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COMMITTEE	MID SUFFOLK CABINET
PLACE	King Edmund Chamber - Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich
DATE	Monday, 9 July 2018 at 2.30 pm

PLEASE NOTE START TIME OF MEETING

Conservative and Independent Group	Green Group	Liberal Democrat Group
Nick Gowrley (Chair) John Whitehead (Vice Chair) Gerard Brewster David Burn Julie Flatman Glen Horn David Whybrow Jill Wilshaw	Rachel Eburne	Penny Otton

AGENDA

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2 To receive any declarations of pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest by Councillors	
3 MCa/18/07 - Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2018	1 - 8
4 To receive notification of petitions in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme	
5 Questions from Councillors	
6 Matters referred to by the Overview and Scrutiny or the Joint Audit and Standards Committee	
7 MCa/18/08 - Forthcoming Decisions List	9 - 16

Please note the most up to date version can be found via the website:

www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/the-council/forthcoming-decisions-list/

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Please note Appendix H will follow.

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

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 report 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.

13	MCa/18/13 - Former HQ Regeneration Project - Approval of Recommended Option - Part 2	135 - 156
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Introduction to Public Meetings

Babergh/Mid Suffolk District Councils are committed to Open Government. The proceedings of this meeting are open to the public, apart from any confidential or exempt items which may have to be considered in the absence of the press and public.

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Agenda Item 3

MCa/18/07

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **MID SUFFOLK CABINET** held in the King Edmund Chamber - Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich on Monday, 4 June 2018 at 2:30pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Nick Gowrley (Chair)
John Whitehead (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Gerard Brewster
Rachel Eburne
Glen Horn
Jill Wilshaw

David Burn
Julie Flatman
Penny Otton

In attendance:

Councillor Roy Barker
Councillor Michael Burke
Councillor Diana Kearsley
Councillor Suzie Morley
Councillor Keith Welham

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

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Whybrow.

2 TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY OR NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST BY COUNCILLORS

Councillor Horn declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 9, report MCa/18/04, Stowmarket Vision for Prosperity, as a Trustee of the Museum of East Anglian Life.

3 MCA/18/01 - CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 MAY 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 May 2018 were confirmed as a correct record.

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

None received.

5 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

None received.

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

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

7 MCA/18/02 - FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST

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

- CAB60 to be amended to read Councillor Barker as the Lead Member.
- Whether a report on the Boundary Review would go before Full Council?
- Would there would be a report on the Suffolk Design Guide?

8 MCA/18/03 - END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE OUTCOME REPORTING

8.1 Councillor Horn, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Organisational Delivery, introduced report MCA/18/03 and moved the recommendation. This was seconded by Councillor Burn.

8.2 Some members questioned the consistency in respect of some of the performance indicators as some had targets whereas others did not. Also, the following points were raised:

- 8.3
- Further information required in relation to the 5 Year Land Supply.
 - The number of experienced staff which had left the authority and whether this was measured?
 - The number of staff vacancies at present.
 - The number of staff on long term sick leave at present and how many of these were down to stress? Also, what measures had been put in place to provide support?
 - Homelessness - it was hoped the figure would be reduced to zero.
 - The number of void properties should fall.
 - Disabled Facilities Grant, - whether obligations had been fulfilled?
 - The reduction in subsidy for affordable housing and the percentage of time spent on housing revenue.
 - Further information needed for fly tipping such as how many were enforcement cases.
 - Did the Council encourage or discourage volunteers in relation to on-call fire fighters?

- 8.4 Councillor Horn, the Cabinet Member for Organisational Delivery, agreed to address the issues raised as well as any additional matters. However, it was noted much work had been done around stress and mental health with staff; there was no record of volunteers for on call fire fighters and in respect of enforcement for fly tipping this could just involve a letter being sent.

By 8 votes to 0

It was RESOLVED:

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

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

9 MCA/18/04 - STOWMARKET VISION FOR PROSPERITY

- 9.1 Councillor Brewster, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economy, introduced report MCA/18/04 and moved the recommendation with an amendment. This was seconded by Councillor Wilshaw.
- 9.2 Members questioned what the next steps would be following the second round of public consultation. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economy, explained during June/July 2018 in Stowmarket, there would be a form of wider consultation.
- 9.3 It was unclear as to which parts of the document had been officer comments and which were residents. Also, statements in relation to infrastructure should be made carefully. It was important to focus on the inaccessibility from villages and ensure cycle pathways were included. With regards to the action plan it should ensure attention was put on both the large and small villages in terms of having the relevant transport infrastructure in place.
- 9.4 The Economic Development Officer explained infrastructure still required broadening out and cycle paths were aspirational at present and as such would be part of the next stage.
- 9.5 Following a question on the amended recommendation, it was explained the investment would help the whole of the district and could develop into a vision for others in the future, running in parallel with the Stowmarket vision.

By 8 votes to 1

It was RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the draft "Vision for Posterity (VfP) Action Plan" and draft VfP All-Issues Response" is reviewed and endorsed for publication, and that the Cabinet Member for the Economy in consultation with the Strategic Director be

granted delegated authority to approve any updates/amendments prior to publication.

- (2) That a total of £200k be allocated from the Growth and Efficiency Fund as follows:
 - Investigate the Council's options for branding and marketing Stowmarket, and
 - Explore the feasibility/deliverability of a Stowmarket town centre regeneration project.
- (3) Members agree in principle that £350,000 be allocated from the Growth and Efficiency Fund for allocation across the whole of the District for shop front and access improvements and that a scheme of allocation be decided outside of the meeting.
- (4) That Consideration is undertaken on how and when the VfP response is presented to the public beyond the release of the document (to be available online and copies in prominent places). And, that a drop-in event is conducted with partner organisations, and appropriate publicity, to be held on 16 June 2018 as part of Stowmarket Civic Day.

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 Stowmarket area, and pave the way for further VfP projects and interventions. The grant schemes respond directly to issues raised through the consultation and will have a high-impact outcome to raise the profile of the town centres in the District.

