAL: Hadleigh is an emerging town that is considered by many to be in good commuting distance to the City. There is good demand for housing with a significant sales premium over the towns close by such as Needham Market.
- 2.7 Residential Care could have a market in this location, however McCarthy and Stone currently have a scheme under development at 109 High Street, Hadleigh, Suffolk, IP7 5EJ. The flood plain situation for the site would also have a significant impact on the attractiveness of the site for a residential care use. A consultant specialising in finding sites for care home clients and although they said the site could be attractive to their clients the McCarthy and Stone consent together with the flood plain issues and the need to redevelop the existing listed buildings would be a significant barrier to a care home operator considering the site.
- 2.8 General residential development of the site was seen as attractive to housing developers. Agents who specialise in finding sites for housing confirmed that if this site were to come forward as a site for housing there would be significant interest.
- 2.9 Soft market testing concluded that residential use of the site was the only viable option. Three residential options were therefore developed in November 2017:

Option 1 -Retention and conversion of ALL buildings: all listed, all of the 1980's extension buildings, Bridge House with new build adjacent to Bridge House and Corks Lane corner and car park

Option 2 (recommended option)- Retention and conversion of the listed buildings, part retention and conversion of the 1980's extension i.e. retention only of the 1980's extension that could be readily converted to residential, demolition of Bridge House and new build development on Bridge House Car park and Corks Lane car park.

Option 3 – Retention and conversion of the listed buildings, total demolition of the 1980's extension, demolition of Bridge House with new build being within the curtilage of the listed buildings, Corks Lane corner and car park and on and adjacent to site of Bridge House.

<p>3. RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>3.1 That the Cabinet considers comments made by Full Council (appendix h) on 19th June 2018 and makes recommendations for any amendments to the preferred option (Option 2) and development scheme</p> <p>3.2 That Cabinet approves Option 2 (section 2.1 of this report) and delegates responsibility to the Strategic Director, with responsibility for Assets and Investments, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Assets and Investments, to submit a full planning application for the redevelopment of the former Council HQ site at Corks Lane and the Bridge House and car parks.</p>
<p>REASON FOR DECISION</p> <p>This option provides for a comprehensive and sympathetic regeneration of the site whilst enhancing the significance and setting of the important listed buildings and preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.</p>

4. KEY INFORMATION

- 4.1 At the Council meeting on 22 September 2016 Councillors considered and noted the key information relating to the development of the Hadleigh site in C/70/16 (Appendix A).
- 4.2 At that stage early market testing and early appraisal of the possible options for the sites had been undertaken. In September 2016, following a development appraisal report by Carter Jonas, Council approved proposals for officers to investigate the future options for the use of the Head Quarters site.
- 4.3 An OJEU advert was placed inviting expression of interest and 6 bidders were selected to interview. Both Council Leaders were part of the formal interview process with officers in April 2017.
- 4.4 In June 2017 Purcell Architects, Lawson Planning Partnership, Hoggarth Cooke and Morley Riches & Ablewhite were appointed to support the Council with design, planning advice, feasibility and financial viability appraisals of the options for future use.
- 4.5 The commission was for both Babergh and Mid Suffolk’s HQ sites and the aim of the commission was to establish a redevelopment option for each of the sites which realises the potential market values of the sites and is acceptable in planning policy terms; alongside the requirement to deliver outcomes which meet the Councils’ Joint Strategic Priorities and also consider the socio-economic impact relating to the closure of the offices.
- 4.6 An important outcome for the commission was to achieve the delivery of a solution that will prevent the sites lying dormant for an extended period of time; and provide residential development that creates apartments in the retained, converted buildings and new housing on the surrounding car park sites.
- 4.7 The project team have been developing proposals for the site. These proposals have been developed using the following mechanisms:

- Site assessment and Pre-planning discussions
- Market testing outcomes
- Viability testing and appraisal
- Sounding Board, Councillor, Town Council & public engagement comments

4.8 This report takes into consideration the detailed design and planning work and takes into consideration all survey work, additional market engagement and the financial appraisal of various options. All options included the retention of the 5 historic buildings on the site.

4.9 The brief was to provide a residential development, creating apartments in the retained, converted buildings and new housing on the surrounding car park sites.

4.10 The rationale for the extent of demolition of the 1980s consisted of defining which blocks of the existing office complex could be converted to residential use without compromise to the quality of created residential accommodation. This resulted in the proposal to demolish the council chamber (due to its bespoke design as a chamber and difficulty in conversion) and the associated deep plan areas of office and circulation. In addition, the existing refectory wing was proposed for demolition for the same reasons.

4.11 The proximity of the site to the River Brett imposes significant flood risk constraints. A detailed flood modelling has been undertaken to define the extents of the flood plain and the extent of development potential for the site, without building within the recognised flood plain.

4.12 New build options for the Corks Lane car park (to the west of the office buildings) were explored, testing housing of different types and apartments. However, much of the car park would need to be retained for parking to support the adjacent apartments (converted offices).

4.13 Options were developed for the Bridge House site, which retained and converted Bridge House with adjacent new build, or proposed to demolish Bridge House. Following consultation with our traffic consultant, the position of Bridge House prohibits the use of the adjacent driveway (leading to the allotments) as an two way road, which is instrumental to unlocking the development of the site. Furthermore, a detailed structural survey of Bridge House was undertaken by The Morton Partnership which defined the extent of structural works required to restore the building. This was cost prohibitive and therefore it is proposed to demolish Bridge House.

4.14 **Next Steps**

- Following approval from Cabinet a full detailed planning application will be submitted for approval (August);
- Section 106 Heads of Terms of Agreement (if any);
- During the planning determination period (13 weeks) a detailed business case will be prepared and presented to Council for a decision to be made

on the delivery approach to the site, in readiness for the planning determination;

- Project start on site

4.15 **Project Benefits**

- The local economy will benefit from increased employment during the construction phase and increased foot fall for local shops and services in the long term.
- This scheme will provide outcomes which impact on the Councils Strategic Priorities by providing housing delivery.
- Comprehensive site reuse and redevelopment, including the retention and enhancement of the listed building significance and settings and preservation of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area
- The retention of the riverside walking routes
- Community Infrastructure Levy

5. **LINKS TO JOINT STRATEGIC PLAN**

5.1 The release of the former HQ sites for economic and housing purposes meets the following key strategic priorities:

- Property investment to generate income and regenerate local areas
- Making best use of land and buildings across the Suffolk system
- Further develop the local economy and market towns to thrive.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (Further Information Contained in Part 2 – Restricted)**

6.1 The costs of feasibility and design work being undertaken to support delivery of the regeneration of the headquarters site are included within previously approved capital and revenue budgets.

Revenue/Capital/ Expenditure/Income Item	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Purcell Contract (includes others subcontracted as full project team)	£109,082.41	£74,602.09	N/A
Other Surveys/land investigation & Consultation commissioned directly by the Council	£83,972.41	£26,640	N/A
Full Planning Application & listed building consent	N/A	£23,963	N/A

A business case for the regeneration of the headquarters site, which sets out the full financial implications, including any capital funding requirements, will be presented to Council for approval, at a future date, prior to moving forward with the regeneration of the site.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 All procurement for the project was advertised nationally and via the Office of journal of the EU (OJEU) using a two-stage process.
- 7.2 Subject to Cabinet approval a planning application will be made pursuant to Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 (as amended).
- 7.3 All rights of way and ownerships have been rigorously investigated by solicitors and they have confirmed that the development of this option can be achieved.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 This report is most closely linked with the Council's Corporate / Significant Business Risk No. 4b Assets and Investments, Failure to Manage our corporate and housing assets effectively. Key risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
If we didn't explore fully the options for the former HQ site the Council may not achieve the best economic, social and financial outcomes from the site	Unlikely (2)	Medium (2)	Having the appropriate professional and technical experts to support the Council to ensure that the future options are fully appraised.
Other project risks:			
The project cannot be delivered within budget and within the agreed timescale. If projects are delayed could give rise to increased costs.	Unlikely (2)	Bad (3)	The project team have been working well together, all relevant surveys and site investigations have been carried out so that cost implications are known and it also serves to front load the planning application. Full consultation with stakeholders as

			the project has progressed have shaped the proposals.
The planning application is refused.	Unlikely (2)	Bad (3)	The application has been very thorough.
There is a market downturn which means that the viability position is altered for the project.	Unlikely (2)	Bad (3)	The Council could consider using properties for private rent whilst the market recovers.

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 Sounding board November 2017: A project sounding board consisting of Ward Councillors, the Council Leader, and representatives of the town council was established in November 2017 to provide important confidential input from representatives of the community. In November 2017, the site analysis, strategic and detailed briefs, concept designs and 3 site options were presented to the Sounding Board.
- 9.2 Pre -application submissions were made to the Planning Authority and statutory consultees as follows – to Historic England in October 2017, to the Planning Authority (incorporating Suffolk CC as Local Lead Flood Authority, Highways and Place Services Historic Buildings/ Ecology Officers and the Strategic Housing Officer) in November 2017.
- 9.3 Cabinet briefing and all member sessions – January 2018.
- 9.4 Town Council meeting 13th February 2018.
- 9.5 SDRP – March 2018, the consultant team engaged with the Suffolk Design Review Panel. Following a site visit, the site analysis, briefing and outline options were presented along with the developed, preferred option. The review panel provided useful feedback which has been reviewed and taken into account during the subsequent development of the proposals.
- 9.6 Public consultation exhibitions of the proposals were held at Hadleigh Cricket Club Pavilion and at the Guild Room (Town Hall) on 11th and 18th April.
- 9.7 Second sounding board –April 2018, the consultant team presented to the Sounding Board members, feeding back the responses from the SDRP and the public consultation.
- 9.8 The proposal (Option 2) was presented at Full Council, for comment, on the 19th June 2018. These comments can be found at Appendix H.

9.9 The advice from all these bodies, the responses arising from the public consultation exhibitions, councillor briefings and Full Council (19th June 2018) have been taken into account in developing the scheme design for the preferred option, including the associated site redevelopment mitigation strategies.

10. EQUALITY ANALYSIS

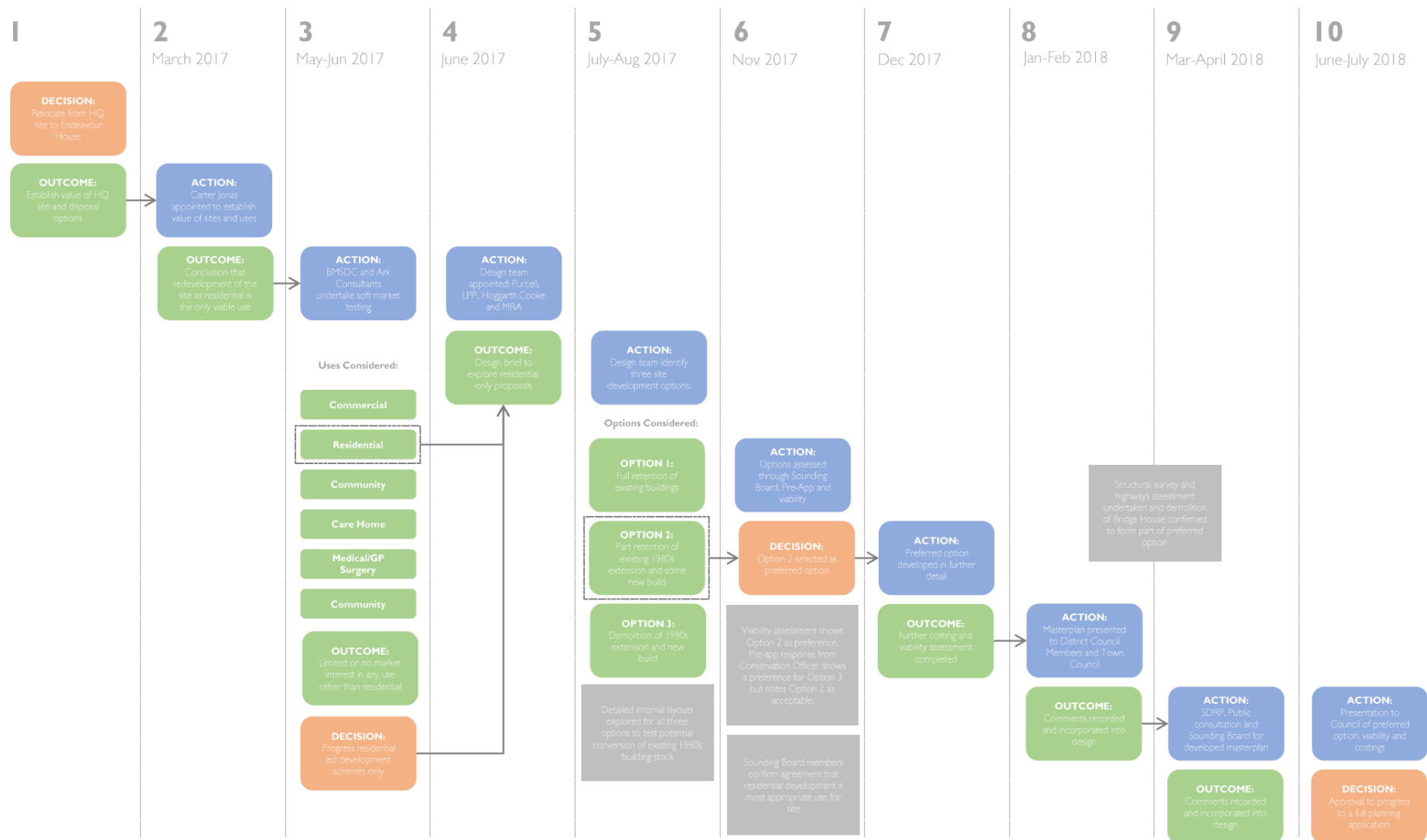
10.1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required as there are no equality issues arising from the contents of this report and the recommendations.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The environmental implications of the project/build specifications will be set out in the report on the delivery of these proposals

12. APPENDICES

Title	Location
(a1) Process Summary	Attached
(a) Paper C/70/16 Site Options	In Part 2 of the Report-Restricted
(b) Public Consultation Exhibition Boards	Attached
(c) LPP Summary of Consultation Responses	Attached
(d) CJ Employment Viability Report	Attached
(e) MRA Viability Information	In Part 2 of the Report-Restricted
(f) High Level Project Plan/ Timetable	Attached
(g) Drawing	Attached
(h) Comments from Full Council 19.06.2018	To follow



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EXHIBITION ANNOUNCEMENT

PUBLIC EXHIBITION OF PLANS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE FORMER COUNCIL OFFICES

Wednesday 11 April & Wednesday 18 April 2018

Drop in anytime from 3pm to 8pm

Wednesday 11 April

Hadleigh Cricket Pavilion
Friars Road, Hadleigh, IP7 6DF

Wednesday 18 April

Guild Room, Hadleigh Town Hall,
Market Place, Hadleigh, IP7 5DN

Representatives of Babergh District Council, Purcell Architects
& Lawson Planning Partnership will be on hand to answer your questions

INTRODUCTION

PUBLIC EXHIBITION OF PLANS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE FORMER COUNCIL OFFICES

- Babergh & Mid Suffolk Council started working together in 2011 with one chief executive and a shared workforce to deliver better services at lower cost
- In 2016 Babergh members made the decision to relocate from the HQ buildings in Hadleigh to Endeavour House in Ipswich, sharing space with other public sector bodies including the County Council and also Clinical Commissioning Group
- The decision was a result of appraisals of the HQ site which showed that it was no longer fit for purpose to fulfil local government functions. The reasons for this included barriers to redesign, including listed building status, and poor connections to vital utilities: the cost of mitigating this and bringing it up to modern standards would be prohibitive
- As a result of the move Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils will save an estimated £5.8m over the next decade in HQ costs, which will be reinvested in council services
- Public facing services continue to be delivered within the district, including from a public access point in Sudbury



STRATEGIC BRIEF & AIMS

PUBLIC EXHIBITION OF PLANS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE FORMER COUNCIL OFFICES

THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC AIMS & OBJECTIVES:

- Our Joint Strategic Plan set out our priorities to invest to generate income and regenerate local areas; make best use of land and buildings across the Suffolk public sector and financially sustainable councils
- The former Council offices are one of several redevelopments the council is leading to deliver as part of our assets and investments programme
- The redevelopment of the former office site must:
 - Support the strong and vibrant community in Hadleigh
 - Regenerate the site and deliver housing to meet local needs
 - Ensure development takes place within a reasonable timeframe



DETAILED BRIEF

PUBLIC EXHIBITION OF PLANS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE FORMER COUNCIL OFFICES

THE STORY SO FAR...

- A design and planning team is focussed on the regeneration & redevelopment of the two HQ sites
- The councils have carried out soft market testing to identify suitable options, exploring opportunities at the two HQ sites
 - This process confirmed that demand for commercial office space in this location is extremely limited and that there was no demand from providers of care homes and hotels
 - The assessment work has concluded that the only viable use for the site is residential

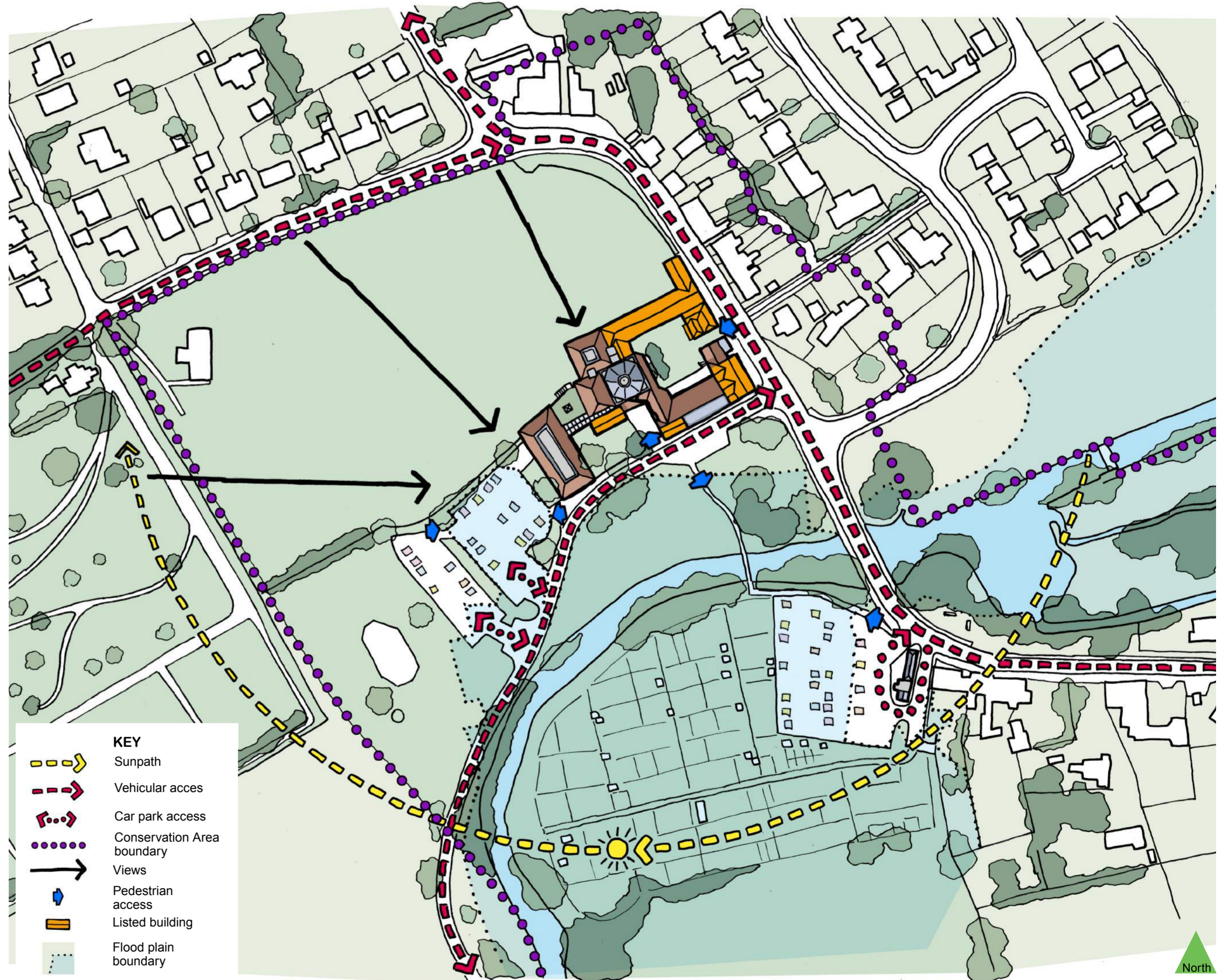


UNDERSTANDING THE SITE

PUBLIC EXHIBITION OF PLANS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE FORMER COUNCIL OFFICES

CONSTRAINTS & OPPORTUNITIES

- Heritage (five historic buildings, including Grade II* and Grade II Listed properties)
- Bridge House in poor repair; restricts visibility to Bridge Street, access to the existing allotments and proposed dwellings
- All parts of the site lie within a Conservation Area
- Site north of the river lies within a Special Landscape Area
- Site south of the river lies within an Area of Archaeological Interest
- River Brett and associated flood risk zones
- Corks Lane, which incorporates a public right of way
- Access to the site
- Views of and from the site
- Surrounding open spaces (cricket ground, recreation area, green space)
- Vacant previously developed site with high redevelopment costs and related financial viability considerations