10 MCA/18/05 - ASSET INVESTMENT FUND (ACQUISITION FUND)

- 10.1 Councillor Gowrley, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Assets and Investments, introduced report MCA/18/05 and moved the recommendation with an amendment. This was seconded by Councillor Burn.
- 10.2 It was agreed to add into paragraph 4.5 of the report, within the criteria as (f), that it would need to meet strategic purposes.
- 10.3 Members were concerned as the new Assistant Director was not yet in post whether she would have a different approach, however, it was agreed the relevant Ward Member would be involved in the decision process and the opposition groups would also be kept informed.
- 10.4 A Member questioned within the criteria in paragraph 4.5 whether ethical standards would also be considered. It was felt as long as the group decided on the purchase and it met the strategic priorities it would be ethical.

By a unanimous vote.

It was RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the establishment of a Strategic Property and Land Fund of £3 million, from the Growth and Efficiency Fund be approved in principle, subject to a revised allocation process.

Reason for Decision: To enable the Council to react and secure, when required, strategic property and land, as an investment opportunity, and to assist future housing building and economic growth within the district.

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 MCA/18/06 - BMBS REVIEW OF YEAR TO DATE

- 12.1 Councillor Wilshaw, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing, introduced report MCA/18/06 and moved the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Flatman.
- 12.2 Members agreed that paragraph 4.2.1 within the report should be amended to indicate that two Districts were served rather than stating “the whole district”.
- 12.3 A member queried the financial charts within the appendices and whether any double counting had taken place. Also, why “other expenses” had materialised which had not been taken into account within the first business case. Also, it was felt the capped maintenance figures were going up and down considerably, and with voids, the worry was some really significant differences from the original business case to the current one.
- 12.4 The Cabinet Member for Housing, with the Assistant Director for Housing, explained there were now two Team Leaders in place and as such it was hoped there would be a vast improvement in deliverability. Further detail had been included within the financials in the business plan. The financial detail had been reviewed by an external consultant and the business case would also be referred to the internal audit team which should provide members with additional reassurance.
- 12.5 A concern was raised about one of the objectives for BMBS being commercialisation. Objectives needed to be clear and for members to have the confidence these could be achieved and delivered. Members agreed it would be much better to properly serve customers and provide a high-quality service in the first instance.

- 12.6 It was questioned whether the IT mobile working solution, Total Mobile, was now up and running, the impact was of not being able to complete jobs and whether these were being monitored? Whether the loss of staff as detailed on page 148 were experienced people and whether the use of Property Services added more staff time and costs.
- 12.7 The Corporate Manager for BMBS explained Total Mobile was still an ongoing issue but much work had been completed in respect of developing the system. This had been raised as an urgent item to be resolved. Paragraph 4.8 within the report gave detail on feedback, but it was noted that although the new service had experienced teething problems complaints had been low. Property Services were part of the process in terms of delivering the best customer service, providing a one stop shop for repairs.
- 12.8 After much discussion it was felt the recommendation should be amended so additional wording of *“that places a high-quality customer service above a surplus generating “commercial” business”* was added within the future vision. Also, that recommendation 3.3 was removed in order for the document to go straight to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to make recommendations in the first instance. This was proposed by Councillor Wilshaw and seconded by Councillor Flatman.

By a unanimous vote.

It was RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the progress made during Year 1 of the BMBS Business Plan be noted and endorsed.
- (2) That the following future vision for BMBS be supported:

BMBS will provide an inhouse repairs and maintenance service to both Babergh and Mid Suffolk with priority on delivering an efficient, value for money service that places a high-quality customer service above a surplus generating “commercial” business.

- (3) That this report and the revised BMBS Business Plan is referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for review and consideration.

Reason for Decision:

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

13 MCA/18/07 - ASSET INVESTMENT FUND (STRATEGIC PROPERTY ACQUISITION STOWMARKET)

By a unanimous vote.

It was RESOLVED:-

(1) That the recommendations set out in report MCa/18/07 be approved.

Reason for Decision: To enable the Council to secure a strategic property and site within Stowmarket as an investment opportunity, and to assist economic growth within the District.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 4:40pm.

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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	Yes <i>as per Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act</i>
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. <i>as per Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act</i>

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@baberghmidsuffolk.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@baberghmidsuffolk.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@baberghmidsuffolk.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@baberghmidsuffolk.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@baberghmidsuffolk.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@baberghmidsuffolk.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@baberghmidsuffolk.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 Frank Lawrenson	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 Frank Lawrenson	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

MCa/18/09

Response to Questions raised at Cabinet or submitted post Cabinet on the end of year performance report (For noting)

Questions received from Cllr Eburne

1. **Comment:** ‘the “summarised highlights” (section 4 of the report) does not identify any areas that need improvement despite stating it does (“where good performance is demonstrated or where performance improvement is needed”).’

Response: Members requested that the outcome performance report should focus on performance outcomes (both good and requiring improvement) and highlight key achievements and success stories. There is therefore a range of information within the summarised highlights including a mention at section 4.1 of the need to improve the average number of days to turnaround an empty council; it reports that at the end of Q4 it was taking 46 days against a target of 28 days. Section 4,4 also discusses the high number of staff leavers during the year which it is hoped has now stabilised.

The performance outcomes contained within the framework and reported upon, are determined by the Cabinet Portfolio Holders in conjunction with the respective Assistant Directors. Work has been underway to refine these indicators for 2018/19, to ensure they reflect the JSP and the Councillors priorities.

2. **Comment:** ‘I find it incredible that the lack of a five-year housing land supply is not mentioned as needing improvement – indeed it is not mentioned at all’.