SITE DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

PUBLIC EXHIBITION OF PLANS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE FORMER COUNCIL OFFICES

OPTIONS DEVELOPED IN NOVEMBER 2017



OPTION 1

- Retention and conversion of the Listed buildings
- Retention and conversion of the 1980's extension
- Retention and conversion of Bridge House
- New build development on the Corks Lane car park, corner of Corks Lane and Bridge House car park



OPTION 2

- Retention and conversion of the Listed buildings
- Part retention and conversion of the 1980's extension
- Retention and conversion of Bridge House
- New build development on the Corks Lane car park, corner of Corks Lane and Bridge House car park



OPTION 3

- Retention and conversion of the Listed buildings
- Demolition of the 1980's extension
- New build development within the curtilage of the Listed buildings
- Demolition of Bridge House
- New build development on the Corks Lane car park, corner of Corks Lane and Bridge House car park

SITE DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

PUBLIC EXHIBITION OF PLANS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE FORMER COUNCIL OFFICES

OPTIONS DEVELOPED IN NOVEMBER 2017

ASSESSMENT OF THESE OPTIONS:

- The three options were assessed in the following ways:
 - Sounding board, comprising of local representatives
 - Scheme cost and financial viability comparison
 - Local planning authority pre-application advice including liaison with statutory consultees
- Option 2 was the preferred option, which has been developed further to form the current proposed masterplan



MASTERPLAN

PUBLIC EXHIBITION OF PLANS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE FORMER COUNCIL OFFICES

MASTERPLAN - FACTS & FIGURES

- Total site area = 1.22 hectares / 3 acres
- Total number of new homes (houses and apartments) = 58
- Mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments and 3 and 4 bedroom houses
- Housing density of 47 dwellings per hectare
- High quality private and public spaces, hard and soft landscaping
- Residents and visitor car / cycle parking and bin storage
- Memorial trees retained
- Green space and footpaths adjacent to the river to be retained



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CREATING PLACE & ACHIEVING A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

PUBLIC EXHIBITION OF PLANS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE FORMER COUNCIL OFFICES

PROPOSAL BENEFITS:

- Retention of the listed buildings and enhancement of the setting and significance
- High quality housing sympathetic to the local character
- Improved public realm
- Retention of the riverside green space and informal walking routes
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payment towards education and healthcare to address any impacts arising to local services



New Build Housing



South Elevation



West Elevation

CONCLUSIONS & NEXT STEPS

PUBLIC EXHIBITION OF PLANS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE FORMER COUNCIL OFFICES

PLANNING BENEFITS, BROAD TIMESCALES & PROGRAMME

- Necessary regeneration which will achieve a sustainable development
- Mix of good quality housing & local community benefits
- Financially viable scheme to ensure regeneration is delivered within a suitable timeframe
- Planning and Listed building application(s)
- Business case & procurement process for delivery
- Listening to the community
- Scheme submission to Local Planning Authority estimated for late summer 2018
- Thank you for attending; your views are invited



BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, CORKS LANE, HADLEIGH – REDEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE FOR RESIDENTIAL LED PURPOSES

PUBLIC CONSULTATION – SUPPORT v OBJECTION SUMMARY OF 3rd PARTY REPRESENTATIONS

- In total, **132** persons attended across the two Public Consultation Exhibitions: 61 persons attended the event on Wednesday 11th April 2018 and signed the register; and 71 persons attended the second event on Wednesday 18th April and signed the register.
- In total, approximately 2% of the total population (8,253*) of Hadleigh attended the consultation exhibitions.
- In total **63** written responses have been received.
- The deadline for comments to be received for inclusion was 2nd May 2018.

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	Question	Total number	Percentage
A	Number of persons who <u>agreed</u> in principle with the redevelopment of the vacant site for residential led purposes	50	79.4%
B	Number of persons who <u>did not agree</u> in principle with the redevelopment of the vacant site for residential led purposes	6	9.5%
C	Number of persons who <u>did not clearly indicate</u> whether or not they agreed in principle with the redevelopment of the vacant site for residential led purposes	7	11.1%
		Total 63	100%

*Population Figure Source: ONS 2011 Census as set out in Hadleigh Socio-Economic Profile (Parish Level) updated Jan 2016

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FORMER BABERGH DISTRICT
COUNCIL OFFICES

CORKS LANE HADLEIGH
IP7 6SJ

MAY 2018

EMPLOYMENT VIABILITY APPRAISAL

Reference: Employment Viability Appraisal – Former Babergh District Council Offices, Corks Lane, Hadleigh IP7 6SJ

Client: Babergh District Council

Carter Jonas Contacts:

Keith Fuller MRICS – Partner – Architecture & Building Consultancy

Ben Le Coq MRICS – Associate – Commercial Agency & Development

Ben Ward – MRTPI – Senior Planner – Planning & Development

Jacob Buckley – Mapping Technician

Tel: 01223 315716

Web: www.carterjonas.co.uk/commercial

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The property, is located in a rural market town setting and not within an established employment setting such as a business park or town centre.
- The majority of people living within a 45 minute drive time to the property are aged 45 - 64 yrs, which may be seen as unfavourable to prospective employers seeking a broader spectrum of employees
- The percentage of degree qualified residents within the same 45 minute drive time radius identifies the fact that the majority are located close to major employment locations, with the property mostly adjacent to zones with 10-25% degree qualified people
- Major employment hubs (Bury St Edmunds, Colchester, Harwich, Felixstowe and Ipswich) are all accessible within a 45 minute drive time from the property and are therefore likely to be a more attractive destination for residents in the area where a greater number of employers are located offering a wider range of business types
- It is anticipated that the market demand for the office space in question will be limited to non-existent given long term market statistics for the area
- There is over 339,000 sq. ft. of available office space within a 10 mile radius of the property with a further 334,000 sq. ft. of office space that is proposed or under construction (all of which is to be delivered in close proximity to major employment hubs)
- There are a number of examples of similar sized, well-located and purpose built offices that have remained available on the market for over 5 years with St Clare House, Ipswich being vacant for over 10 years
- On average office disposals take no more than 2,300 sq. ft. per transaction with only 7 deals occurring over the last 5 years that have taken more than 10,000 sq. ft. – all of which occurred in Ipswich or Colchester
- The vast majority of leasing activity occurring over the last 5 years has occurred around Ipswich and Colchester. The only deals to occur in close proximity to Hadleigh were small in scale and ranged between 730 sq. ft. and 2,316 sq. ft.
- It is considered highly unlikely, if not impossible, that the office will be disposed of in a single letting given the fact that no office deals have occurred in the last 5 years that have involved the disposal of more than 20,000 sq. ft. in any one deal.
- Prevailing secondary office rents are low leaving little room for manoeuvre in order to cover the required refurbishment / subdivision costs
- There are very few known and suitable businesses in the area that would be large enough to take even a proportion of the property (should they have a desire to relocate) with the majority that have been identified being located in established employment hubs (e.g. Colchester and Ipswich)
- Office market conditions remain incredibly challenging with a number of factors working against a successful disposal of the space in question within a reasonable timescale

- The property was designed and constructed for a single occupier and any attempt to split the space for multiple occupiers (to meet any anticipated market demand) will significantly reduce the net lettable space to levels that are below industry standards
- All services to the property have been delivered as a single supply with major alteration required to incorporate separate services supplies or the introduction of sub-meters
- The property is considered to be unsuitable for conversion into alternative employment uses – such as a care home or hotel given the strict requirements that such operators hold and the inability to make them sit within the confines of the existing structure
- The demand for alternative employment uses has been tested through a market testing exercise run by ARK with property agents and care/ hotel operators approached. No forthcoming demand was identified throughout this process from these sectors.

2.0 LIMITATIONS OF REPORT

This report is provided for the purposes and use of the client. Carter Jonas LLP accepts responsibility to the client that the report has been prepared with the skill, care and diligence reasonably expected of a competent Chartered Surveyor but accepts no responsibility whatsoever to any party other than the client. Any such party relies on the report at their own risk.

This report should be read as a whole so that no part may be taken out of context.

The report has been prepared in accordance with the instructions received from Peter Buist at Purcell on behalf of Babergh District Council.

The report has been prepared by Ben Le Coq MRICS, Keith Fuller MRICS and Ben Ward MRTPI who have the relevant experience and knowledge to appraise the properties in this location.

This report is not intended nor is it suitable for secured lending purposes or for assessing the suitability of the property for loan security by a third party.

We have undertaken a visual inspection of the property as far as reasonably possible.

Any interpretation of legal documents and legal assumptions must be checked by the client's legal advisor. No responsibility or liability is accepted for the correct interpretation by Carter Jonas LLP of the legal position of the client or other parties or with regard to legal title. We have assumed the property is not subject to any unusual or especially onerous restrictions, encumbrances or outgoings and that good title can be shown. For the avoidance of doubt, these matters should be investigated by the client's legal representative. We have assumed that the property and its value would not be affected by any matters which would be revealed by a local search and replies to the usual inquiries, or by any statutory notice and neither the property, nor its condition, use, intended use are or would be unlawful.

We have not carried out any tests of drainage, electrical, plumbing or other service installations.

We have not undertaken any tests to establish whether deleterious, hazardous, inherently dangerous or unsuitable materials or techniques were used in the construction of the property or have since been incorporated. Therefore we are unable to confirm the property is free from such materials.

In the event of values being provided in this report – they are done so on the basis of the site being made available with suitable planning consent and on assumed occupational terms. They are not values of the sites being traded as going concerns, which would be subject to a different method of valuation.

2.1 SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Market statistics and trends have been sourced from Property Market Analysis LLP, CoStar, Estates Gazette Interactive and our own market knowledge of recent lettings / sales in the area.

3.0 THE BRIEF

The former council offices are currently vacant following the relocation of the Council towards the latter end of 2017. A project team led by Purcell has been appointed by Babergh District Council to prepare a full planning application for residential development of the BDC site at Hadleigh.

Carter Jonas has previously produced a Development Viability Report (February 2016) in respect of the site which looked at the likely market values for potential redevelopment options, and in so doing concluded that there is unlikely to be any market demand for office use on the site. This has been further confirmed by a soft market testing exercise undertaken by Ark which looked into office, hotel and care home uses in this location.

The Babergh Local Plan seeks to retain existing employment uses unless continued use is considered to be unsuitable or unviable (as stated in Policy EM24).

It has been agreed during pre-application discussions that a marketing campaign for the site is not required however the client (applicant) would still need to demonstrate that continued employment use is not suitable or viable to address the emphasis of Policy EM24. A detailed Employment Viability Report is therefore submitted in support of the planning application.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY OVERVIEW

4.1 THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The development plan comprises the saved policies of the Babergh Local Plan (2006) and the Babergh Local Plan Core Strategy & Policies (2014). Babergh District Council has adopted a number of Supplementary Planning Documents. The relevant SPDs are the Affordable Housing SPD (adopted 2014), Safeguarding Employment Land SPD (adopted 2008), the Suffolk County Council Parking Standards Supplementary Guidance (2014), and the Supplementary Planning Guidance on Provision of Outdoor Recreation Facilities & Open Space (adopted 2010).

4.2 THE CORE STRATEGY

The Core Strategy (CS) sets out a high-level strategic plan for the District from 2011 to 2031. Policy CS2 states that most development in the district will be directed to the largest towns and urban areas, including Hadleigh. Policy CS2 states that on land defined as the countryside development will be permitted in exceptional circumstances subject to a proven justifiable need. Policy CS6 provides for a mixed use urban extension to the town of Hadleigh for approximately 250 dwellings and up to 5.5ha of employment land.

Policy CS15 relates to “Implementing Sustainable Development in Babergh.” Relevant to this site are the policy’s requirements to:

- Protect or create jobs to strengthen the local economy and reduce out-commuting
- Ensure an appropriate level of services and facilities
- Protect and enhance biodiversity
- Make provision for open space
- Reduce exposure to risks of flooding
- Policy CS19 requires 35% affordable housing in residential developments.

4.3 SAVED POLICIES OF THE BABERGH LOCAL PLAN (2006)

The proposals map associated with the Babergh Local Plan (2006) shows the site as lying outside of the “Built up area boundary” of Hadleigh. In addition, it shows the site as being located within a “Special Landscape Area” as well as lying within Hadleigh Conservation Area.

Saved Policy HS04 indicates that new housing will be integrated into the defined areas of Towns and Villages. Outside of these areas, in the countryside, the policy states that existing land uses will remain “for the most part undisturbed.” As such, this policy when taken on its own would have the effect of precluding residential development on the subject site.

This must be weighed against the more recent Core Strategy and the presumption in favour of sustainable development outlined in paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) taking account of Babergh District Council’s acknowledged shortfall of deliverable housing sites against its five year requirement. According to the latest Annual Monitoring Report (2016-2017) dated June 2017, Babergh District Council claims that it has between 4.1 and 4.7 years of its five year housing land supply depending on the methodology used. This is against the adopted Core Strategy’s housing requirement whereas if land supply is assessed against the most recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment there is actually a 3.1 year housing land supply which represents a significant deficit. As such, decisions on planning applications for new homes in the district need to be taken in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development and only refused where the adverse impacts significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits or the NPPF itself indicates that

development should be restricted. In this case, the site is located in a conservation area and Footnote 9 is clear that the NPPF extends protection to heritage assets regardless of the particular five year land supply position.

Saved Policy EM24 states that proposals to redevelop or re-use existing vacant employment land for non-employment purposes will only be permitted if alternative employment uses have been fully explored by way of an agreed and sustained marketing campaign undertaking at a realistic price or, where agreed in advance, the applicant can demonstrate that the land, site or premises are inherently unsuitable or not viable for all forms of employment related use.

In relation to the application of Saved Policy EM24 Babergh District Council has adopted Supplementary Planning Document dating from 2008 entitled "Safeguarding Employment Land." This elaborates on the second rung of Policy EM24 which permits the loss of employment land where the site or premises are inherently unsuitable or not viable for all forms of employment related use. The SPD qualifies that in order to use this provision, the applicant must approach the local planning authority and agree the use of this route in advance. Subsequently, the applicant is required to employ appropriate commercial expertise to demonstrate that the land, site or premises in question are inherently unsuitable or not viable for all non-domestic forms of employment related use. The SPD states that the Council will consider the evidence provided and may enlist independent advice on the information the cost for which the applicant will be liable.

The SPD notes that although the retention of the site in employment use may not be viable at a particular moment in time, the economics of development may change over time and the site's potential for employment uses could become a viable proposition in the future. In this respect, such sites are still considered by the Council to have value as an employment resource.

The SPD continues that where an applicant can demonstrate that the redevelopment or refurbishment of an existing employment site is unviable, developers will be expected, subject to other policy considerations, to explore the prospect of a balanced approach to mixed-use development which incorporates an element of higher value uses to cross-subsidise employment uses. Where residential development is proposed the applicant or his agent need to explain why a mixed-use development is not feasible on a particular site. Where an industrial or business use is not feasible, leisure or community uses will be preferred.

It should be noted that Saved Policy EM24 and the corresponding SPD are now 10 – 12 years old and planning policy at the national level has moved on to a material degree. Paragraph 22 of the NPPF 2012 states that "planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of the site being reused for that purpose. Where there is no reasonable prospect of the site being used for the allocated employment use, applications for alternative uses of land and buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities."

Given its comparatively rigid focus, Saved Policy EM24 is not wholly consistent with the more recent NPPF 2012 particularly in as much as the SPD indicates that alternative uses or mix of uses other than the existing or proposed use be considered in preference to residential, whereas Paragraph 22 of the NPPF is clear that where the existing use is shown to not have a reasonable prospect of continuing, alternative uses should be treated on their merits. Requiring that other uses or mixes of uses be explored before the site is brought forward for residential development is not consistent with treating alternative uses on their merits.

4.4 THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (2012)

Paragraph 7 of the NPPF sets out three dimensions to sustainable development – economic, social, and environmental. The presumption in favour of sustainable development at paragraph 14 sets out that for decision-taking the presumption means when the development plan is absent, silent, or out

of date that planning permission be granted unless the adverse impacts significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits or the Framework itself indicates that development should be restricted.

Paragraph 17 sets out core planning principles. It states that the planning system should deliver the homes that the country needs and that every effort should be made to objectively identify and then meet housing need. Paragraph 17 also encourages the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed provided it is not of high environmental value and to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. Paragraph 17 continues by stating that the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth and make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking, and cycling as well as focusing significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable.

The advice of Paragraph 22 in respect to the retention of employment land has been set out above in relation to local planning policy. Paragraph 34 states that development which generates significant movement should be located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes maximised.

Paragraph 47 states that local planning authorities should aim to boost significantly the supply of housing and to that end identify a five year supply of deliverable housing sites plus an appropriate buffer. Paragraph 49 states that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development and that relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

Chapter 7 of the NPPF 2012 relates to requiring good design. It states that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment and that planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and should not stifle innovation, originality, or initiative.

Under the heading of Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment, Chapter 11 of the NPPF states that the planning system should aim to achieve net gains in biodiversity and protect and enhance valued landscapes. It also states at paragraph 111 that planning policies and decisions should encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed.

Chapter 12 of the NPPF relates to “Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment.” Paragraph 128 states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset’s significance. Paragraph 129 states that local planning authorities should identify and assess the significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by the proposal and take the assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset.

Paragraph 132 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to that asset’s conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be attributed to its conservation. Paragraph 138 states that not all elements of a World Heritage Site or a conservation area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of buildings which make a positive contribution to the conservation area should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 133 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 134.

Paragraph 134 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

5.0 PROPERTY OVERVIEW

5.1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY

The freehold of the Babergh District Council office, Corks Lane, Hadleigh is owned by Babergh District Council.

The site contains an office building (B1 Use Class) of circa 33,113 sq. ft. (net) (this area is approximate and has been established from the VOA rating of the office) accessed separately from both Corks Lane and the B1070. The existing accommodation is principally set over ground and first floors with a small amount of space at second floor level. It comprises a mixture of building types which have been pieced together over time and are all linked internally.

The site on which the property is located extends to approximately 0.44ha (1.09 acres - northern site) with an additional 0.42ha (1.03 acres) on the southern plot to the south of Corks Lane – as can be seen in Figure 1. Note the former staff car park accessed off Bridge Street is excluded from this area calculation.



Figure 1 – Site Boundary / Location Plan – Existing Buildings

Internally it is currently divided into a series of private offices, meeting rooms, circulation areas and open plan offices. There is a large courtyard to the eastern side of the plot and a large landscaped area (referred to in the report as the Southern Plot) on the other side of Corks Lane.

Floor plans are provided on the following page – Figures 2 and 3.

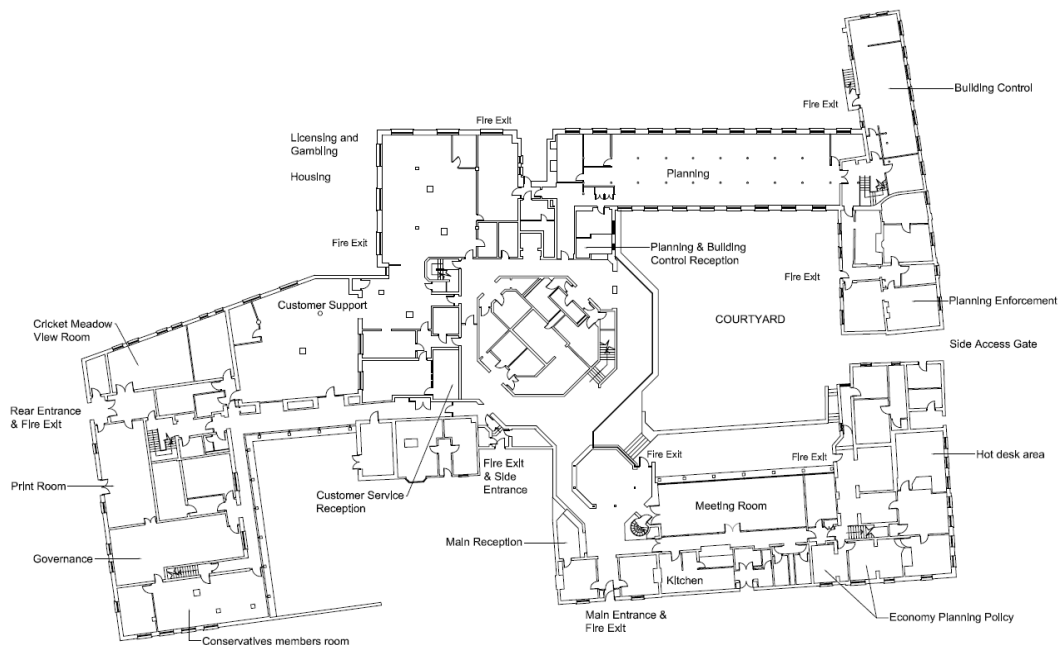


Figure 2 – Ground Floor Plan (Not to Scale)

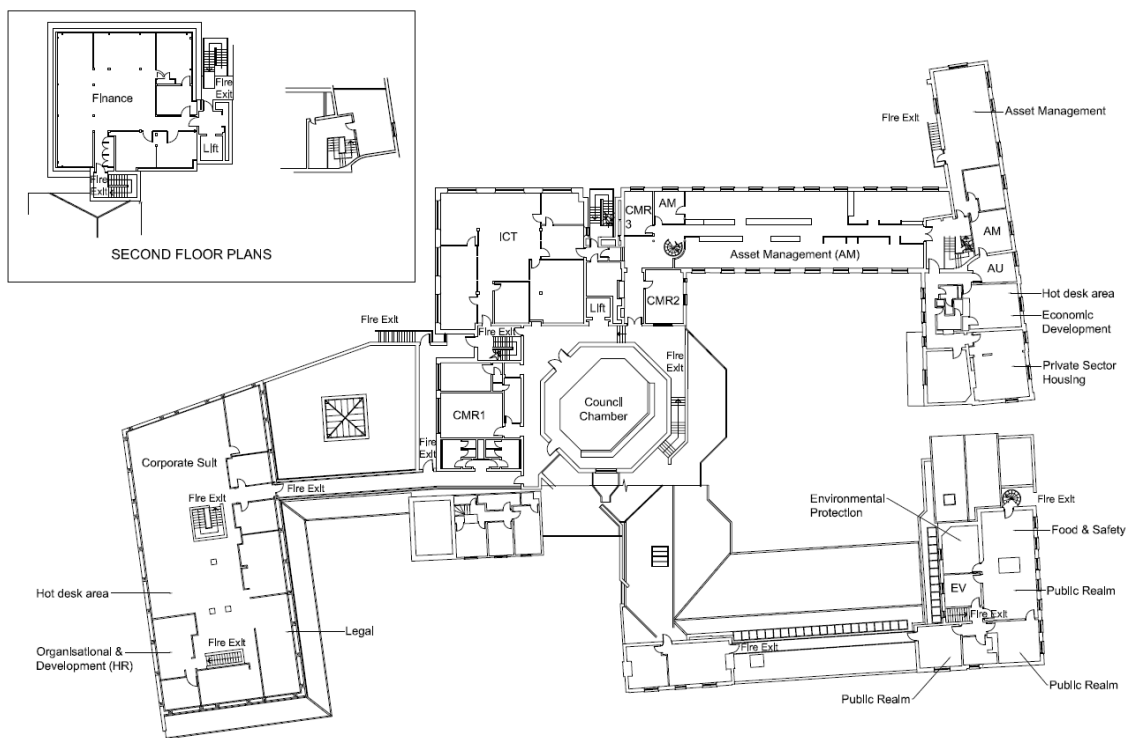


Figure 3 – First & Second Floor Plan (Not to Scale)

6.0 RESTRICTIONS TO CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT USE

6.1 PROPERTY LOCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS & STATISTICS

6.1.1 Property Location

Babergh is a predominantly rural district and Hadleigh served as the administrative centre until the Council relocated to Ipswich in 2017. Nearby Sudbury is the largest town by population size. Commercial and employment activities within Babergh are concentrated primarily around Sudbury and Ipswich.

Hadleigh is the second largest town in Babergh although is still relatively small with a population of approximately 8,253 people according to the 2011 census. The historic character of the town, with the River Brett forming the western boundary, provides an attractive setting for a wide variety of shops and service facilities that includes a range of specialist shops that draw people from outside the immediate area and contribute to the visitor and tourist offer.

The shape of the town influences the location of the residential areas, which are contained to the northern, eastern and southern edges and are some distance from the town centre.

The A12 and A134 trunk roads, which run north to south across the district, are key transport corridors in the region. The A1071 bypasses the town and provides good access to the main employment area.

The town does not have a railway station although bus services are available from Hadleigh to Ipswich, Sudbury and Colchester where trains can be taken.

6.1.2 Age Distribution

Analysis has been undertaken into the age distribution of residents within a 45 minute drive time to the property in order to build a picture of the number of prospective employees within a reasonable drive time catchment area (Figure 4).

It is evident that the office is situated in a 0-15 dominant age group although generally it is adjacent to 45-64 dominant age group zones.

The nearest populous areas (Sudbury, Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich, East Bergholt and Stowmarket) are predominantly 65+ i.e. above working age.

Principal clusters of 16-29 / 30-44 dominant age groups are, as would be expected, located around Colchester and Ipswich although there is a small 16-29 dominant age group to the north of the site around Wattisham Airfield.

These age population statistics are not favourable and highlight the lack of 'working age' people within reasonable commuting distances to the property. The statistics reinforce the fact that the property is situated in a relatively rural area with the proximity of Ipswich and Colchester have an impact by attracting a greater cluster of people that would fall within the right age brackets for employers located here.

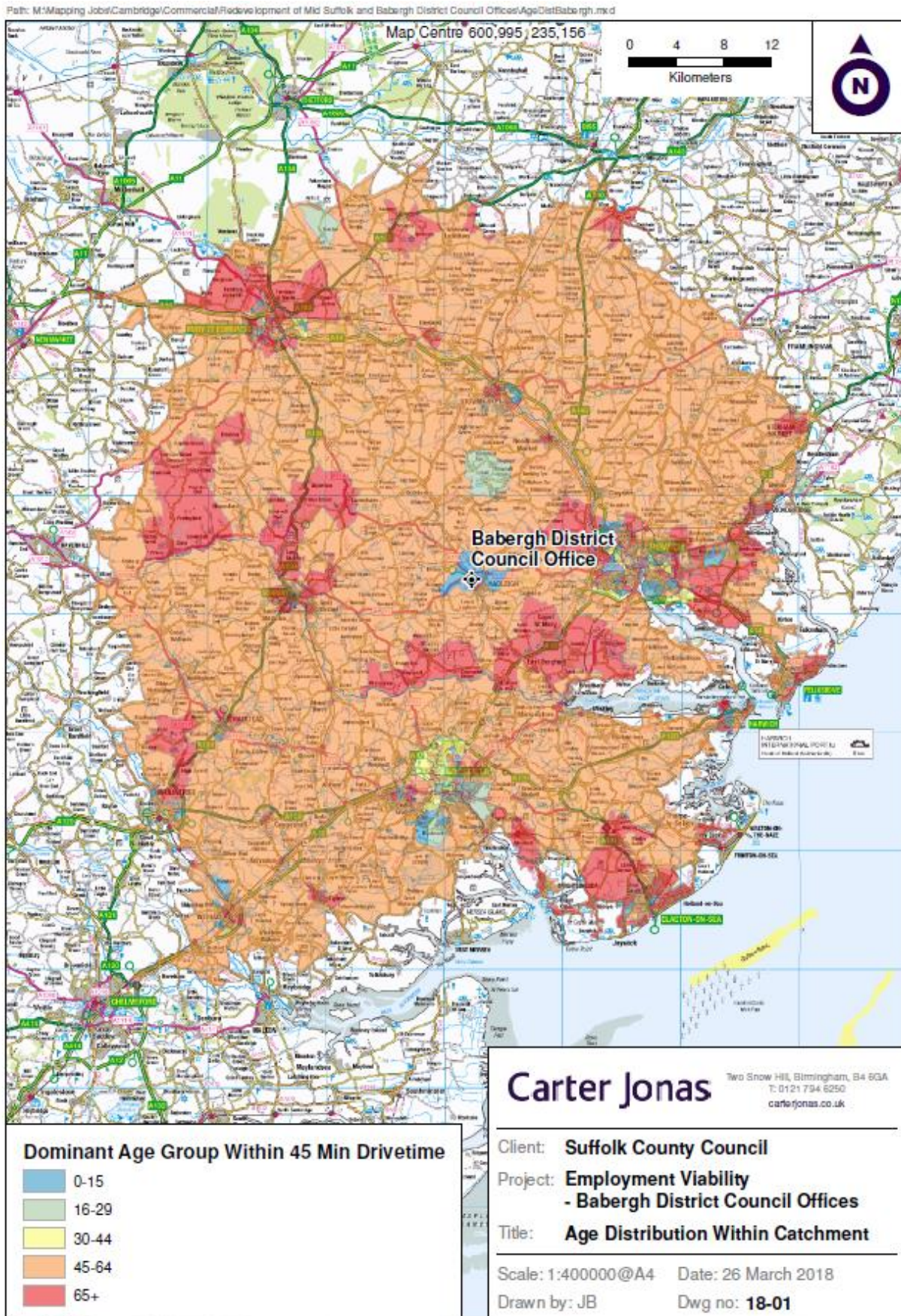


Figure 4 – Age Distribution within 45 Minute Drive Time Catchment

6.1.3 Percentage of Degree Qualified Residents

Analysis has been undertaken into the percentage of degree qualified residents within the same 45 minute drive time radius of the property (Figure 5).

This work has identified the fact that the office is located away from urban zones of 25%+ degree qualified people (Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds and Colchester) as well as larger rural zones (which are less populated therefore placing a greater emphasis in establishing an office in more populous zones).

Hadleigh is dominated by 10% to 25% degree qualified zones (the lowest two brackets) with the office itself is located within a 15% degree qualified zone. There are small pockets of 25-50% degree qualified zones however these appear to be outweighed by the dominant 10% to 25% degree qualified zones.

These statistics do not shed a positive light on the opportunity to attract prospective employees to the property with established clusters of degree qualified people within easy reach of more established employment locations including Colchester and Ipswich.

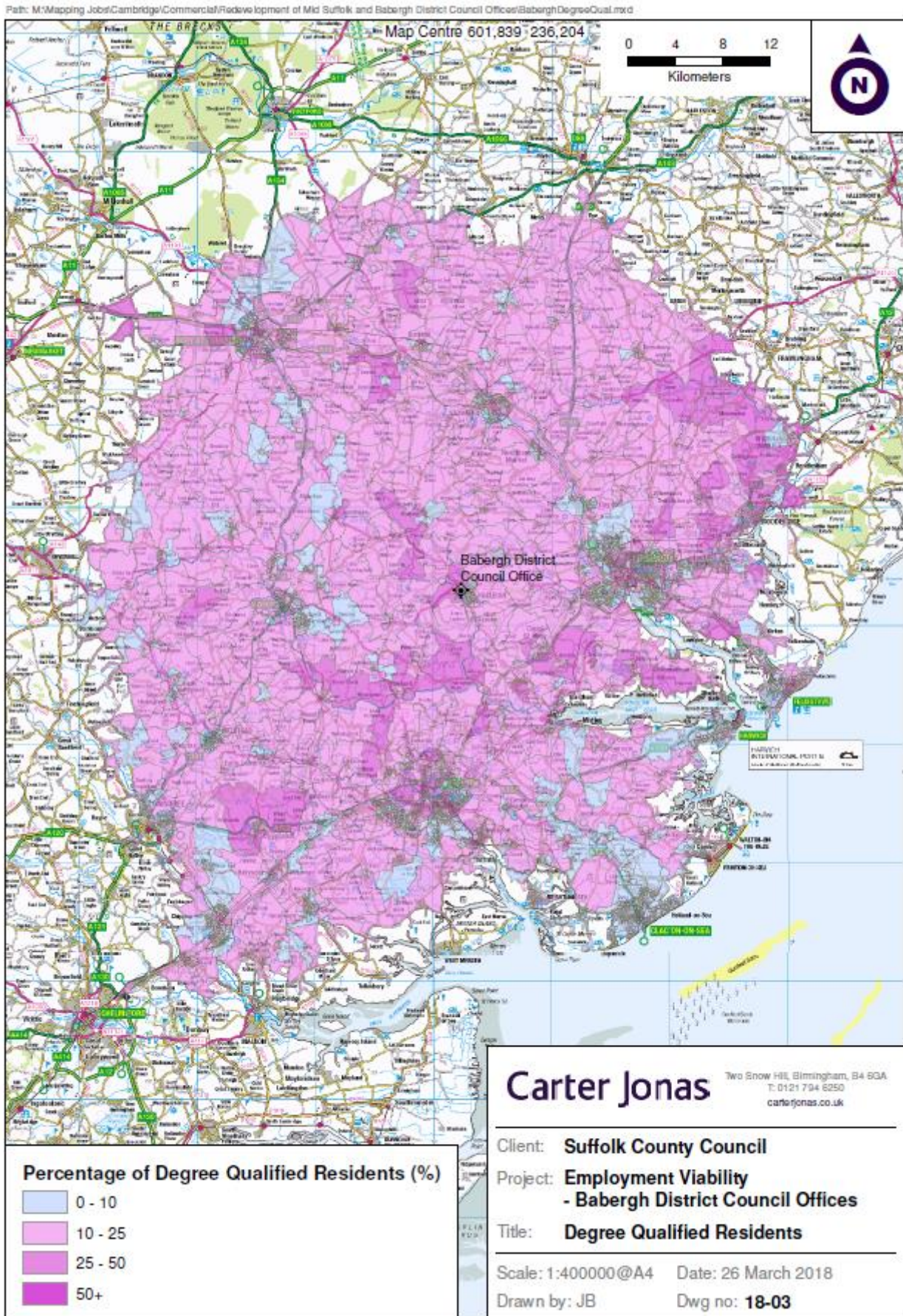


Figure 5 – Degree Qualified Residents within 45 Minute Drive Time Catchment

6.1.4 Drive Time Distances

The two demographic analysis maps have been prepared on the basis of a 45 minute drive time distance to the property. They highlight the fact that there are a number of sizable towns within this area including Bury St Edmunds, Colchester, Harwich, Felixstowe and Ipswich. These well established and higher populated areas will strongly compete for office based companies that will often seek areas that are easily accessible by car and public transport and also offer a good mix of amenities in the area.

Prospective employees living within this 45 minute drive time area will, as a result, have access to a number of these competing locations and the full range of companies that are located there.

Certain types of businesses will be location sensitive for a number of reasons (above and beyond accessibility) with some seeking to cluster around similar organisations for knowledge sharing / cross selling of work but also due to the nature of their business and their core target customer base / market in which they operate.

Hadleigh will struggle to compete as a viable alternative to these core office / general employment hubs given its distance from them, its relative scale and amount of existing office space in the locality.

6.2 THE LOCAL OFFICE MARKET

6.2.1 Office Market Assessment Area

An assessment has been undertaken of the local office market based on a 10 miles radius from Hadleigh. This radius (as can be seen in Figure 6) encompasses parts of Ipswich, Colchester and Sudbury which are larger regional commercial centres. It is important to take this into account when analysing the market trends occurring and forecasts for the future.