Response: An indicator for the effective Land Supply is shown in Appendix A, page 24 of the report. The 2016/17 figure is shown with commentary that the 2017/18 position will become available during June. The Strategic Planning team are unable to currently collect robust housing completions data on a quarterly basis but do provide annual information each June/July through the Annual Monitoring Report. Our Building Control team provides quarterly returns to the Government in relation to new starts and completions for housing, however this data only represents the Councils market share of building control work so does not paint a complete picture. For this reason, coupled with the delay in reporting by the NHBC and any other Approved Inspectors, only annual information is included in the report. This was not available at the time the report was presented to Cabinet and hence was not included in the summarised highlights report.

3. **Comment:** ‘In general, throughout the tabled Appendix A the extent of commentary for each section varies widely. For some there are no “reports on progress” and for many no targets are set. Some may be because we just want a downward (or upward) trend but most should be aiming for something. So how do we know how well we are performing? Equally there are varying comments on what does it mean – what are the next steps or what work is going on?’

Response: The agreed performance reporting is based upon monitoring improving trends and the next stage of the developing framework is to add context to the data shown through the inclusion of benchmarking. It is accepted that where possible targets should be identified, and these will form part of the refinement work mentioned above.

4. Comment - Report page 24: 'Barriers to growth: no commentary in the report on progress section for all targets despite this being probably the most important area currently for the council.'

Response: The report on progress and additional comments need to be read together as information is in both, in future these comments will be merged. The last update date relates to the latest comments provided where it is deemed necessary. More recent data will often be shown in the total data column and the trend analysis, but a further update may not add any further value.

5. Comment - Report page 24: 'Question: T2 - no. of dwellings completed. We are in Q1 of the next year where is Q3 data at least?'

Response: Information was omitted in error, Q3 was 50 dwellings and Q4 data will be available shortly.

6. Comment - Report page 25: 'Question: I1 – no. of dwellings approved. Why no numbers of what has been approve but not built?'

Response: Please see comment no. 2 above.

7. Comment - Report page 27: 'Question: T2 – no. of plans entering examination stage. Why were no Neighbourhood Plans at the stage we expected?'

Response: The Council has no influence on when Neighbourhood Plans are ready for submission. Currently none of the groups are advanced enough to submit for examination.

8. Comment - Report page 27: 'Question: T3 – no. of neighbourhood plans made. Target is 1. If possible for 4 or 5 then should the target be higher?'

Response: The target for this measure will be reviewed in line with the refinement work that is underway.

9. Comment - Report page 28: 'Question: I1 – no. of enforcement cases referred to the team. If benchmarking is hard, what are we doing about it?'

Response: As mentioned above, as part of the refinements of the performance measures with the Cabinet Portfolio holders we are looking at opportunities to benchmark wherever possible.

10. Comment - Report page 28: 'Question: T1 - no. of privately owned properties empty, in excess of two years, brought back into use. Is 14 or 17 good? Is it anywhere near 100%? How do we know?'

Response: 100% is an aspiration but for now a target of 50% has been set. On average there are approximately 80 empty properties in excess of 2 years. As one property becomes occupied it is often the case that others will become longer term empty properties, hence the movement in the figures. Any number of empty properties returned to use is a success story.

11. Comments - Report page 30: 'I3 – no. of disabled adaptations in council stock. They are residents not customers.'

Response: The Council has a wide variety of customers, including residents, businesses and visitors. This will be explained more in the refreshed Customer Strategy which has an underlying aim to put the customer at the heart of the organisation.

12.Comment - Report page 30: '15 – no. of households for whom homelessness was prevented via the private rented sector. If landlords won't accept claimants, what are we doing to help?'

Response: The Council is planning to submit a bid for funding from the LGA Housing Advisors Programme to fund a project around reviewing how we access the PRS and produce a new scheme to increase the number of successful preventions.

13.Comment - Report page 35,36: T1,T2,T3 - Adult sport and physical activity levels. No targets so is what is being achieved good? Clearly a priority as it is included but what are we doing about it? Targeted grants / capacity building.'

Response: Performance measurements in this area can be seen through comparison with our peers, as per the commentary in the report. Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils adopted a Joint Leisure, Sport and Physical Activity Strategy in December 2017. An interim Strategic Leisure Advisor and Leisure Projects Manager will coordinate the Councils overall approach to implementing the Strategy. The Health and Wellbeing team are leading on key elements of the Strategy through the commissioning of targeted programmes addressing inactivity and by enabling community-based leisure, sport and physical activity opportunities.

It is important to recognise that the Sport England figures (based on the Active Lives survey) reflect the collective efforts of many individuals and organisations at all levels across the districts who provide countless opportunities for people to be active and participate in sport. Nationally, activity levels have decreased slightly in recent years, but the most recent figures suggest that activity levels are on the up and are moving in the right direction as people become more aware of the value of incorporating health and fitness in their everyday lives. Locally we are seeing an increase across a wide variety of activities and sports; in particular an increase in walking and running. This could be due to the accessibility of these activities, fitting more easily into hectic work and home lives and at low cost, alongside a number of great walking and running clubs and initiatives in the area for people to take part in from beginner level up to elite athletes.

14.Comment - Report page 38: 'T3 – Delivery of safeguarding training to all Staff and Councillors, no. of attendees. How many Councillors have had safeguarding training? Surely 100% is target?'

Response: 34 Councillors have completed Safeguarding training since July 2017. A target of 100% will be used to monitor mandatory staff attendance at the training.

15.Comment - Report page 43: 'Question: T1 – Government funding – Actual Revenue Support Grant. Surely revenue support grant isn't a performance measure. We get what we are given. Obtaining other grants from government might be a target when we have to apply for them or work for them?'

Response: This performance measure was identified as a tracker (or lag indicator) due to its strategic importance in enabling the Council to identify appropriate influencing (lead indicators) to bridge the budget gap.'

16.Comment - Report page 53: ‘Waste, very surprised at lack of targets.’

Response: As part of the refinements of the performance measures with the Cabinet Portfolio holders this will be looked at alongside opportunities to benchmark wherever possible.

17.Comment: ‘It is difficult for anyone to see how we are doing overall and I could not understand how you could therefore say this was ‘adequately reflecting’ our performance.

Response: The performance report contains a very wide range of indicators measuring performance across the Council, including an at a glance view of trends against targets (where applicable). The report demonstrates performance outcomes, key achievements and highlights against the themes in the Joint Strategic Plan. Where performance improvements are required this is also shown. The performance framework and this report is designed to provide a feel of overall performance and the difference the Council is making in the community. As mentioned previously, our framework continues to develop and further work is underway to ensure completeness of information and that robust targets are set.

Other Questions raised at Cabinet

18.Comment: What are the number of staff vacancies at present?

Response: As at 20 June total vacancies for BDC and MSDC, bearing in mind shared service provision, is approx. 39.73 FTEs. From a financial perspective these can be split as BDC GF 17.8 FTEs, MSDC GF 19.23 FTEs, BDC HRA 1.35 FTE’s and MSDC HRA 1.25 FTEs. The top four service areas with the greatest number of vacancies are Development Management 6.8 FTEs, Customer Services 4.6 FTEs, Strategic Planning 4.8FTEs, Shared Legal Service 4 FTEs.

19.Comment: How many experienced staff have left the authority?

Response: Please see table below:

Length of service - leavers April 17 to March 2018	122
Leavers excluding scanners	
0 to 1 year	22
1- 5 years	28
5-10 years	12
10-15-years	11
15-20 years	13
20-25 years	6
25-30 years	6
30-35 years	2
35-40 years	2
40-45 years	3
Total	105
Scanners	

Work has been undertaken with certain teams where retention and recruitment has been an issue. In some areas career graded roles are now in place e.g. in Planning and Building Control. Managers are also encouraged to succession plan through development of staff and to consider how they recruit when someone leaves e.g. do they need to replace like for like. In addition, a Market Forces Pay Supplement Policy is in place which can be used in exceptional circumstances to help retain experienced staff or where recruitment is difficult.

20.Comment: How many staff are on long term sick leave due to stress?

Response: 16 employees, (3%), were off on long term sickness with Mental Health issues, either Anxiety, Stress or Depression over the past year Mar 2017- April 2018. This is based upon a head count of 531 as at 31 March 2018.

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Agenda Item 9

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: Cabinet	REPORT NUMBER: MCa/18/10
FROM: Lead Member for Customer Services, Councillor Suzie Morley	DATE OF MEETING: 9 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 culturally we embed a customer centric culture.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The refreshed Customer Strategy be 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, webchat/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.

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



Contents

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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