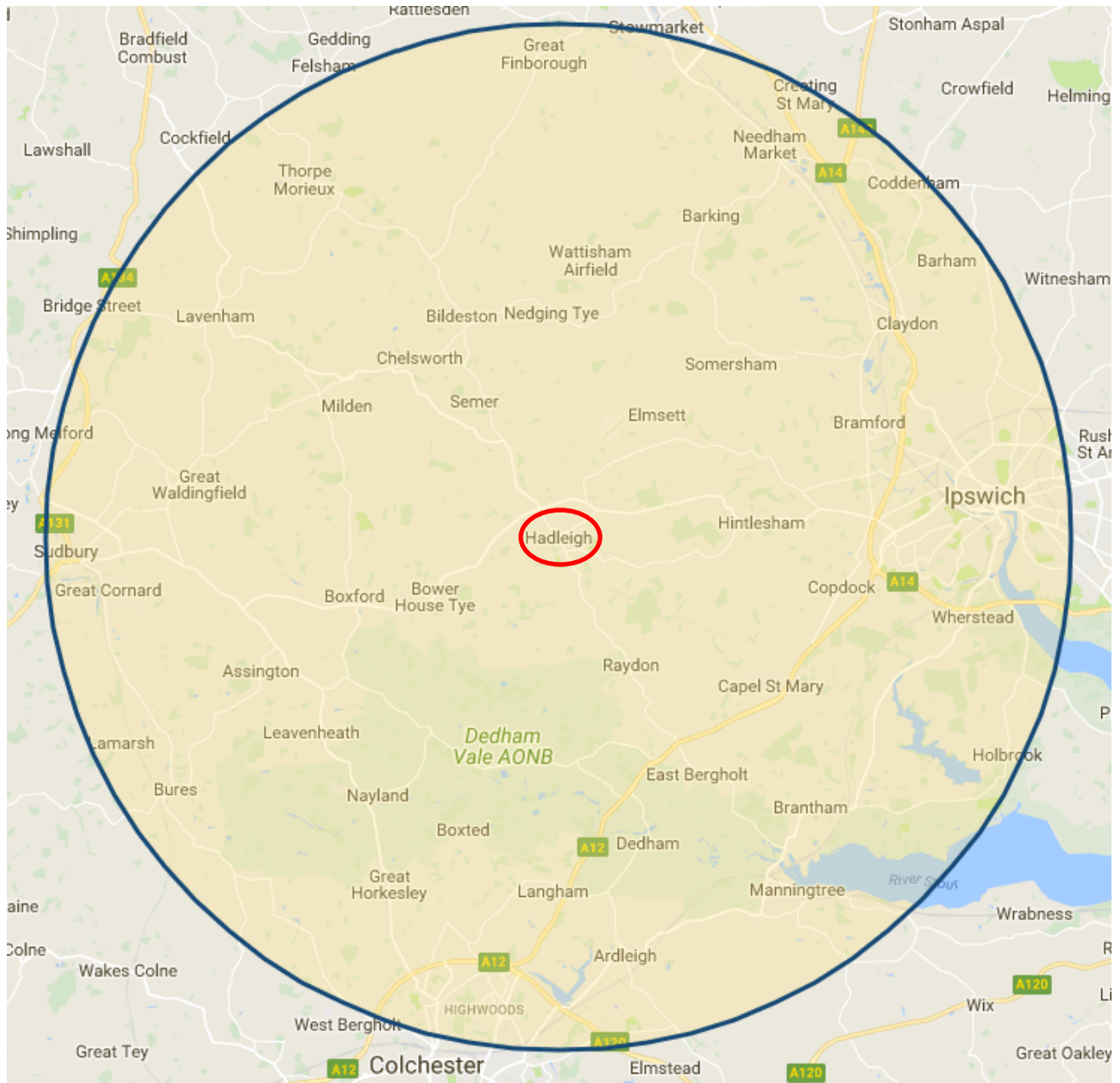


Figure 6 – Office Market Search Radius – Hadleigh + 10 Miles

6.2.2 Office Availability

Within a 10 mile radius of the town there are currently 598 existing and proposed offices providing over 5.11 million sq. ft. of office space which compares very closely to the five year average of 5.13 million sq. ft.

There are circa 581 existing offices suites (including those under renovation) providing around 339,219 sq. ft. of available space in total. The majority of existing and all available office space is located in established employment locations away from Hadleigh (as per Figure 7) with small clusters of existing office suites scattered around peripheral villages and towns.

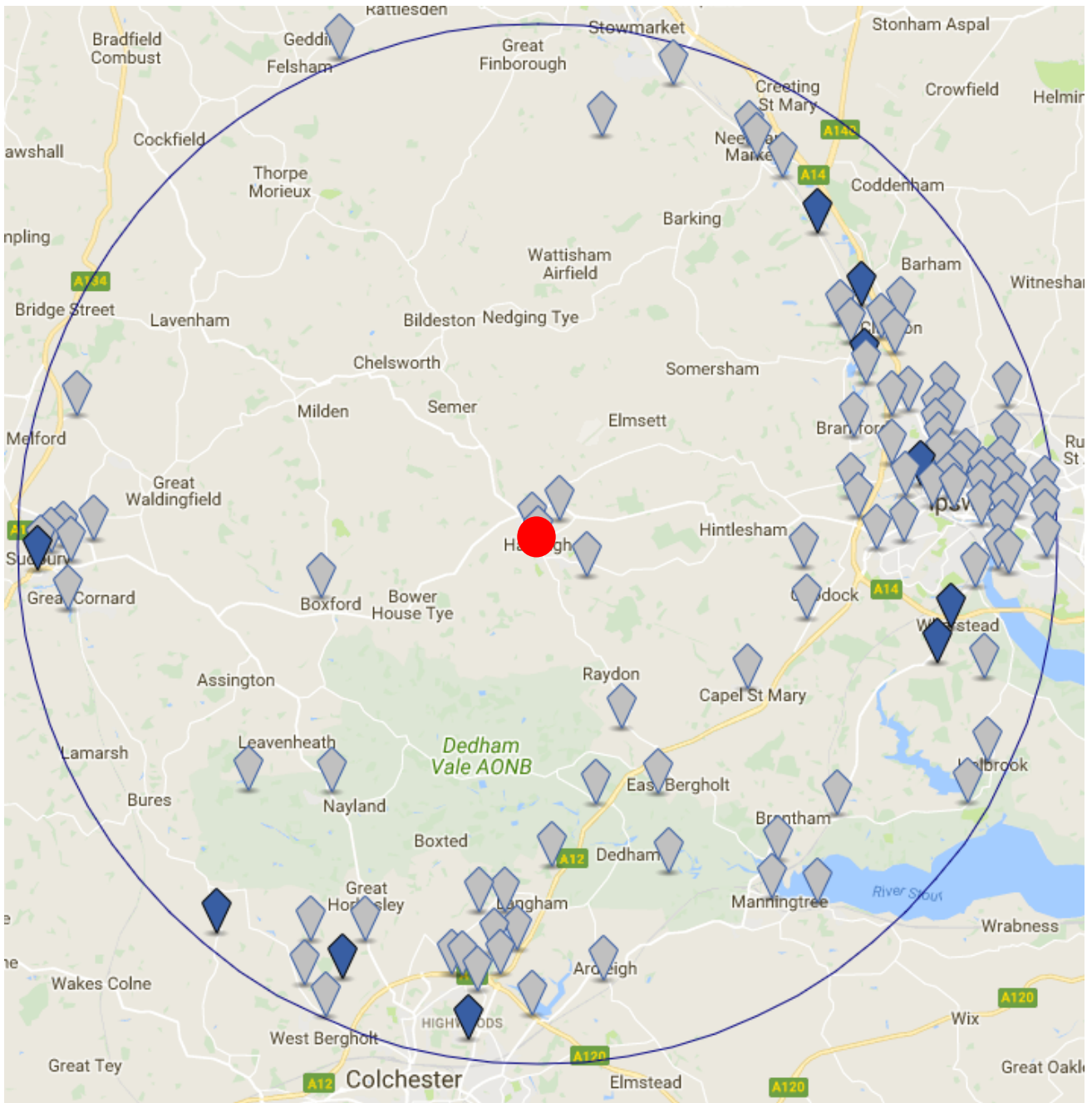


Figure 7 – Offices that are Existing and / or Under Renovation

(Dark Blue Markers = Available Space. Light Blue Markers = No Space Available)

Of the existing space available, the average available office / suite size is 2,476 sq. ft.

There are five offices currently on the market (for sale / to let) that are offering in excess of 20,000 sq. ft. These are:

Berkeley Business Centre, Connexions 159, Princes Street, Ipswich: 43,551 sq. ft. of modern, purpose built, office accommodation within walking distance of Ipswich railway station. Asking rent: £18.00 - £20.00 per sq. ft. Time on Market: 61 months (5+ years).



Figure 8 – Berkeley Business Centre, Connexions 159, Princes Street, Ipswich

St Clare House, Princess Street, Ipswich: 40,980 sq. ft. of purpose built office space in walking distance to Ipswich Railway Station. Asking rent: £5.95 per sq. ft. Time on Market: 45 months (3.75 years) on average (some spaces been on for up to 103 months (8.5+ years)).



Figure 9 – St Clare House, Princess Street, Ipswich

Franciscan House, 51 Princes Street, Ipswich: 32,000 sq. ft. of purpose built office space in the centre of Ipswich and in walking distance to Ipswich Railway Station. It is currently under renovation.



Figure 10 – Franciscan House, 51 Princes Street, Ipswich

Sulby House, North Street, Sudbury: 31,784 sq. ft. office with consent for residential conversion and on the market for sale. Time on Market: 9 months.



Figure 11 – Sulby House, North Street, Sudbury

Hyde Park House, 1 Crown Street, Ipswich: 20,199 sq. ft. of purpose built office space currently available located close to Ipswich town centre and in close proximity to Westerfield Railway Station. Asking rent: £12.50 - £13.00 sq. ft. Time on Market: 21 months on average (some spaces been on for up to 65 months (5+ years)).



Figure 12 – Hyde Park House, 1 Crown Street, Ipswich

In addition, there is a further 334,228 sq. ft. of office space that is either proposed or under construction although 116,273 sq. ft. of this space is available and on the market as such. This includes:

Building Address	Building Name	Building Park	Building Status	Rentable Building Area	Total Available Space (SF)
Crockatt Rd		Hadleigh Enterprise Park	Under Construction	4,260	4,260
Landseer Rd	Eagle House		Proposed	15,070	
7A-7C Little Blakenham	Broomvale Business Centre		Proposed	5,272	5,272
Lower Brook St	The Link		Proposed	150,000	
Manningtree Rd	The Pavilion	Dedham Vale Business Centre	Proposed	2,885	
Princes St	Birketts		Under Construction	50,000	
Old Ipswich Rd	Building 1	Hudson Park	Proposed	8,180	8,180
Old Ipswich Rd	Building 2	Hudson Park	Proposed	8,180	8,180
Old Ipswich Rd	Building 3	Hudson Park	Proposed	8,180	8,180
Old Ipswich Rd	Building 4	Hudson Park	Proposed	8,180	8,180
Old Ipswich Rd	Building 5	Hudson Park	Proposed	8,180	8,180
88-96 Princes St			Proposed	40,300	40,300
Severalls Ln	Axial House		Proposed	18,300	18,300
Summers Park	Dairy Barn Mews		Under Construction	7,241	7,241
TOTALS				334,228	116,273

As can be seen in Figure 13, the majority of this space is situated in Colchester or Ipswich with only one proposed office near Hadleigh – 4,260 sq. ft. of office space under construction at Hadleigh Enterprise Park. The location and scale of these offices further highlights the focus of the local market place on the core employment areas of Colchester and Ipswich.

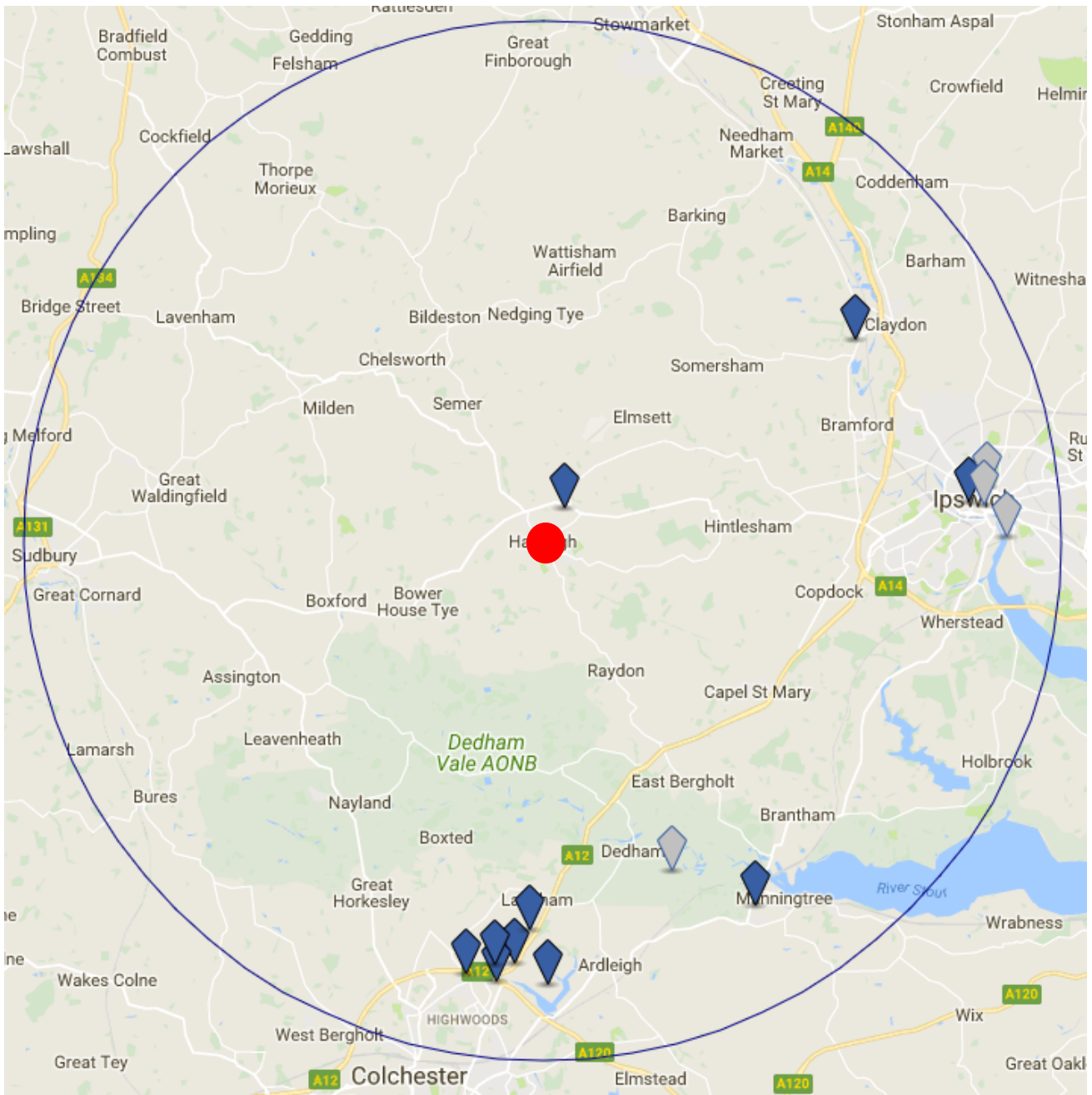


Figure 13 – Office Space that is Proposed or Under Construction

(Dark Blue Markers = Available Space. Light Blue Markers = No Space Available)

The level of availability within the area has risen slightly since 2016 (254,420 sq. ft.) and has started to return to levels of recent peaks – as per 2014 where circa 370,407 sq. ft. was available. There has been little change in the level of available space throughout 2017 (339,298 sq. ft.) and 2018 (350,720 sq. ft. to date).

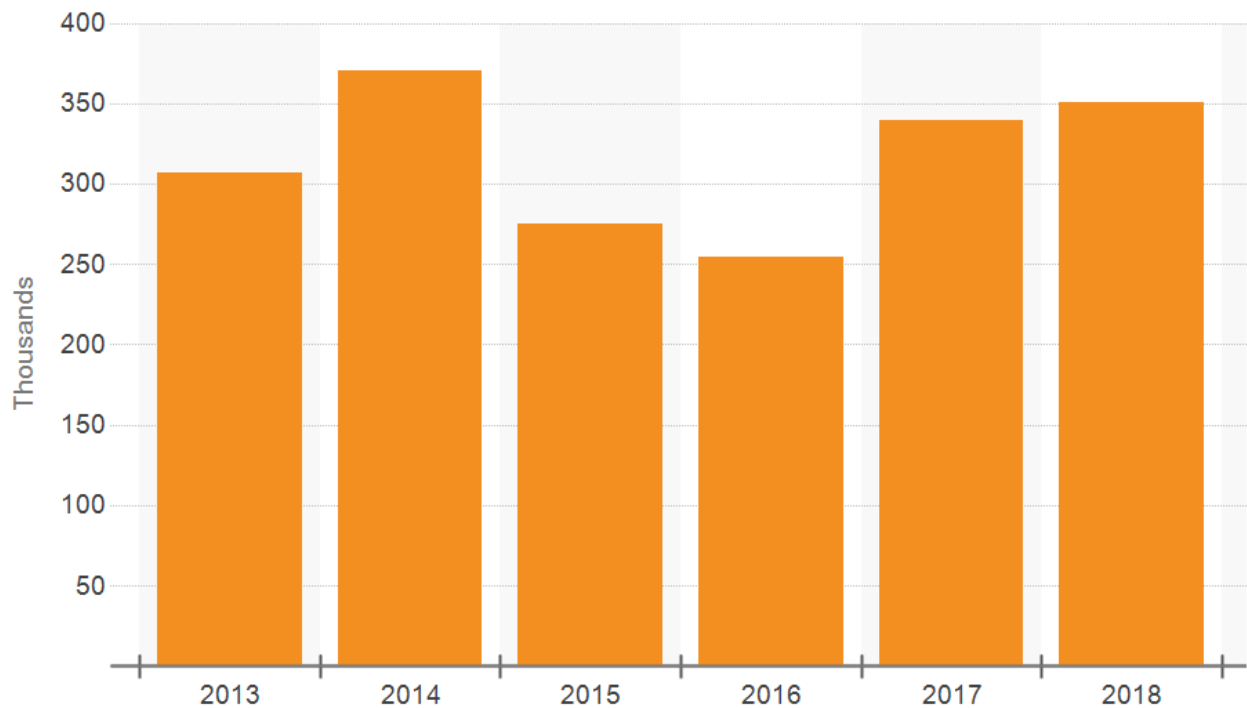


Figure 14 – Office Availability – Hadleigh + 10 miles

This level of availability is reflected in the availability rate (e.g. a percentage of the total amount of available space divided by the total amount of existing inventory) climbing to 6.8% in the current quarter from a recent 5 year low in Q4 2016 of 4.9%.

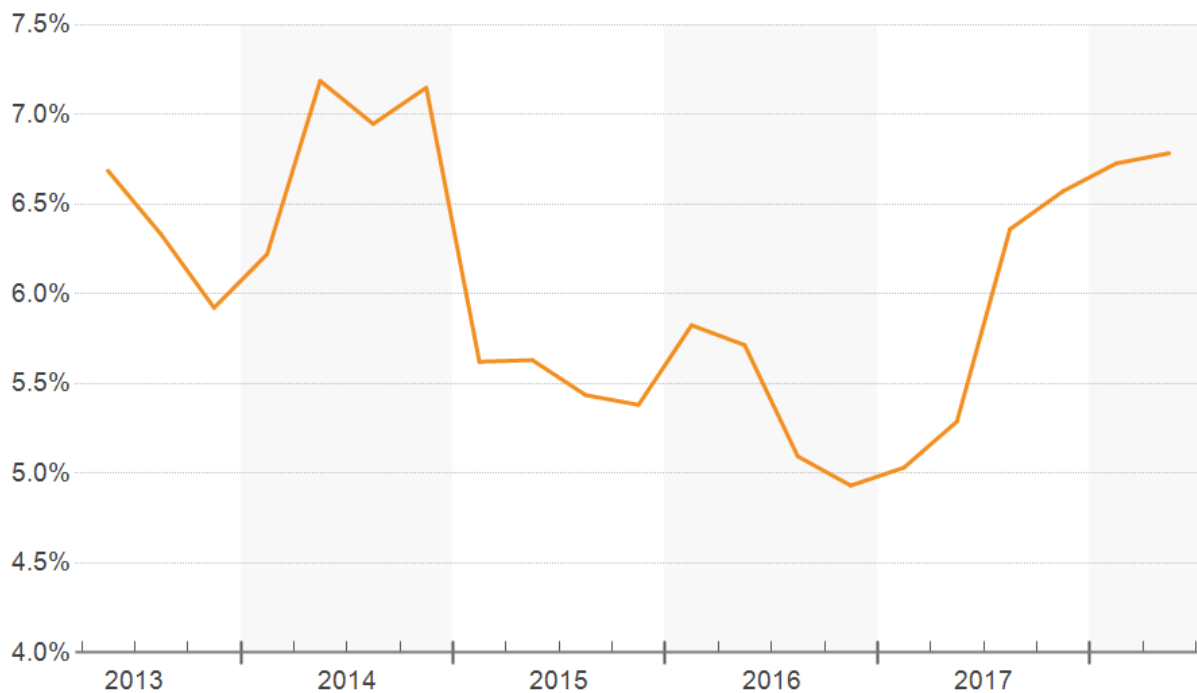


Figure 15 – Office Availability Rate – Hadleigh + 10 miles

6.2.3 Office Leasing Demand

In 2015 around 48,449 sq. ft. was let (as seen in Figure 16) which was followed by two years of better results with 59,931 sq. ft. in 2016 and 77,259 sq. ft. in 2017. This compares to the five year average of 67,800 sq. ft.