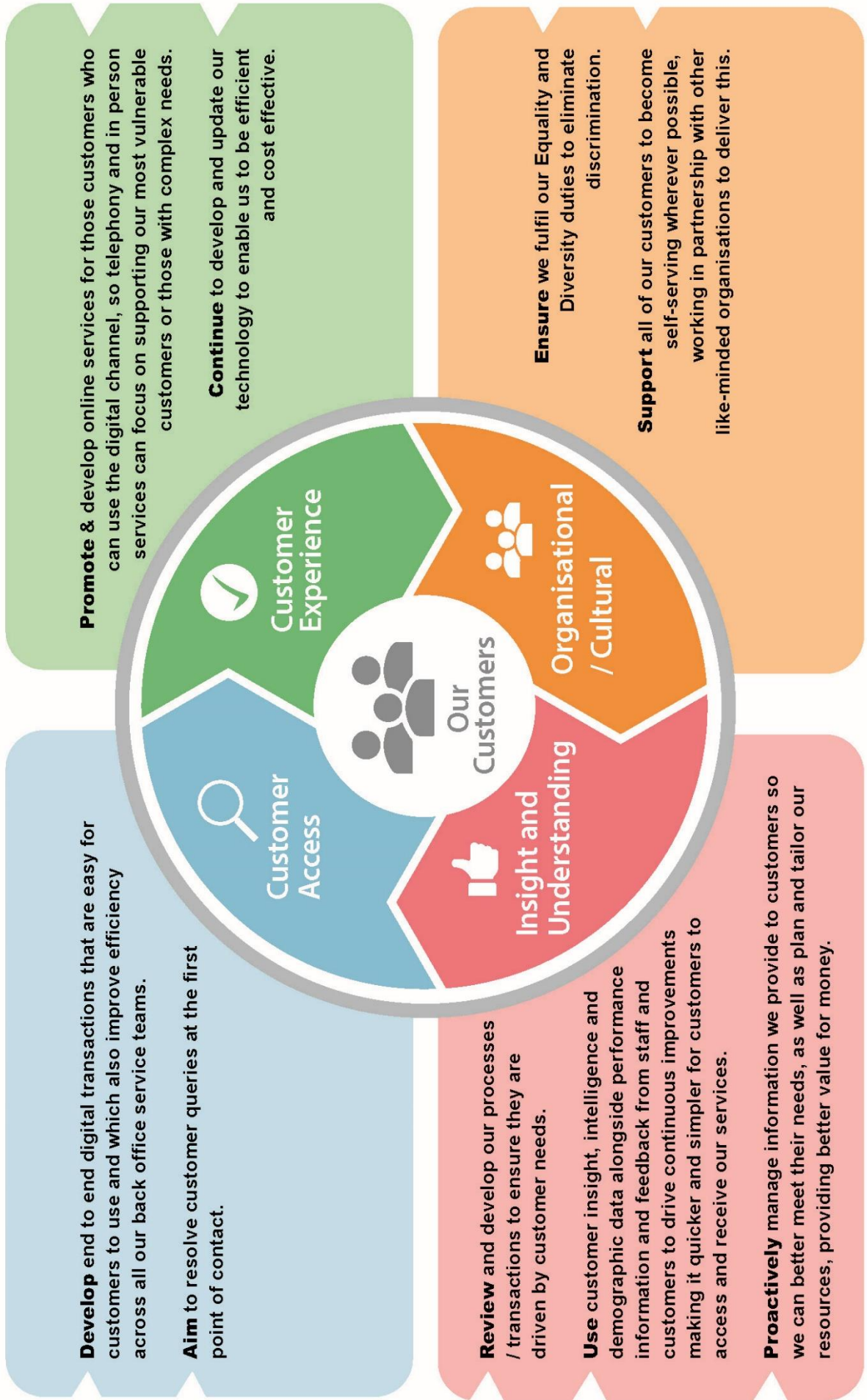


Cllr Suzie Morley

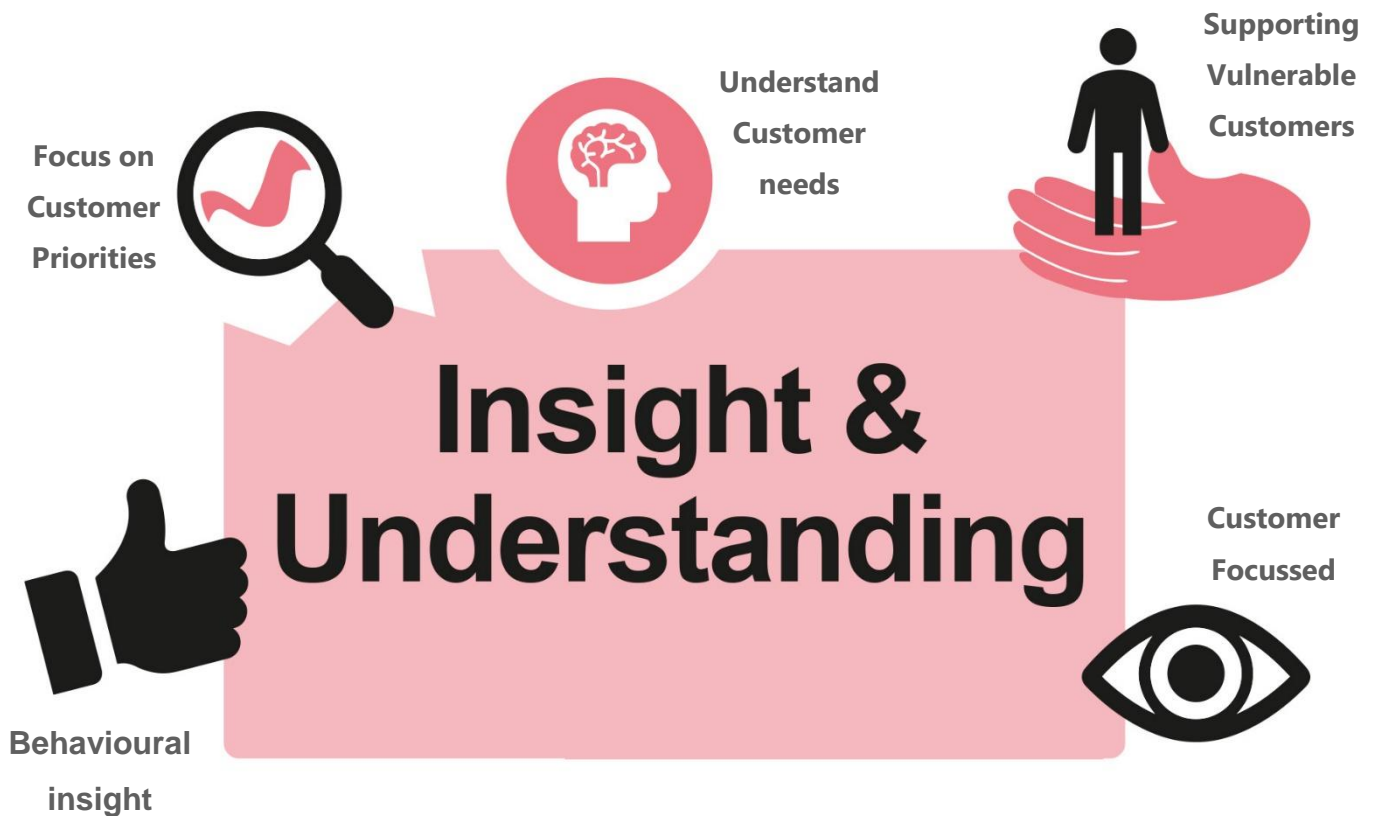
Lead Member for
Customer Services

Mid Suffolk District Council

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.