Over the last 5 years circa 395,490 sq. ft. has been leased with 171 deals recorded of between 141 sq. ft. and 19,966 sq. ft. resulting in an average deal size of 2,312 sq. ft.

The vast majority of office demand in the area has been at the lower end of the market with 86% of office deals taking less than 5,000 sq. ft. in any one deal.

There have only been 7 deals of 10,000 sq. ft. or over in the last 5 years (all of which occurred in Ipswich or Colchester – further confirming their dominance within the regional office market) including:

- **Elm House and Elm Court, 25 Elm Street, Ipswich:** 19,966 sq. ft. leased in September 2015.
- **Colchester Business Park, 900 The Crescent, Colchester:** 17,907 sq. ft. leased in January 2014.
- **Fitzroy House, 3 Crown Street, Ipswich:** 15,792 sq. ft. leased in April 2014
- **North Maltings & Kiln, Felaw Street, Ipswich:** 14,971 sq. ft. leased in March 2015
- **Crown House, Crown Street, Ipswich:** 10,000 sq. ft. leased in May 2017
- **St Vincent House, Cutter Street, Ipswich:** 10,000 sq. ft. leased in October 2014

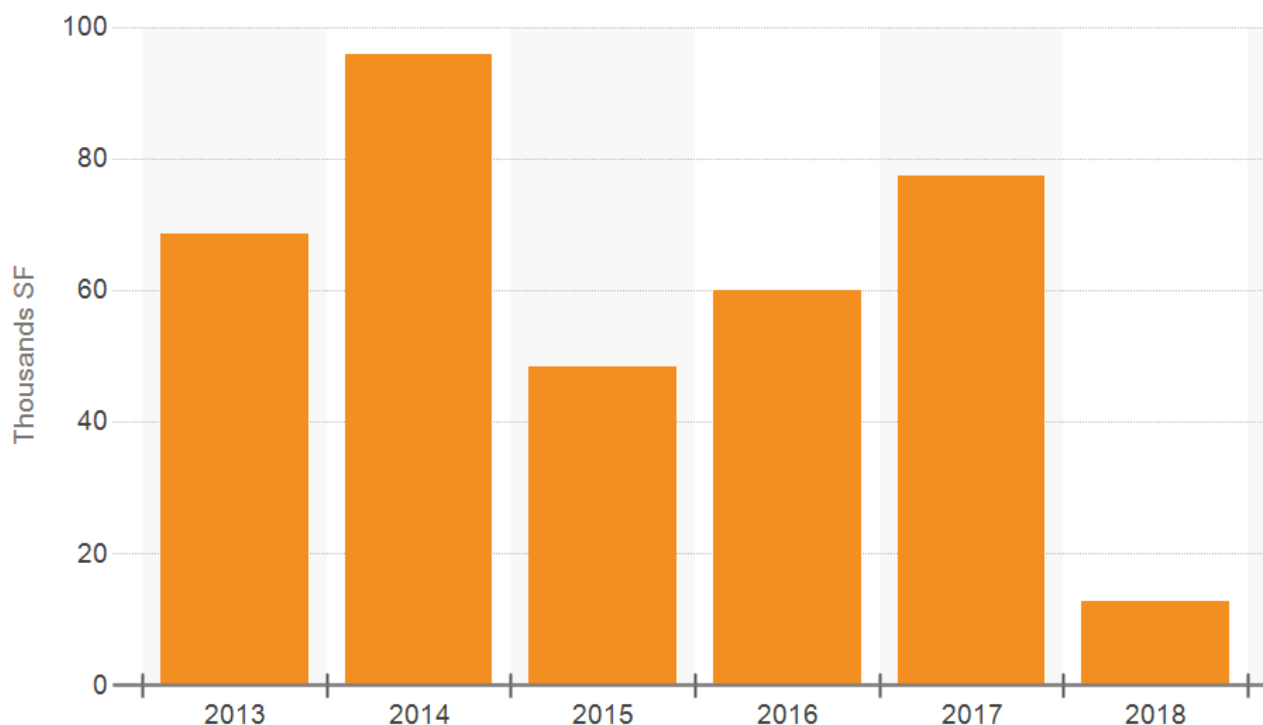


Figure 16 – Office Deals Done – Hadleigh + 10 miles

As is evident in Figure 17, the vast majority of leasing activity occurring over the last 5 years has occurred around Ipswich and Colchester. The only deals to occur in close proximity to Hadleigh were small in scale and included the disposal of 2,316 sq. ft. at 1-6 Hadleigh Enterprise Park back in June 2013 and 729 sq. ft. let at Cart Lodge Office, Hook Lane, Hadleigh in June 2015. The next closest disposals were in Sudbury or villages between Colchester and Ipswich.

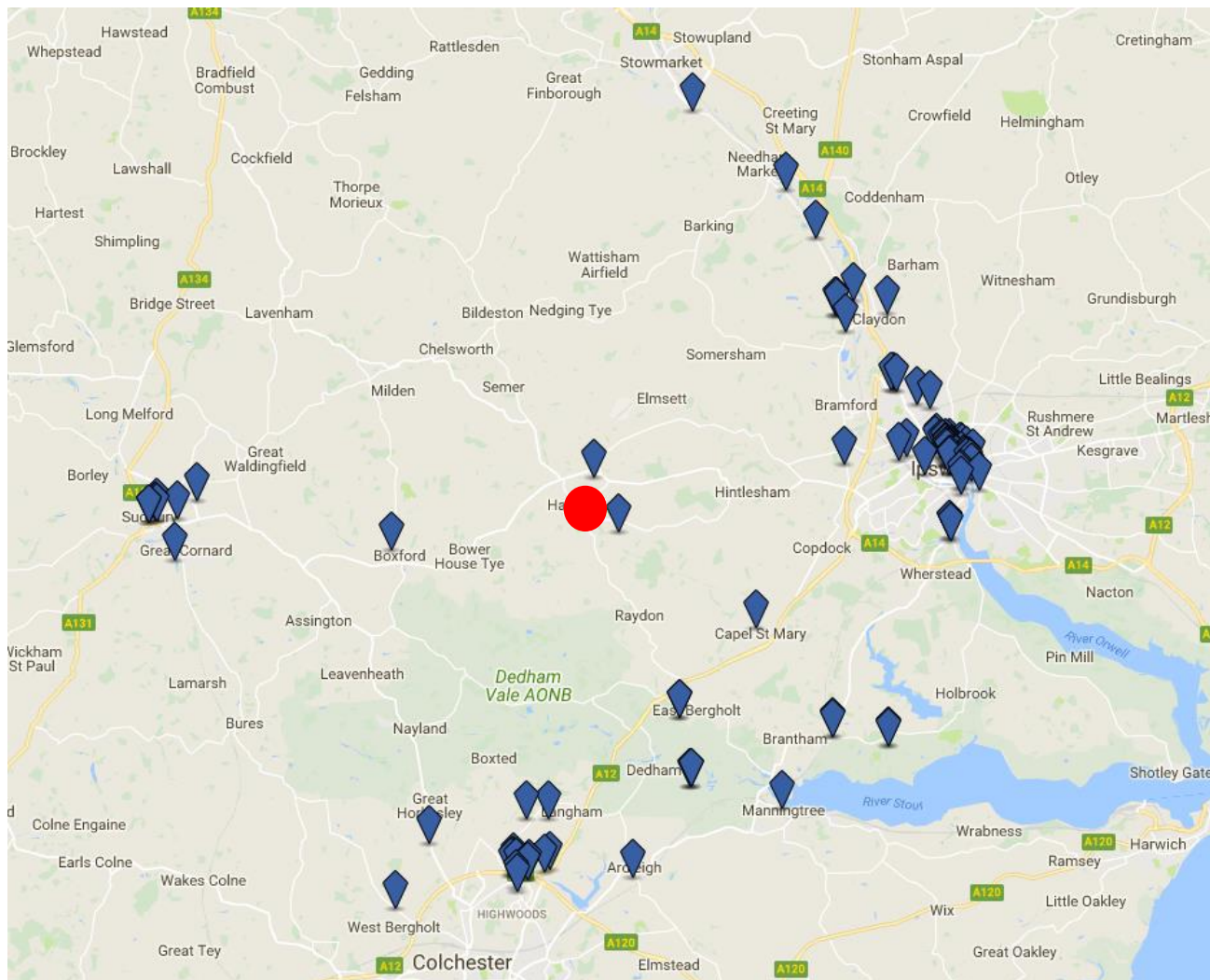


Figure 17 – Leasehold Office Deals Done – Hadleigh + 10 miles

Over the last 5 years, offices have remained on the market for 15 months (on average) before being let with the current quarter showing a slight improvement to this long-term average with property remaining available for circa 8 months (as per Figure 18).

The average number of months a property is on the market for has generally fallen since Q3 2016 mirroring the level of demand for space over the last couple of years across this search area.

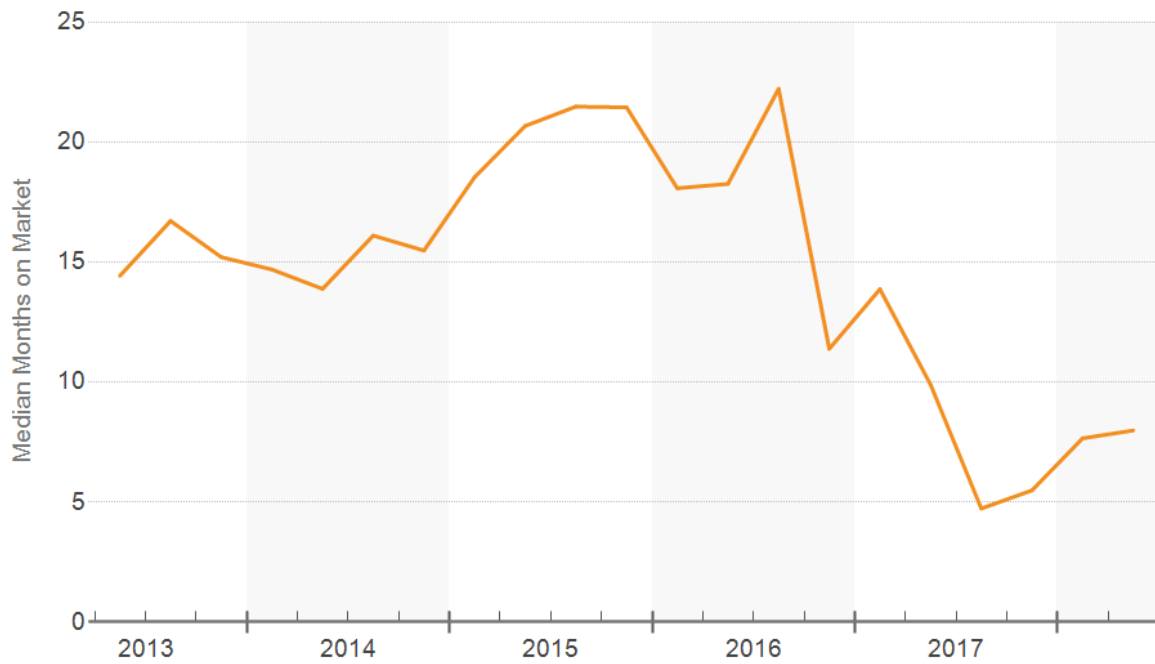


Figure 18 – Average Number of Months of the Market - Hadleigh + 10 miles

6.2.4 Office Rents

Average asking rents in the area are currently around £11.35 per sq. ft. which is a slight improvement following on from a recent low in Q2 2014 of £9.40 per sq. ft.

Average achieved rents, by comparison, currently stand at around £8.68 per sq. ft. with net effective rents around £8.11 per sq. ft. once rent free periods are taken into consideration.

These asking and achieved rents are considered to be reasonable: they are low by comparison to the wider region and reflect the general quality of office space on the market and the level of demand for it.

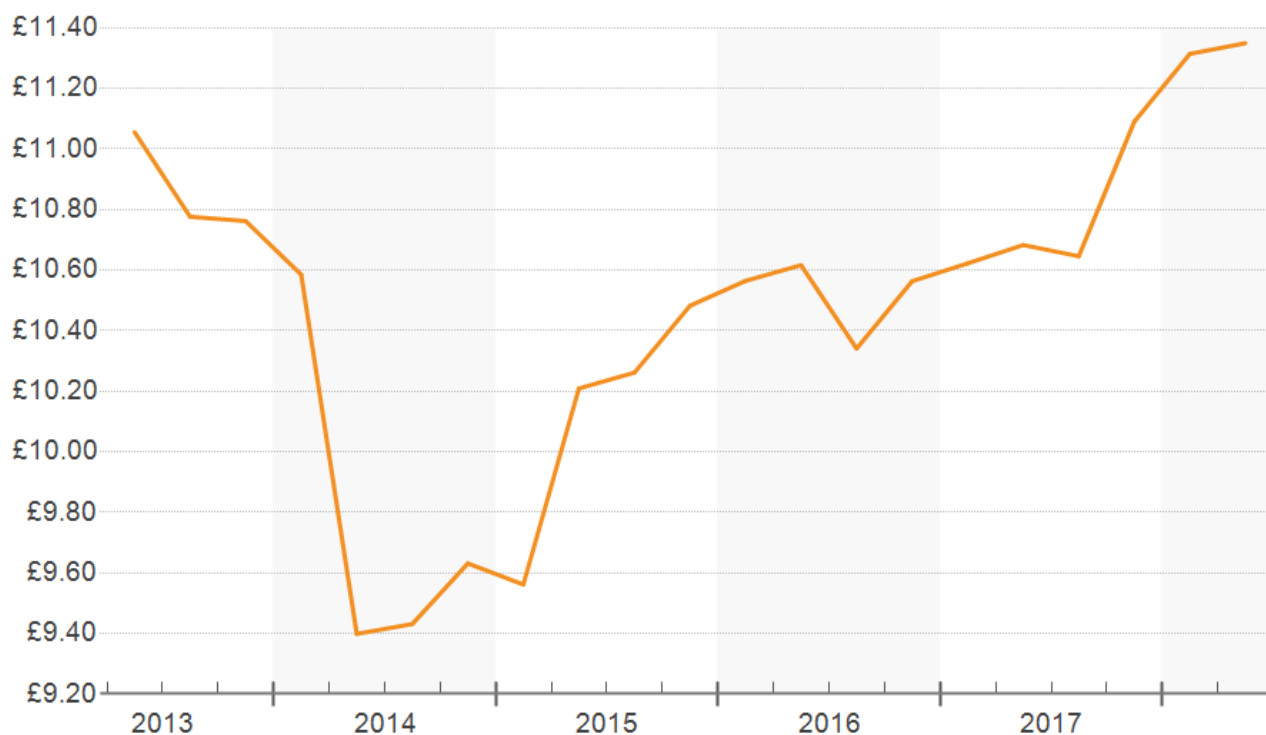


Figure 19 – Average Office Asking Rents – Hadleigh + 10 miles

6.2.5 Office Occupiers

Within 10 miles of the town there are around 386 known office occupiers in 233 buildings, although there are only 52 that occupy more than 5,000 sq. ft. in 42 buildings.

Of these larger occupiers, there are a number that could be considered suitable for the space in question (based on the nature of business that they conduct), however there would be very few (circa 7) that could occupy the space in its entirety as a single occupier. Although, in theory, a number could occupy the space based on their business type there is a strong chance that their business model would prevent them occupying a multi-occupier building with a number seeking their own independent space without shared facilities or receptions.

Furthermore, all of these known businesses are currently located in or in very close proximity to Ipswich and Colchester – on the periphery of the radius search area. This is likely to hamper any efforts to entice them to relocate further away from the town to a more rural location given the move away from direct public transport links and amenities.

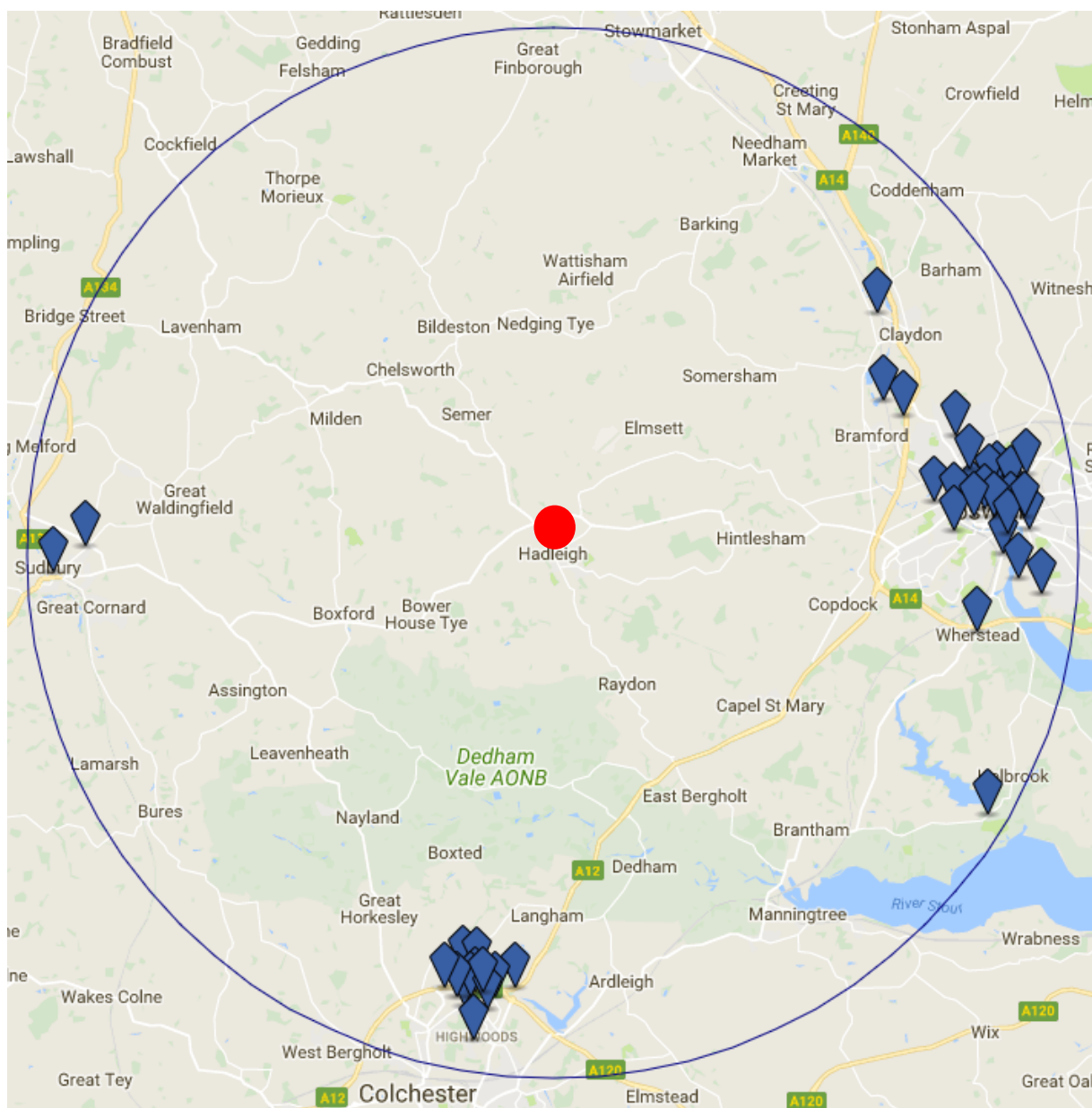


Figure 20 – Known Office Occupiers of more than 5,000 Sq. Ft. of Space

Known office occupiers of 5,000 Sq. Ft. or more:

Company Name	Building Name	Address	City	Post Code	SF Occupied	Industry Type
Larking Gowen Group		Claydon Business Park	Ipswich	IP6 0NL	7,440	Accountants
Scrutton Bland	Fitzroy House	3 Crown St	Ipswich	IP1 3HY	15,792	Accountants
Flowgroup plc	Suffolk Enterprise Centre	Felaw St	Ipswich	IP2 8SJ	14,726	Agri/Mining/Utilities
CloudFM Integrated Services Ltd		3 Charter Ct	Colchester	CO4 9YA	6,345	Business Services
Cobb Europe Ltd	The Beeches	Old Ipswich Rd	Colchester	CO7 7QY	6,680	Business Services

Craft Media	St Vincent House	1 Cutler St	Ipswich	IP1 1UL	5,400	Business Services
Derivco Ipswich	Crown House	Crown St	Ipswich	IP1 3HS	10,000	Business Services
Group Four	Former Volvo Site	Raeburn Road South	Ipswich	IP3 0ET	5,273	Business Services
ISG Plc	Jackson House	Eight-Six Sandyhill Ln	Ipswich	IP3 0NA	25,781	Business Services
Mosaic Publicity	Oyster House	Severalls Ln	Colchester	CO4 9PD	8,020	Business Services
MyGo	Fraser House	23 Museum St	Ipswich	IP1 1HN	5,295	Business Services
WS Training Ltd		37-43 Fore St	Ipswich	IP4 1JL	8,251	Business Services
Newsquest (Essex) Ltd		Brunel Way	Colchester	CO4 9XP	9,142	Communications
Sharedband Ltd		40-50 Princes St	Ipswich	IP1 1RJ	7,230	Communications
Ludologic Ltd	Crown House	Crown St	Ipswich	IP1 3HS	8,000	Computers/ Data Processing
Netscout	Fraser House	23 Museum St	Ipswich	IP1 1HN	5,550	Computers/ Data Processing
Atkins Ltd	Beacon House	53-65 White House Rd	Ipswich	IP1 5PB	9,166	Engineers/Architects
MLM Group Ltd	North Maltings & Kiln	Felaw St	Ipswich	IP2 8PN	14,971	Engineers/ Architects
The Chameleon Group		Brunel Way	Colchester	CO4 9NQ	21,372	Engineers/ Architects
Killik & Company LLP	Crown House	Crown St	Ipswich	IP1 3HS	9,000	Financial Institutions
New India Assurance Company	Crown House	Crown St	Ipswich	IP1 3HS	8,000	Financial Institutions
Essex County Council	Essex House	200 The Crescent	Colchester	CO4 9YQ	29,973	Government
Sudbury Town Council	Sudbury Town Hall	Market HI	Sudbury	CO10 1TL	6,447	Government
Suffolk Chamber of Commerce	Suffolk Enterprise Centre	Felaw St	Ipswich	IP2 8SJ	5,438	Government
Suffolk Constabulary		10-10a Museum St	Ipswich	IP1 1HT	6,096	Government
Suffolk County Council	Endeavour House	8 Russell Rd	Ipswich	IP1 2BX	133,638	Government
Suffolk County Council	Landmark House	White House Rd	Ipswich	IP1 5PB	57,489	Government
Direct Line Group Ltd		31 Princes St	Ipswich	IP1 1PU	8,371	Insurance
Willis Limited		15 Friars St	Ipswich	IP1 1TD	188,314	Insurance
Birketts	Birketts	Princes St	Ipswich	IP1 1PH	50,000	Law Firms
Fisher Jones Greenwood LLP		1 Charter Ct	Colchester	CO4 9YA	7,920	Law Firms
Gotelee Solicitors		31-41 Elm St	Ipswich	IP1 2AY	11,496	Law Firms

Linklaters		750 The Crescent	Colchester	CO4 9YQ	7,835	Law Firms
Prettys	Elm House & Elm Court	25 Elm St	Ipswich	IP1 2AD	19,966	Law Firms
Crown Mortgage Management Ltd	Crown House	Crown St	Ipswich	IP1 3HS	8,901	Personal Services
Turning Point	Sanderson House	17-19 Museum St	Ipswich	IP1 1HE	5,536	Personal Services
Nwes Property Services	Suffolk Enterprise Centre	Felaw St	Ipswich	IP2 8SJ	30,373	Real Estate
Savills		40-50 Princes St	Ipswich	IP1 1RJ	6,150	Real Estate
Spicerhaart Property Management Ltd		Brunel Way	Colchester	CO4 9XP	5,870	Real Estate
Eastern Electricity	Suffolk House	Civic Dr	Ipswich	IP1 2AN	60,000	Utility Provider
Town & Country Building Society	St Vincent House	St Peters St	Ipswich	IP9 2RX	15,177	Banking Services

6.2.6 Office Market Analysis – Conclusion

Hadleigh is evidently not a strong office location; particularly considering the dominance of Ipswich and Colchester which are both in close proximity and command a greater share of market demand for and supply of office space in the local area. This is partly due to their scale and established supply of good quality office space but also accessibility (train stations / better road connections etc.) as well as the extent of available amenities, all of which are sought-after by office occupiers.

Although Ipswich and Colchester are both relatively strong regional centres serving a cluster of local businesses, it is evident that the office market in the area has remained relatively flat over the last 5 years. There has been an increase in the amount of available office space in the last couple of years (linked in part to the delivery of a couple of small office developments that are under construction) and a slight increase in the number of deals done (an increase of circa 17,000 sq. ft. between 2016 and 2017).

This is further compounded by the relative absence of proposed office space in the area with only 116,000 being actively marketed at present (circa 2.3% of the existing office stock), which indicates a lack of confidence in the need for additional space in the market. This has, no doubt, been influenced by the amount of time that offices are spending on the market (15 months on average) with examples of both newly refurbished and second-hand stock of a similar scale to the subject property remaining on the market for between 5 and 8.5 years, despite reasonable asking rents and strong locations.

Although take up of office space in the last couple of years has improved slightly, it should be noted that the level of space transacted in 2017 was only marginally above the 5-year annual average (i.e. 9,500 sq. ft.) with the average deal size remaining small at only 2,312 sq. ft., and with 86% of office deals in the area involving the disposal of 5,000 sq. ft. or less. The subject property alone represents around 6 months' worth of office supply for the local area, with around 14 individual leasehold disposals required to fill it (based on average deal sizes for the area) over at least a 15-month period (based on the average time on the market), although it is likely to be considerably longer given the level and quality of available space elsewhere.

It is considered highly unlikely, if not impossible, that the office will be disposed of in a single letting given the fact that no office deals have occurred in the last 5 years that have involved the disposal of more than 20,000 sq. ft. in any one deal. Indeed, there have only been 6 disposals of more than 10,000 sq. ft. over this time, all of which have occurred in Ipswich or Colchester (again reinforcing the

appeal of these two locations) with the last being 10,000 sq. ft. disposed of at Crown House, Ipswich in 2017.

Average office asking rents have returned to recent peak levels (circa £11.28 per sq. ft.) following a recent dip to circa £9.40 per sq. ft. in Q2 2014, although average achieved rents are closer to £8.68 per sq. ft. This compares to asking rents on Berkeley Business Centre at £18.00 - £20.00 per sq. ft. which is new office accommodation but remains fully available and has done for some time.

Average asking and achieved office rents for second hand office accommodation in the area are relatively low and give little room for manoeuvre to cover the cost of refurbishment or subdivision which would no doubt be required if the subject property were put to the market, especially considering average deal sizes. There is, of course, scope to seek a higher than average rent for the refurbished space. However, any office suites would still be competing in a tough market with high quality office accommodation in more attractive locations and would be likely to struggle to secure interest, which does not bode well for the subject property given its location and layout.

Research undertaken into known office occupiers within a 10-mile radius of the property indicates that there are around 40 occupiers that could, based on their industry type, be considered suitable for the space. However, as they are all located in Ipswich or Colchester, it is considered highly unlikely that they would relocate to a more rural setting and to a property that would, for many, offer a more compromised layout by comparison to the typical quality of space available in these locations. Such a move would also take these occupiers away from easily accessible public transport and local amenities whilst also separating them from well-established clusters of employment areas and likeminded organisations. In addition, not all businesses will be happy to occupy multi occupied spaces with many now seeking their own independent space, not just from a client perception perspective but from a cost perspective associated with whole building service charges etc.

It is evident, having considered all the market trends over the last 5 years within a 10-mile radius of the property, that office market conditions remain incredibly challenging with a number of factors working against a successful disposal of the space in question within a reasonable timescale. Demand for office space is limited, with the majority of deals occurring being small in nature and focused on Ipswich and Colchester.

Providing an attractive enough relocation package to prospective occupiers will be challenging, particularly given the lack of amenities and access to public transport when compared to more established office locations.

Office suites of varying quality are remaining available on the market for at least 15 months (on average) with examples of good quality space still available after more than 5 years.

Average achieved office rents remain stable but at a level that leaves little room for growth, to cover the cost of refurbishment and / or subdivision of space (which will certainly be required when considering the average deal sizes occurring), given the fact that asking rent post completion of the works could quickly surpass those being sought on reasonable quality space elsewhere.

The chance of a single office disposal is very low given the lack of suitable sized occupiers in the area and average deal sizes. It would be necessary to split the building, which was designed for a single occupier, into parts (explored further in Section 6.4.3), a move that is likely to reduce the pool of prospective occupiers even further.

6.3 ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

In order to consider the viability of conversion into an alternative employment use it is necessary to not only appraise the suitability for conversion but also the demand for it in the market.

The only alternative, employment generating, uses that could be considered in situations like this are conversion into a hotel or a care home.

The care home sector is heavily regulated with any proposed designs for new homes having to take into consideration design features that are recommended by the Government's HAPPI Panel (Housing our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation). This includes:

- Providing more light and space through the introduction of atriums
- Open plan apartments and larger windows
- Larger balconies
- Roof terraces and winter gardens wherever possible, so that residents can enjoy being outside all year round
- Adaptability and 'care ready' design
- Positive use of circulation space
- Shared facilities and 'hubs'
- Energy efficiency and sustainable design
- External shared surfaces and 'home zones'

Although it is not impossible to convert existing buildings in to care homes they do pose a considerably higher number of challenges for delivery by comparison to purpose built accommodation.

Retrofitting the existing building to accommodate the range of services and facilities to the right standards required will no doubt prove difficult including, for instance, the delivery of:

- Sufficiently sized and well-proportioned rooms with high levels of natural day light which have to be carved out of existing floor plates
- Ensuite bathrooms and potentially kitchens in each apartment with the delivery of services throughout the building whilst working around the confines of existing floor and ceiling voids
- Access to gardens; made harder by the position of the building on the site and its configuration which severely limits the amount of accessible outdoor space to parts of the southern and western boundaries

The layout of the building is inconsistent with the efficient floorplates generally sought in retrofit scenarios with a high chance of inefficient spaces being created (by default) which will be off putting to prospective operators.

The property relatively well situated although is on the edge of the town and about 0.5 miles from the core high street facilities. Despite this, it is necessary to consider it in the context of the wider setting, particularly from a demographic perspective.

According to the 2011 census there are circa 8,253 residents in the town with the wider catchment area primarily made up of small villages (before larger towns are reached including Sudbury, Colchester and Ipswich). A number of care home operators have minimum population requirements in order to ensure that there are sufficient numbers of people within reach of the proposed development (the average distance that a potential resident is likely to move from their existing home to a residential home being 8 miles). These include:

- Kingsley Healthcare: minimum population of 50,000 people
- Castleoak Care Developments: minimum population of 20,000 people
- Mercian Developments Ltd: minimum population of 20,000 people
- LNT Care Developments: minimum population of 10,000 people

These demographic statistics alone will rule out the town as a suitable location for a care home.

Indeed, a soft market testing exercise has been undertaken by Ark which explored the demand for alternative employment uses on the site (including a care home) with the inclusion of a care home within the site discounted due to the lack of operator interest in the area. McCarthy & Stone specifically commented that the demographics would rule out the site as an option for them.

Consideration has also been put towards the suitability of the property as a hotel. The bulk of activity in the hotel sector at present is being driven by the budget hotel market with Premier Inn and Travelodge leading the way. The majority of operators have set standards and requirements for room layouts and dimensions within which pre-designed rooms can be slotted into. In order for this to work, it is necessary to identify sites that can deliver uniform buildings that can accommodate these rigid format rooms. There is scope to convert existing office buildings to hotel accommodation although operators will look for efficient floor plates that can accommodate 300 sq. ft. (GIA) bedrooms either side of a central corridor and a linen room is needed on each floor.

Travelodge, for instance, have a series of set requirements which would need to be satisfied in order for an existing office to be considered suitable for conversion, this includes:

- Floor plate depth should be a minimum of 27m (length) x 12m (width) to a maximum of 16m
- Floor to ceiling height a minimum of 2.3m
- 'Grid' depth a minimum of 6m (such as window bays or columns)
- All bedrooms need openable windows or air conditioning
- All bedrooms need natural light
- Lifts must serve every floor
- No stepped access for customers or deliveries (ramp or same level)
- Dedicated staircase for customers' use, but will share fire escape stairs

Figure 21 shows a typical floor plan for a Travelodge hotel. It is clearly evident that the existing floor plate layout of the property (seen in Figure 22) is irregular in shape with differing areas of depth and length between sections. This will mean that the building is highly likely to fall short of the standard requirements sought by the likes of Travelodge with a number of areas that would be unusable. It will

also result in long travel distances between the main reception and rooms on the extremities of the building which are likely to be off putting.

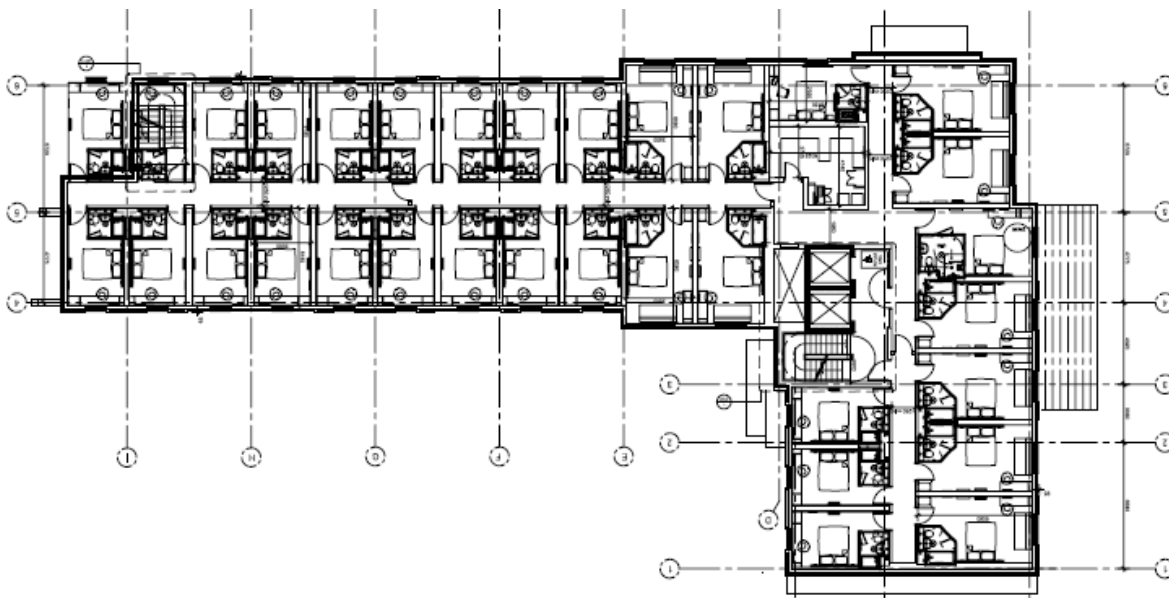


Figure 21 - Typical Floorplan - Travelodge Hotel

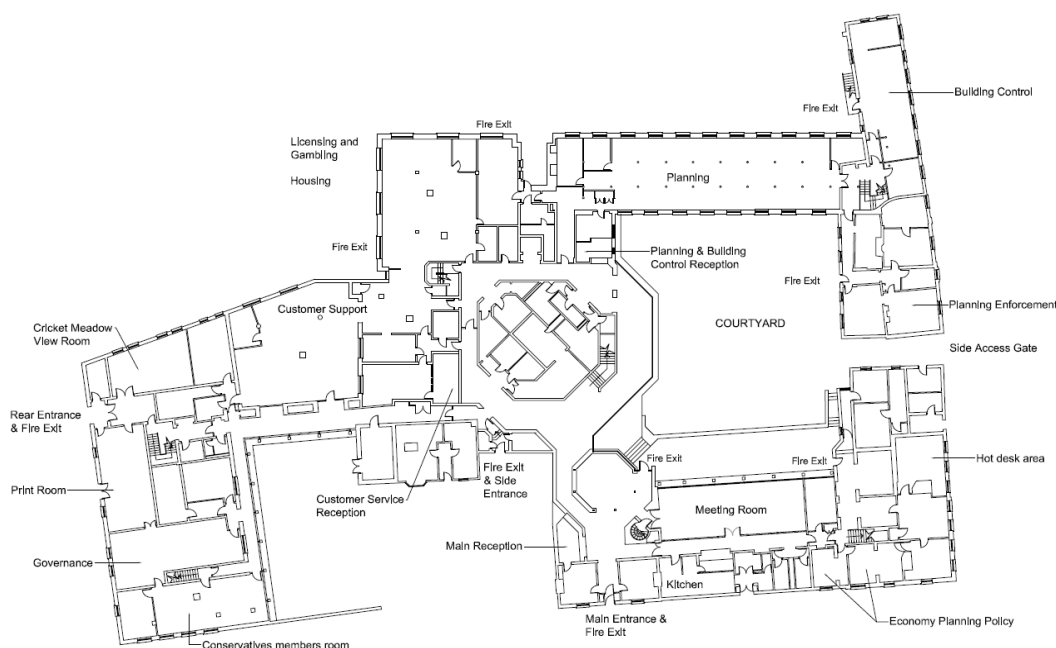


Figure 22 – Ground Floor of Subject Property

Hotel provision across Mid Suffolk and Babergh Districts focusses on smaller, independent providers supplemented by a good range of bed and breakfast ('B&B') accommodation. Travelodge, Premier Inn and Holiday Inn are well represented across the district. Premier Inn are proposing to build a 55 bedroom hotel at Prentice Road in Stowmarket (with similar sized hotels proposed elsewhere in the region) with Hadleigh considered too small a location to warrant a hotel; particularly with the proximity of provision in Sudbury and Ipswich capturing a lot of the local demand.

Travelodge has also been approached with confirmation received that they do not have a requirement for the area.

Although there appears to be scope to increase the number of smaller boutique hotels in the area (for which the property is substantially oversized) it is evident that the provision of new hotel accommodation is more likely to be successful in the larger towns in the district, (namely Sudbury, Colchester and Ipswich).