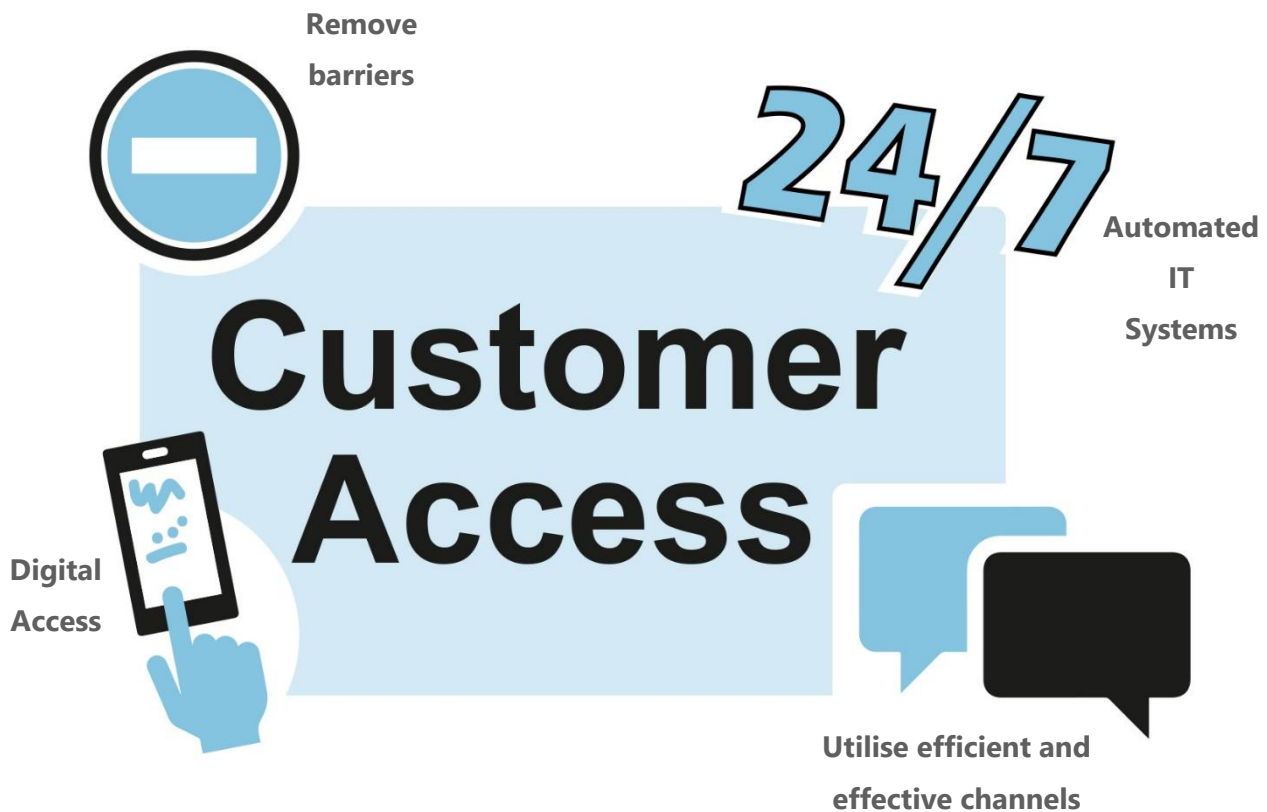
- **Review processes from customers perspective**

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



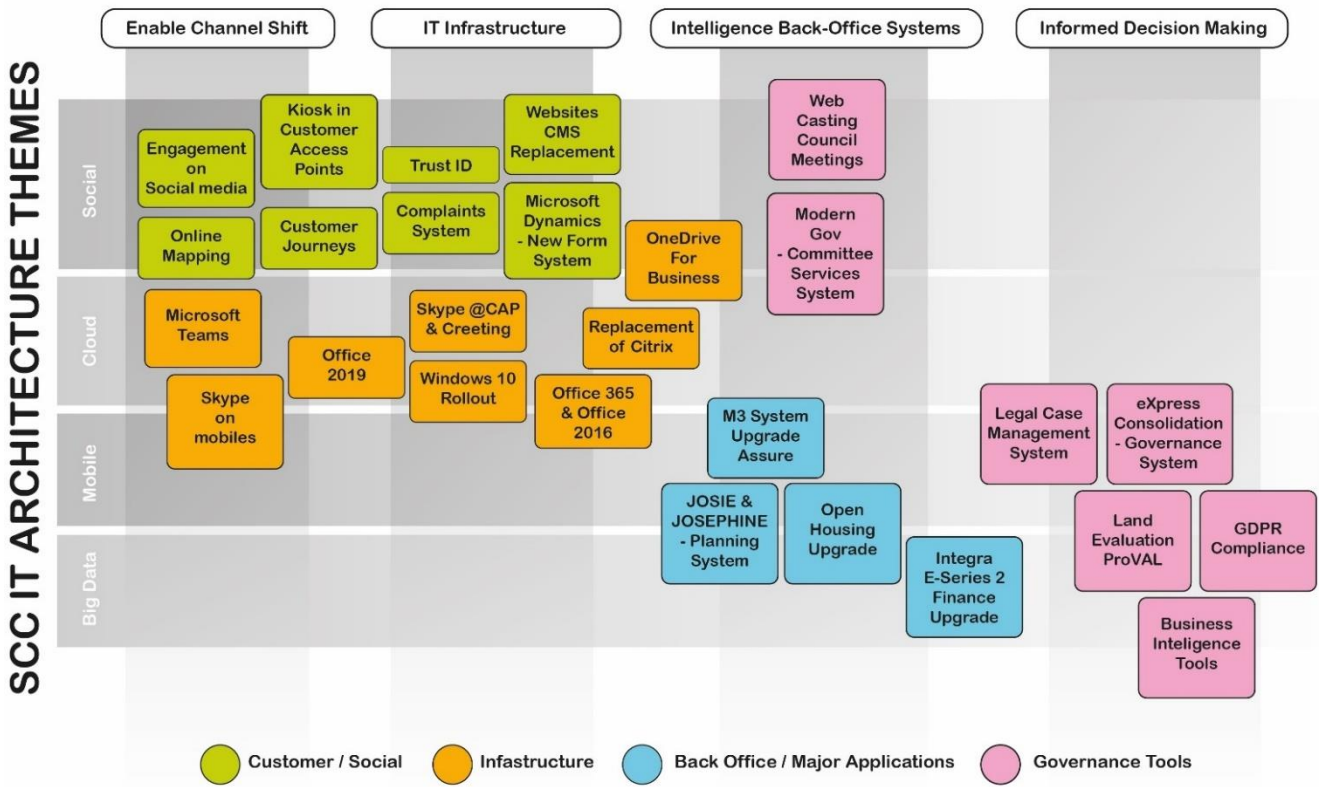
Social: Harnessing new collaboration and communication channels to drive social productivity and connected experiences between both colleagues internally and also with partner organisations and customers.



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

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: Cabinet	REPORT NUMBER: MCa/18/11
FROM: Cllr David Burn, Cabinet Member for Environment	DATE OF MEETING: 9 July 2018
OFFICERS: Peter Garrett – Corporate Manager, 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 there is 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, where appropriate, the provision or refurbishment of public conveniences will be integrated into other wider development and regeneration plans; and that local control will continue to be encouraged by offering town and parish councils or other community organisations the opportunity to manage public convenience provision directly, where they wish to do so.

2. MID SUFFOLK OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The following options were considered:
 - a. To encourage, where possible, third parties to manage public conveniences currently in the ownership of Mid Suffolk District Council.
 - b. To withdraw funding from public conveniences owned by third parties.
 - c. To increase the provision of public conveniences through a Community Toilet Scheme.
- 2.2 Option 2.1 (a) 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 (b) is not recommended because it may lead to a reduction in the provision of public conveniences.

Option 2.1 (c) 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 Joint Public Convenience 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 encourage, where possible, third parties to manage public conveniences currently in the ownership of Mid Suffolk District Council.</p>
<p>4. REASON FOR DECISION</p> <p>To put in place a policy to guide decisions about existing and future provision of public conveniences in Mid Suffolk.</p>

5. KEY INFORMATION

The Member Advisory Task & Finish Group

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 The Task and Finish Group meetings are chaired alternately by Cllr David Burn, Cabinet Member for Environment in Mid Suffolk and Cllr Margaret Maybury, Cabinet Member for Community Capacity Building and Engagement in Babergh.
- 5.3 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 5.1, which will be reported to Cabinet in October 2018.

Background

- 5.4 The provision of public conveniences has implications for public health, tourism, the local economy, transportation, crime prevention, urban design, social equity and accessibility.
- 5.5 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.

- 5.6 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 toilet 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 toilet provision is significant with respect to isolation in older people.
- 5.7 People with disabilities and their carers also lack the freedom to leave their homes without the reassurance of adequate public toilets 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.
- 5.8 In Mid Suffolk there are nearly 7,000 people with limited day-to-day mobility. There are approximately 5,000 0-4 year olds resident in the district. The Office of National Statistics estimated in 2016 that 10.6% of the population in Mid Suffolk is 75 years or above, which is higher than the national average of 8.1%; this equates to about 9,500 residents.

Scope and Process for the Review of Public Conveniences

- 5.9 Both Babergh and Mid Suffolk 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. 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 locations and the largest parks and open spaces.
- 5.10 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.

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 Councils either directly run the provision or contribute 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.

The Findings of the Review

5.11 Overview

Mid Suffolk 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.

5.12 Number, Location and Management Arrangements for Public Conveniences

In Mid Suffolk there are currently four public conveniences where the District Council either runs the facility directly or contributes financially. They are listed at **Table One** below, along with details of their management arrangements. Two of the provisions are owned by Mid Suffolk District Council, one at Cross Street, Eye and the other at Needham Lake, Needham Market.

Table One – Location and management arrangements for council-funded or part-funded public conveniences in Mid Suffolk

Location of Toilet	Management Arrangements
Cross Street, Eye	Managed and funded by MSDC (only the disabled facility remains open).
Needham Lake	Managed and funded by MSDC.
The Regal, Stowmarket	Managed by Stowmarket Town Council and MSDC contributes towards the running costs through a grant.
Meadow Centre, Stowmarket	Managed by a land trust and MSDC contributes towards the running costs.

5.13 Costs

The total annual revenue cost of public conveniences in Mid Suffolk is approximately £24,000, acknowledging that utility costs vary from year to year. These detailed revenue costs are summarised in **Table Two** below.

Table Two – Details of annual revenue costs for public conveniences

Location of Toilet	Business Rates	Water Rates	Electricity	Legionella Testing	Misc.	Total annual revenue cost
Cross Street, Eye	£3,065	£127	£324	£294	£0	£3,810
Needham Lake, Needham Market	£0	£479	£720	£294	£5,158 (Public Realm & Countryside Team for maintenance)	£6,651
Meadow Centre, Stowmarket	£0	£0	£0	£0	£4,212 contribution towards management and running costs.	£4,212

Regal, Stowmarket	£0	£0	£0	£0	£9,530 contribution towards management and running costs –ends during 2019.	£9,530
Total	£3,065	£606	£1,044	£588	£18,900	£24,203

In addition, Mid Suffolk District Council spent £507 on repairs to public conveniences at Needham Lake in 2016/17 and £67 in 2017/18.

5.14 **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 Districts, 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.

5.15 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.

5.16 There has, however, been significant lobbying nationally of Government 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.

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

5.18 **Accessibility**

All existing public conveniences that the Council funds in Mid Suffolk have disabled facilities and all have baby changing facilities.

5.19 All disabled toilets in the district are accessed using a RADAR key, except for the one in Eye. 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.

5.20 Condition of current public conveniences

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

5.21 No separate assessments for improvements have been carried out in Mid Suffolk as part of the Task & Finish Group's review because both council-owned facilities are part of wider plans being considered for improvement in their respective locations. The development of a Café/Visitor Centre at Needham Lake will provide improved toilet facilities and discussions are underway with Eye Town Council regarding a range of related provisions, that include public conveniences, and are more appropriately looked at as a whole.

5.22 What do other councils do?

Nationally there is a mixed picture regarding the provision of public conveniences. Some councils have closed all their toilets 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, populations and strategic priorities.

5.23 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.

5.24 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.

5.25 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.

5.26 The joint Member Task & Finish Group were keen for both Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils 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 Councils' existing and future provision of public conveniences in the district

- 5.27 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.

6. LINKS TO JOINT STRATEGIC PLAN

- 6.1 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.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Details of existing annual revenue costs of public conveniences are set out at paragraph 5.13 (Table Two) of this report.

- 7.2 With regard to any new future financial implications, these arise from the initiatives below:

(i) Any contribution that Mid Suffolk District Council would make to businesses joining a Community Toilet Scheme, estimated as no more than £300 per business per year.

(ii) The re-provision of public conveniences as part of a café/visitors' centre at Needham Lake, which would need to be integrated into the costs of the wider project.

(iii) Any financial implications arising from future decisions regarding provision and management of the toilets at Cross Street, Eye.

- 7.3 It is not possible to quantify the budget implications of the above until further feasibility work has been completed.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 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.

- 8.2 This report proposes that the two district councils 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).

- 8.3 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.