Considering these factors it is deemed highly unlikely that any plan to convert the property (or indeed the site) into hotel accommodation will be successful.

6.4 BUILDING SURVEY RESULTS

6.4.1 Overview

An inspection of the property has been undertaken to assess various aspects of its configuration, condition, divisibility and energy efficiency to understand its suitability for continued use as an employment facility.

The findings of this assessment have been outlined in the following sections.

6.4.2 Building History

The site includes four Grade II listed buildings, and one Grade II* listed building, registered in the 1950's and 1970s.

The former Council Offices building, which incorporates and links the listed buildings with a significant post war extension, was designed and developed in the early 1980s for the sole use of Babergh District Council (which was newly formed in 1974). Arup received a RIBA design award for the highly bespoke approach to the floor space solution in 1987. There have been subsequent modifications made to the property which mainly related to the internal configuration.

The site is located within a Conservation Area.

6.4.3 Building Configuration & Divisibility

The building is arranged on a rough figure six floor plate. Although some elements are open plan, a high proportion of the space is poorly configured for modern working practices with a number of small rooms and extensive linking corridors. There are limited communication and escape stairs with welfare areas clustered in central locations.

The footprint of the total building is arranged on the approximate basis of:

- Gross internal area of 4,700 m². (50,592 sq. ft.)

With the net lettable space broken down as:

- Ground floor – 2,100m² (22,605 sq. ft.)
- First floor and second floors – 1,200m² (12,917 sq. ft.)

The above gross to net areas results in a non-lettable area percentage of 30% (lower than average).

However, it is considered that there would be a significant further reduction in the lettable floor area if the building is divided for small suites and offices (up to a further 25% reduction). This percentage will increase further once the unique features within the building are taken into account, including the council chamber, which are not considered suitable for commercial letting.

Difficulty will occur in creating external access to parts of the building (e.g. there is a single main entrance / reception as it stands with limited options around the building to create additional and comparable points of access), the need for additional means of escape provision together with welfare facilities (such as toilets and kitchens) as well as the reduction in lettable space due to increased circulation areas.

As has been appraised within the analysis of the office market, it is considered highly unlikely that there will be demand from a single occupier to take the whole of the office. As such, the likelihood is

that the building would have to be subdivided in an attempt to create small enough office suites to meet market demand (considered to be in the region of 2,000 sq. ft. each). This, in turn, results in a number of issues that will inhibit this being a viable option to pursue.

The exercise of dividing the building to create a series of small office suites (e.g. walls / corridors / toilets and kitchens / service rooms / communal areas etc.) will result in a significant reduction in lettable floor area with a further 25% reduction in lettable floor space expected. This will reduce the lettable area from 70% to 45%; considerably lower than the building currently offers. This significant reduction in lettable space (combined with the cost of dividing the building and adding sufficient access / egress points) will have a severe impact on the viability of leasehold disposals given the reduction in space capable of being rentalised. This will be further hampered by the inability to charge a higher rent as any such move would outprice the property from the current market, resulting in unfeasibly long void periods.

The subdivision of the building into office suites that would be in line with market demand would create approximately 25 suites. As such, at least 25 different companies will have to be identified which would wish to take up a space within a multi occupied building and who would be prepared to share the cost of upkeep, a shared liability that may be off putting to small businesses.

6.4.4 Building Condition

While a full and intrusive building survey, survey of the structure and high-level access inspection has not been undertaken, it is evident that the condition of the building fabric is mixed with external elements requiring attention to maintain the water tightness and its décor. This excludes the replacement of some components with more energy efficient alternatives with issues/works required including:

- Flat roof replacement.
- Slipped and missing tiles.
- Guttering and rainwater goods overhaul.
- Glazing and joinery details.
- Render repairs.
- Brickwork and masonry details.
- Rising dampness.

Externally there is evidence of earlier brickwork repairs suggesting ongoing problems with the building envelope.

Internally the space looks aged with a full refurbishment and modernisation exercise required to make the space lettable. The full cost of this has not been appraised however will have to be taken into consideration, either in the form of rent free periods (allowing any ingoing occupiers to carry out the works themselves), through a capital contribution or by undertaking the work prior to marketing and disposal which would be wasted if a pre-let agreement cannot be secured.

6.4.5 Energy Efficiency

The purpose-built office elements of the building were constructed in 1980. It is thought that the building has remained largely unchanged since erection and will therefore be relatively inefficient in respect of both the building envelope and services including:

- Cavity walling lacking insulation.
- Windows, while double glazed, lack improved heat resistance.
- Roof/ceiling insulation of limited thickness.
- Floor slab lacking insulation.
- Lighting is generally old style florescent and inefficient.
- Heating provided by a gas fired multi boiler system.
- The building lacks any heat recovery.

A copy of the building's Display Energy Certificate and the most recent EPC have been requested. The ratings are expected to be low and well below the expected standards of construction today.

If the property has an EPC rating of F or G then current legislation will prevent it from being sold or let until sufficient energy efficiency improvement measures have been undertaken to increase its rating. Even if the property has an EPC rating in excess of this (e.g. D or E) it is expected that energy efficiency standards associated with the disposal of commercial properties will increase in the future and may therefore capture a building with such a rating. Refurbishment costs associated with this legislation will further impact on the viability of disposal given fact that they will have to be recovered through an increase in rent which may, once again, price the property out of the market.

6.4.6 Services

The services (electricity, water and gas) are configured as a single supply due to the building's previous occupation by a single occupier in an owner occupier arrangement.

For it to be subdivided, the various floor areas both vertically and horizontally would need to include major alteration to incorporate separate services supplies or the introduction of sub-meters.

Alternatively, the landlord would need to offer an inclusive rent with services included within the package alongside the associated management agreement. Such arrangements are often off putting to prospective occupiers that are sizable enough to take independent space where they would be in full control of utility costs incurred.

6.4.7 Asbestos

Given the age of the development it is possible that the building contains asbestos based products requiring removal or management as part of any disposal.

7.0 CONCLUSION

As has been outlined, the Babergh Local Plan (2006) and the Babergh Local Plan Core Strategy & Policies (2014) contain policies which seek to retain employment sites in employment use unless continued use is considered to be unsuitable or unviable. It has been agreed during pre-application discussions that a marketing campaign for the site is not required, however the client (applicant) would still need to demonstrate that continued employment use is not suitable or viable to address the emphasis of Policy EM24. The Employment Viability Report has highlighted a number of factors which demonstrate why the continued employment use is not suitable or viable. These include:

- The fact that the property is poorly located with unfavourable age and qualification related demographic statistics
- Office market statistics that demonstrate a lack of demand, small average deal sizes, low rental levels, lengthy void periods and limited numbers of sizable businesses that would be suitable for the space in question under a B1 Use Class
- A lack of demand from alternative employment generating end uses including care home & hotel uses
- The current building layout which restricts divisibility, requires refurbishment and energy efficiency improvements – all of which will incur costs which may price the property out of the market

Property Location / Demographics

The property is located in a rural market town setting and in a primarily residential area with a limited number of local amenities on offer. Access is restricted primarily to 'B roads' although regional A roads are relatively close by.

Any prospective occupier looking to use the property for employment purposes will strongly consider the age distribution of the local area as well as the percentage of degree qualified residents, both of which will influence their ability to attract and secure suitable staff for their business. It is evident that the property is situated in a 45-64 dominant age group zone which highlights the limited diversity of 'working age' people within reasonable commuting distances to the property (i.e. those within the 16-29 / 30 – 44 age brackets are not represented). Furthermore, the property is mostly adjacent to zones with 10-25% degree qualified people with the most highly degree qualified areas tending to be found around Colchester and Ipswich.

The unfavourable nature of these demographic statistics is compounded further by the drive time distances from the property and its immediate surrounds which highlight the ability to reach major and well established employment locations within a 45 minute drive time. The ability to easily access locations where there is a higher concentration and greater diversity of employers (and indeed suitably qualified and aged employees) will diminish the demand for an office in a setting that is disconnected from these principal centres.

Office Market Statistics

The level of demand for office space in the area has remained relatively flat over recent years with little proposed office space entering the market. Perhaps the most condemning statistics are those that relate to the length of time that offices have remained on the market without being let. These include new and purpose built offices, newly refurbished office suites and second hand stock with examples of some being on the market for a number of years. This is despite their more favourable locations and reasonable quoting rents for the area in which they are situated.

Average deal sizes in the area are small with little more than 2,000 sq. ft. let on average in any one transaction with very few examples of office disposals occurring of a comparable size to the property in question. Taking this into account, it is considered highly unlikely that the office could be disposed of in a single transaction, resulting in the need secure around 16 to 25 individual lettings to fill the property.

The amount of office space in question represents about 6 months' worth of office supply (by comparison to the average annual take up within a 10-mile radius of the property). This is a significant amount of space when compared with the amount that is leased over the course of a year in such a wide area.

Average achieved rents in the area are low by comparison to the wider region leaving little room for manoeuvre to cover refurbishment, repair and subdivision costs. In addition, there is stiff competition from high quality space located in well-established employment locations which is still well priced to try and attract the little demand that is there.

Alternative Employment Uses

Consideration has been put towards the conversion of the existing building into alternative employment uses including a care home or hotel.

It is evident that the existing building is unsuitable for conversion into either of these uses given constraints orientating from its irregular layout, the varying depths and lengths of sections across the floor plates, access to outdoor spaces and difficulties in delivering services within the confines of the existing floor plates.

Furthermore, soft market testing has been undertaken which has demonstrated a lack of demand for not only office space but also the alternative employment uses, with the size of the town proving too small for both care home providers and hotel operators. The proximity to other larger towns is also an issue with new hotels, for instance, being delivered in said locations.

Building Condition

The property is a sizable, highly bespoke purpose built, office which was designed and built for a single office occupier. Considering this, it does not lend itself well to subdivision with the reduction in net lettable space being at a level that is well below standards. The works required to create such a space will also be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve with a need for services to be split, additional toilets and kitchens installed, fire escapes created and corridors carved out of lettable space, works that will reduce the viability of re letting when the costs are weighed up against the likely rental returns. Any new layout would also have to have regard to preserving the significance of the listed buildings, which may in turn limit how those affected parts can be sub-divided.

The property itself is in need of refurbishment (externally and internally) with changes in energy efficiency legislation putting even greater pressure on the extent of works required.

The redevelopment of the site for residential led purposes is therefore considered to be justified and appropriate in planning and commercial terms.

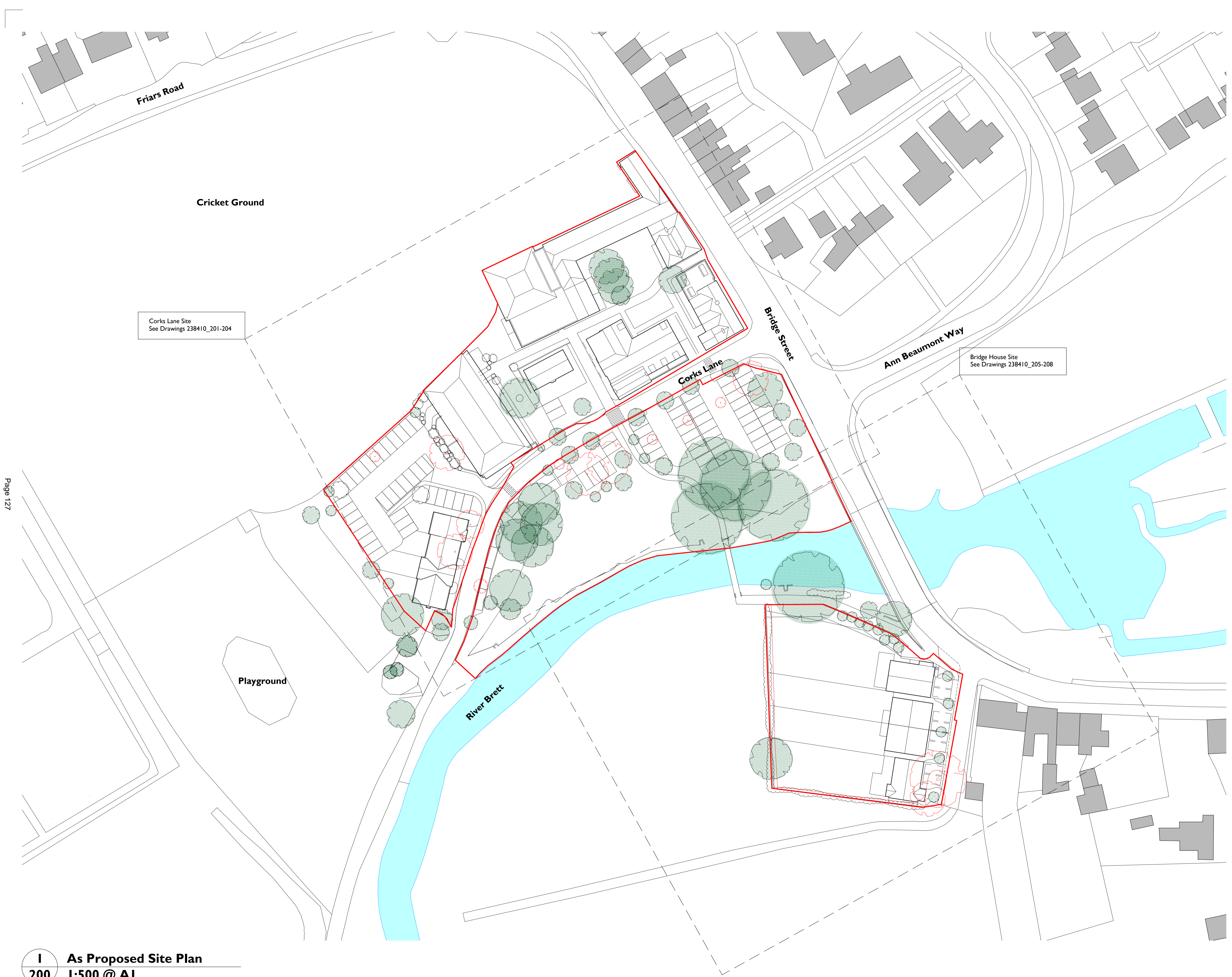
Conversion of listed buildings, part conversion/demolition of 1980s extension & new build

Week Commencing	14.05.18	21.05.18	28.05.18	04.06.18	11.06.18	18.06.18	25.06.18	02.07.18	09.07.18	16.07.18	23.07.18	30.07.18	06.08.18	13.08.18	20.08.18	27.08.18	03.09.18	10.09.18	17.09.18	24.09.18	01.10.18	08.10.18	15.10.18	22.10.18	29.10.18	05.11.18	12.11.18	19.11.18
Week No	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Work Area																												
Planning & Public Consultation (LPP):																												
1 Preparation of further pre-application advice request (Policy Compliance)																												
2 Pre application advice submission to LPA																												
3 Council's pre-application advice (21 days)																												
*4 Review of public consultation responses & preparation of Public Consultation Statement																												
5 Review of technical reports																												
6 Preparation of Planning Statement																												
7 Preparation of planning application & listed building consent forms & documents																												
8 Submission of planning & Listed building applications to LPA																												
9 Monitoring/ negotiating applications & responding to consultee info requests (13 weeks following submission)																												
*10 Determination of planning & listed building applications - Grant PP, LBC & S106 Completion																												
Scheme Design (Purcell):																												
11 Scheme revisions following pre-application advice																												
12 Preparation of Design & Access Statement																												
13 DAS revisions following LPP review																												
Flood Risk & Drainage (Cannon CE & JBA):																												
14 Further Pre-App advice request/liaison with EA																												
15 Preparation of Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Report																												
16 Updates following LPP review																												
Heritage & Archaeology (Purcell):																												
17 Updating of HIA following pre-application advice																												
Transport (Cannon):																												
18 Preparation of Transport Statement																												
19 Updates following LPP review																												
Ecology (Adonis)																												
20 Breeding Bird Surveys (March-June)																												
21 Bat Surveys (May to September)																												
22 Preparation of Ecological Impact Assessment & Mitigation Report																												
Site Investigation/ Contamination (REC):																												
23 Preparation of Site Investigation Report																												
24 Updates following LPP review																												
Arboricultural Assessment (Liz Lake):																												
25 Preparation of Tree Survey, AIA/AMS																												
26 Updates following LPP review																												
Utilities (Create):																												
27 Utilities report																												
28 Updates following LPP review																												
Costings & Viability Assessments (MRA & Hoggarth Cooke):																												
*29 Preparation of costings & viability reports (Toolkit Viability Assessment)																												
30 Updates during determination period to take account of S106 negotiation																												
Key Dates:																												
31 Cabinet Briefing Reporting Deadline																												
32 Cabinet/SLT meeting																												
33 Council Reporting deadline																												
34 Overview & Scrutiny Meeting																												
35 Council meeting																												
36 Cabinet Reporting Deadline																												
37 Cabinet Meeting - Approval to Planning Submission																												
38 Council Funding & Delivery Model Business Case - Reporting Deadline (tbc)																												
39 Council Funding & Delivery Model Business Case (tbc)																												

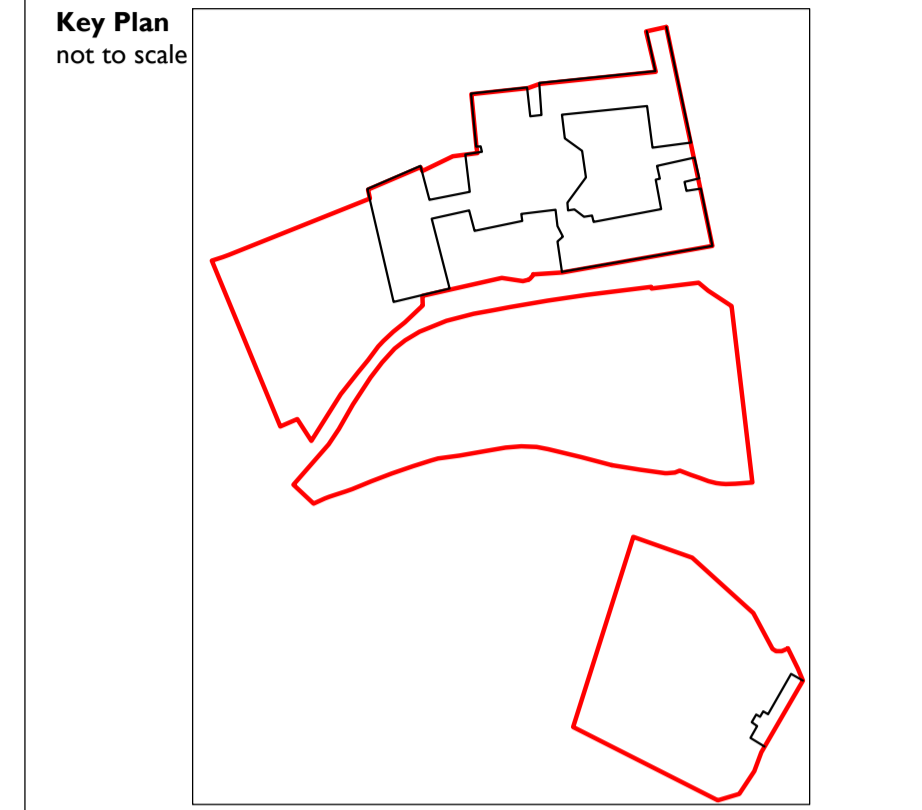
Notes:
There are no elections scheduled for 2018

Risks
 *4 Publicised events held at Hadleigh Cricket Pavilion & Town Hall 11th & 18th April 2018 (3pm - 8pm)
 *10 Assumes determination at the local level - LPA to confirm which DC Committee will be determining the applications - Requirements for referral to Sec of State tbc
 *10 A/B - Babergh/ Mid Suffolk Development Control Committees A & B
 *10 Planning permission would not be issued until Sec 106 Agreement finalised
 *31 A separate Employment Viability Report has been prepared by Carter Jonas to address Saved Local Plan Policy EM24

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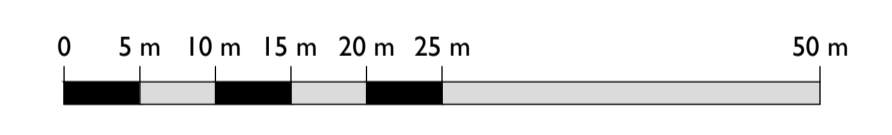
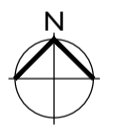


Notes:
 Drawings are based on survey data and may not accurately represent what is physically present.
 Do not scale from this drawing. All dimensions are to be verified on site before proceeding with the work.
 All dimensions are in millimeters unless noted otherwise.
 Purcell shall be notified in writing of any discrepancies.



Notes:
 Based on survey drawing ALS7894/250/01REVA Topographical A0 dated July 2017 provided by Anglia Land Surveys.

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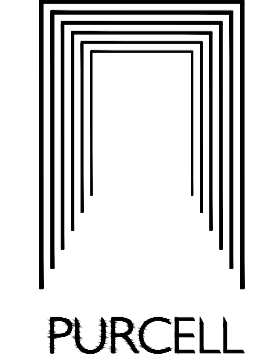
A 14/05/2018 JS PB

First Issue 22 Dec 2017 EL PB

ISSUE	DATE	DRAWN	CHECKED	DESCRIPTION
CLIENT		Babergh District Council		
PROJECT		Redevelopment of BDC Offices		
DRAWING TITLE		As Proposed Site Plan		
SIZE & SCALE		AIL	1:500	
DRAWING STATUS		ISSUED FOR INFORMATION		

I As Proposed Site Plan
200 1:500 @ A1

JOB NUMBER 238410
DRAWING NO. 200
REVISION A



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Agenda Item 12

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: CABINET	REPORT NUMBER: BCa/18/13
FROM: CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMY	DATE OF MEETING: 12 JULY 2018
OFFICER: LEE CARVELL – CORPORATE MANAGER OPEN FOR BUSINESS	KEY DECISION REF NO. CAB51

LOCAL TOURISM STRATEGY (BABERGH VISITOR INFORMATION OPTIONS)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Following Cabinet's decision taken on 08 March 2018 (Paper BCa/17/59 refers), to now provide an update to Members on progression of a core visitor information offer in support of Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts. Both Councils have determined to discontinue with direct Council staffed and funded fixed location Tourist Information Centres (TICs) at Lavenham and Stowmarket from the end of the main 2018 visitor season - end of October 2018.
- 1.2 Further, to also update Cabinet on linked discussions regarding future use of the Lady Lane, Lavenham TIC building, which is a Babergh owned asset. In that regard this report seeks Cabinet approval in principle, and subject to further work up, to enable Lavenham Parish Council (or community group linked to the parish council) to take on the Lady Lane building whether on a below-market rental value leasehold basis or freehold/lease with option to buy. An appropriate delegation to Strategic Director level on negotiating the terms and detail of such an arrangement, in line with Asset and Investment Strategy, is also sought via this report to enable responsive and timely progress. The final terms of agreement or disposal would report back to Cabinet in due course for consideration of approval.

2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Officers were instructed by Cabinet in March 2018 to proceed with facilitating a visitor information offer for the district, so as to ensure that the Council is helping to support a succession visitor information offer upon cessation of the current TIC arrangements.
- 2.2 The option of 'do nothing' for Babergh and Mid Suffolk was discounted through the previous Cabinet discussions and decisions at both Councils. Inaction may have risked a transitional gap in visitor information following the end of the TIC arrangements and thereby leave businesses, communities and sector stakeholders to decide what, if anything, should emerge and when without any interim support. BMS seeks to demonstrate its local leadership to support a transition and establish a core concept so that there is some degree of district consistency which is also in support of our local economy, communities, key destinations and attractions.
- 2.3 Due to the timeframes involved and variety of local (and broader) level interests involved in the tourism sector, an initial core offer provided from existing business and community premises, which can then be supplemented and adapted by local stakeholders over time to best suit local circumstances, is proposed as being the

most viable approach at this time. This may also enable BMS to target best impact support interventions in line with approved strategies.

- 2.4 The level of local community and business input will vary from place to place. Broader place-shaping/visioning considerations are also relevant. As an example, Lavenham has a strong and pro-active community and business base, and a tourism offer needing minimal marketing and promotion given its recognition internationally as a one of the UK's most beautiful and preserved medieval villages. The desire and enthusiasm from within that local community and business base to continue supporting a relevant tourism offer as part of a broader community-hub/co-location opportunity is best led by them, with supportive facilitation from the District Council. BMS can have an influence in that being successful as an enabler, through asset utilisation approach, initial set-up of visitor information scheme and also through our mainstream economy and community support (including with partner network). BMS also have various inputs into development of events, attractions, facilities and products.
- 2.5 There is firm interest from Suffolk Library Service in providing a link-up which could support visitor information, utilising the libraries existing infrastructure and as a logical place for accessing printed information plus digital channels via hosted terminals and free Wi-Fi. This may support the library service's own asset viability through increasing footfall and form part of broader public access strategy. Babergh already grant supports a library link-up at Sudbury, although that is also funded and staffed by the town council as a separate TIC desk. Any new arrangements would likely combine library desks with visitor information and be supported by trained library staff. We have active and ongoing discussions with the Library Service business development officer, and they attended our visitor information stakeholder event on 06 June 2018 at the Museum of East Anglian Life.
- 2.6 Additional/supplementary visitor information options may include:
- visitor information within the Councils own Customer Access Points;
 - our own website tourism resources and links (including progression of our own Heart of Suffolk digital and publications offer);
 - events-linked, and opportunistic, pop-up support;
 - closer longer-term sector support through our key relationships development with Gainsborough's House and Museum of East Anglian Life;
 - longer term link up with new developments which may emerge, for example Needham Lake; and
 - strategic level work with Suffolk Tourism Partnership and district/borough colleagues

These are being/will be progressed but as next phase discussions, and part of broader strategy. Given immediate resource and timeframe/local economy needs it is considered that priority must be given to establishing a core 'Visitor Information Point' scheme, with any potential enhancements not just for BMS to lead or facilitate.

- 2.7 A core (joint Babergh Mid Suffolk) 'Visitor Information Point' scheme has been proposed by BMS, based upon what happens elsewhere including in Suffolk. This was discussed in a workshop discussion with interested parties, and follow-up conversations have since taken place. Full details of this concept are attached as APPENDIX A.

<p>3. RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>3.1 That Cabinet note the updated position in relation to Visitor Information Point development, and the specific and ongoing progress in relation to supporting Lavenham and the broader Babergh and Mid Suffolk area; and</p> <p>3.2 That approval in principle be given to both options of (i) a below market rate lease agreement with Lavenham Parish Council (or community group linked to the parish council); and (ii) a freehold disposal to the same body for the existing Tourist Information Centre premises at 2 Lady Lane, Lavenham; and</p> <p>3.3 That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director with responsibility for Visitor Economy matters to enter negotiation with the lessee regarding duration, terms and conditions, periodic review and other relevant detail, or else a freehold disposal negotiation. (Note: the final lease agreement or disposal terms will be brought to Cabinet for approval).</p>
<p>REASON FOR DECISION</p> <p>To continue to strategically support progression of the visitor economy within the Babergh District, and within financial and operational resource constraints for the Authority. To responsively support the community and local economy of Lavenham, bringing potential benefits to broader economy of the district.</p>

4. KEY INFORMATION

- 4.1 This paper follows on from Paper BCa/17/59 considered by Cabinet in March 2018.
- 4.2 The staffing impact in terms of support, consultation and process is being progressed by HR, Corporate Manager from the Open for Business Team and involving the Unions.
- 4.3 Officers have progressed discussions with partners, neighbouring authorities, communities, businesses and stakeholders in relation to both visitor information and asset use opportunities. Discussions have centred around the principles of:
- accessible, relevant and non-fixed single point visitor information delivered in partnership with local communities and business
 - value-adding to self-help and other resource channels
 - encouraging community and business leadership, self-sufficiency and innovation
 - best value to the extent of Babergh’s support intervention and within its Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
 - opportunities for greater community impact from BDC’s asset, which may also deliver a commercial return for the Authority
 - support for existing staff directly affected by these changes
- 4.4 Significant discussions have progressed since March 2018 regarding development of a multi-purpose community hub utilising the Lady Lane building, with the Lavenham Parish Council and Business Forum taking an active and progressive approach. Whilst the building itself is quite small, it has potential to provide appropriate Sub-

Post Office level services and other community uses, and would likely retain a visitor information element (not directly delivered by BDC). At local level the existing Discover Lavenham website and the 'Lavenham App' provide further opportunities to support visitor information resources directly and from within the community.

5. LINKS TO JOINT STRATEGIC PLAN

5.1 This project most closely aligns with, and tangibly delivers against Priority 2.3.3 'Develop and implement our Suffolk Tourism Strategy'. 'Tourism Strategy' is a key 2018/19 joint priority. It also impacts upon:

- Priority 2.1 Increased understanding of our local business needs
- Priority 2.2 Engage and support our businesses to thrive
- Priority 2.3 Further develop the local economy and market towns to thrive
- Priority 4.1 Property investment strategy
- Priority 4.4 Effective corporate asset management strategy

5.2 The Council's approved Joint BMS Economic 'Open for Business' Strategy (particularly section 6.8 'Supporting the Visitor Economy') also refers.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Revenue/Capital/ Expenditure/Income Item	Total	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
TIC operational costs, end of service liabilities plus pump prime for Visitor Information Point Scheme		£100k net cost of operating TIC (inc corporate recharges)	Pro-rata at 31 October 2018 plus redundancy liability plus kick-start VIP scheme allowance	See below
Note: See Appendix B (Confidential) regarding asset utilisation matters				
Net Effect			Likely to be a pro-rata 'saving' to order of £22k One-off liabilities will offset any savings in 18/19. Savings including for reinvestment in key economic priorities will be realised from 19/20 onwards	Estimated £57k operational service savings (not including £43k of attributable corporate recharge)

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Legal implications in relation to the asset ownership and registry, for example any restrictive covenants, have been ascertained and checked by the shared legal partnership. Any lease agreement terms and conditions with third parties would be considered by legal as standard operational practice. Any freehold disposal

agreement would be similarly reviewed. At this stage there are no prohibitive clauses to impact unfavourably on any potential agreement with Lavenham Parish Council.

7.2 'Tourism' is not a statutory function for district councils. Investment and resource decisions in support of the visitor economy are subject to identifying and monitoring positive outcomes, with legal service input and scrutiny on a case-by-case basis and in line with joint strategic priorities.

7.3 The staff HR process in relation to cessation of TIC operations is being project managed and progressed in accordance with applicable legal and policy obligations, including engagement with the Unions.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 This report is most closely linked with the Council's Corporate / Significant Business Risk No. 2AO4 / Visitor Economy support aligned with approved Economy Strategy and Service Plan.

8.2 This report is also closely linked with the Council's Corporate / Significant Business Risk No. 3a 'If we do not effectively engage communities about their future needs, then we will not be able to help them become more sustainable' and also 4c 'If we do not manage our asset portfolio effectively it may result in lost opportunity; loss of capital value; increased revenue costs and loss of public confidence'.

8.3 Key risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
(a) Lack of suitable Visitor Information Point locations or not having them operational before the commencement of the main 2019 visitor season	Unlikely	Noticeable	(a) Effective and focused engagement with our destinations and groups/business network. Progression of a flexible concept scheme which is consistent with successful models operated elsewhere.
(b) Considering or supporting too many local place variable options at this transitional stage could result in delay and impact on deliverability by the start of 2019 main visitor season	Unlikely	Noticeable	(b) Focus on facilitating a core flexible Visitor Information Point offer for BMS and implement by the end of 2018. Other local enhancements/options may progress as may emerge through relevant stakeholders.
(c) Failure to work positively and decisively with the community and	Unlikely	Noticeable	(c) Progressing outcome focused and inclusive negotiations. Early decision 'in

<p>local businesses of Lavenham may result in missed opportunities to support the visitor and local economy/community.</p> <p>(d) Continuing to take lead and financial responsibility for matters which are owned/shared by private sector businesses, sector professionals and communities may result in wasted spend, confusing offer for visitors and lack of sustainability.</p> <p>(e) Resource pressures within the Open for Business Team given competing priorities. Some expertise and local knowledge gaps following Visitor Economy Development Officer moving post making support and delivery of priorities difficult at a critical time</p>	<p>Likely</p> <p>Likely</p>	<p>Bad</p> <p>Bad</p>	<p>principle' regarding leasing/disposal of Lady Lane building may give confidence and momentum to those discussions, including Sub-Post Office potential link-up.</p> <p>(d) Risk may not be fully mitigated as the tourism landscape is fragmented and complex. BMS has some challenges not shared by other authority areas. Approved BMS Economic Strategy seeks to set out targeted intervention approach linked to priority outcomes.</p> <p>(e) Risk may not be fully mitigated. Effective project management, resource deployment, service plan priorities and assessment and recruitment of relevant expertise will assist.</p>
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9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 Various officers across the Council have co-ordinated in respect of these issues – which cut across multiple specialisms (including asset management, finance, economic development, communications, public realm, communities).
- 9.2 We have commissioned an independent valuation report and ('lifetime' i.e. 30 year) buildings maintenance report for the Lady Lane building. Summary details, financial information and valuation estimates are contained within Appendix B (Confidential).

- 9.3 We have engaged, and continue to do so, with local interested groups and parties interested in supporting a modernised and flexible concept visitor information point offer.
- 9.4 We have advised affected suppliers and other businesses in relation to the changes in visitor information. Should opportunities arise to network tourism retail sectors with emerging visitor information points this will be progressed accordingly, but is ultimately not a matter for the Authority.
- 9.5 We have made our Suffolk Tourism Partnership, Local Tourism Action Group colleagues and broader network aware of the changes. With the exception of Ipswich (at St.Stephen's Church TIC facility) all other district/boroughs have already ended their direct TIC support.
- 9.6 All Councillors have had access to a broader context tourism workshop and update session delivered by the Open for Business Team.

10. EQUALITY ANALYSIS

- 10.1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required directly arising from the matters contained within this report.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no direct environmental implications from the matters contained within this report.

12. APPENDICES

Title	Location
(a) Outline Visitor Information Point Scheme for Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts	Attached
(b) CONFIDENTIAL (NOT FOR PUBLICATION) Survey and Maintenance summary - Lady Lane TIC Building, Lavenham	In Part 2 of the Report - Restricted

13. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 13.1 VISIT BRITAIN - ALTERNATIVE MODELS OF VISITOR INFORMATION
- 13.2 AECOM VISITOR DESTINATION PLAN FOR BMS (JUNE 2015)
- 13.3 JOINT BMS ECONOMIC 'OPEN FOR BUSINESS' STRATEGY

Visitor Information Point Scheme for Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts 2018/19



VISITOR INFORMATION POINT (VIP) BABERGH & MID SUFFOLK (BMS) NETWORK

Briefing Summary:

The visitor economy is of significant importance to Babergh and Mid Suffolk, and the broader region. Research has shown that in 2016 the overall economic impact of tourism to the Babergh District was £188.5m (tourism related employment accounting for 11% of all employment) and for Mid Suffolk District £167.5m (9% of all employment) [source Destination Research Ltd Economic Impact of Tourism Reports 2016]

BMS is changing the way it supports visitor information following a review of the service and the changing needs of visitors, particularly regarding greater access to electronic information.

In March 2018, the Councils decided to discontinue with the current direct service and funding of staffed single fixed point Tourist Information Centres (TICs) in Lavenham and Stowmarket with effect from the end of the main 2018 visitor season (end of October 2018).

This decision was based upon changing visitor trends (and use of technology) which has declined the use of traditional fixed location/uniformed and staffed TIC formats, which have inherently higher delivery costs. There is an opportunity to modernise visitor information by making tourist information more flexible and accessible across the districts – working with local businesses, communities and existing infrastructure.

The Councils seek to instigate a 'Visitor Information Point' (VIP) network across the districts, in partnership with a local business and/or community organisations. We are looking to establish VIPs in each of the market towns and in our key destination towns from existing business and community premises.

The Visitor Information Point concept:

The vision for a VIP is an accessible location which provides a friendly focal point for providing Visitor Information in the town centres or key visitor destinations. The concept is flexible. However, we currently anticipate:

- The VIP will be promoted as part of a BMS wide VIP network as the local place to access literature. In some cases, information and signposting via face to face contact will be available - directing enquirers to available tourism literature and the various visitor support websites available from regional to local place level.
- The VIPs will work together including with other visitor support organisations in an integrated way to promote the areas attractions, accommodation, towns, events etc. to benefit local businesses and the visitor economy.
- The VIP will be within an existing private or community sector premises (such as shop / café / library or other facility), located close to the town centre or key tourist areas and will be open to the public, reasonably frequently, particularly on weekend or event days.
- Staff working within the VIPs will be able to access free 'Welcome Host' type training (supported by BMS), to enable them to provide a warm welcome to visitors, to promote digital offers (for more comprehensive information) and use the printed literature provided to answer local queries – such as events programme and activities.
- Free Wi-Fi provision for visitors is desirable, to encourage visitors to use the websites to search for information.
- The premises could also have the option to offer additional services such as selling tourist merchandise, maps and guides and tickets for local shows, tours/walks and attractions. These usually attract a commission for the retailer.
- There will be space within the premises for leaflet display, the distribution of which will be initially supported by the Councils.
- The premises will be clearly signed from outside as a point for Visitor Information – these signs will be provided by the Councils and be consistent/recognisable as Visitor Information.
- The Councils will monitor the VIP transition and will consider where it may support any refinements so as to maximise impact.
- The Councils do not envisage a substantial cost for the operation of the service within an existing business or community premises. Day-to-day costs will be offset by the additional footfall benefits and advertising as a VIP.
- Visitor information (leaflets, screen displays, pop-ups etc.) may also be utilised elsewhere at non-VIP designated or branded locations – such as taxi waiting rooms, cafés, leisure, events, retail or broader customer access points.

Setting up as a Visitor Information Point:

The Councils will set aside a limited funding allocation to support one-off set up costs for VIPs - which will cover signage, shelving units for literature, an information folder, initial training support and any other reasonable elements.

If you would be interested and motivated to provide this service in support of your local area and economy, we would be delighted to receive an Expression of Interest and some information from you by [DATE] regarding how you would operate the service. The Councils, in consultation with any relevant local organisations such as the Parish/Town Council and local Business Association representatives, will assess and select the VIPs, based on best achieving the above concept. The criteria for assessment will include:

- Proximity to town centre, main footfall or key visitor areas
- Opening hours (particularly weekend)
- Availability of Wi-Fi
- Browsing space
- Impartiality of advice (must be clearly stipulated, to avoid accusations of bias/favouritism)
- Pride in being a VIP and part of a BMS wide network to ensure a quality product is maintained
- Availability of staff for interaction with visitors
- Flexibility/availability to receive initial 'Welcome Host' training (free)
- Ability to network in support of the scheme – for example events such as leaflet swaps

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