9. 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.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 10.1 This report is most closely linked with the Councils' Corporate / Significant Business Risk Nos 1(d); 2(b); and 3 (a). These, along with mitigation, as they relate specifically to public conveniences are set out in **Table Three** below.

Table Three – 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 will be stifled and/or unsustainable.	2 (unlikely)	2 (noticeable)	Provision of public conveniences will be secured through the 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 Stowmarket 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 Stowmarket will be integrated into the 'Vision for Stowmarket', which was agreed at Cabinet in June 2017 and on which there is ongoing engagement with the town council and communities.
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.

11. CONSULTATIONS

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 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.
- 11.3 There has been no formal consultation with communities regarding the provision of public conveniences at this stage. A range of discussions have, however, taken place with representatives from town and parish councils and these are on-going.
- 11.4 Where there are potential significant changes to, or relocation of, public conveniences because of wider development plans (for example in the case of Needham Lake), communities will be consulted as part of the Planning process and through other engagement events.

12. EQUALITY IMPACT ANALYSIS

- 12.1 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.
- 12.2 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.

13. APPENDICES

Title	Location
Appendix One - Public Convenience Policy	Attached

14. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 14.1 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 Convenience 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 toilet 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 Mid Suffolk where there are nearly 7,000 people with limited day-to-day mobility and 5,000 0-4 year olds resident in the district. The Office of National Statistics estimated in 2016 that 10.6% of the population in Mid Suffolk is 75 years or above, which is higher than the national average of 8.1%; this equates to about 9,500 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 the 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 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.

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 11

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: Cabinet	REPORT NUMBER: MCa/18/12
FROM: Cabinet Member for Assets and Investments	DATE OF MEETING: 9 JULY 2018
OFFICER: Jonathan Stephenson Strategic Director & Anne Bennett - Corporate Manager	KEY DECISION REF NO. CAB11

MID SUFFOLK 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 at High Street, Needham Market to Endeavour House as the current HQ was not fit for purpose to fulfil modern local government functions with Babergh District Council.
- 1.2 In April 2017 Executive 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 the Assets and Investments Team with developing options for the future use of the existing headquarter building, and associated car park sites at Hurstlea Road Needham Market, and to develop a programme of work which would ensure the successful delivery of a developed design for the site, 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 explains 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 1) 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: There is no equivalent sized office space within a 7-mile radius of the site. The nearest equivalent would be in Ipswich or Colchester. For the building to continue with its current use it would probably be necessary to attract an existing business out from Ipswich or Stowmarket which would be challenging. A local Chartered Surveyors were asked if they had any clients on their books who might be interested in leasing the building. They confirmed they had no

one suitable and they confirmed that the likelihood of finding a client for the building or a significant part thereof would be extremely difficult and unlikely to be successful.

2.3 **RETAIL:** The High Street has number of independent small shops and cafes with two Co-Op food stores at either end of the High Street. Demand for more retail space is limited. A local Chartered Surveyors contacted all their potential retail clients operating in the supermarket and discount warehouse sector, but no one was interested in taking the site or part thereof. Subsequently Ark opened negotiations with a retail operator who expressed an interest in opening a store on the Hurstlea car park area.

2.4 **RESIDENTIAL:** Needham Market is situated well for its links to the A14 but is not seen as a primary location. However demand is good for town centre developments as shown by the success of the Taylor Wimpey scheme. Housebuilders and land agents expressed interest in the scheme as a residential scheme. A large construction operator specialising in care provision confirmed also confirmed that they would be able to find a client for a 70/80 bed care home on part of the site. Further soft market testing with agents confirm that there was no interest in a care home as initial designs were circulated to agents. Subsequently consultations with heritage concluded that a care home of this size would have a severe impact of the listed building.

Enquires were made with the local GP services in Needham Market, there was no interest in relocating to the site.

Consideration was also given as to whether the community buildings currently located on the Needham Market Middle School site could be located on the car park site. The library and SCC (leaseholder for the library) indicated that their preference was to remain in School Street as they preferred the more central location.

2.5 Three options were developed in November 2017:

- **Option 1** Residential and retail
- **Option 2** Residential, retail and care home
- **Option 3** Residential, retail, care home and community space

3. RECOMMENDATIONS
3.1 That the Cabinet considers comments made by Full Council (appendix H) on 19 th June 2018 and makes recommendations for any amendments to the preferred option (Option 2) and development scheme
3.2 That Cabinet approves Option 1 (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 and Hurstlea Road Carparks in Needham Market
REASON FOR DECISION

This option provides for the comprehensive and sympathetic regeneration of the site, enhancing the significance and setting of the important listed building, and preserving the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, whilst retaining an element of employment.

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 Needham Market 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, Members 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.
- 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 reports the detailed design and planning work and takes into consideration all survey work, additional market engagement and the financial appraisal of various options.
- 4.9 Outline, schematic proposals for the conversion of the 1970s office accommodation were explored at the outset of the project. However due to the existing layout of the buildings, the limitations of the existing external fabric (single glazed windows etc.)

and the opportunity to improve the setting of the listed building it was agreed to propose the demolition of the 1970s accommodation wing.

- 4.10 The concept masterplan focuses on 2 elements; improving pedestrian access across the site, from the High Street to Crowley Park and creating a character and urban grain for the site that matches the surrounding context of Needham Market.
- 4.11 The options explored a variety of massing and masterplan arrangements on the site, including small footprint housing and large footprint apartments, retail units, community buildings and care homes. A key outcome of the pre-application consultation with the conservation officer was to avoid large footprint massing near the listed building.
- 4.12 There are two existing ponds on the site to the west of Hurstlea Road. It was agreed that the retention and restoration of the larger of the two ponds and the surrounding landscaping would be a significant public benefit, restoring an important amenity to the community.
- 4.13 The proximity of the car park site to Crowley Park and the retained pond lends itself to retail use and apartments, where and interdependency of shared, private/public amenity can be best utilised. It was therefore proposed to locate residential development in the form of housing on the High Street site and retail and apartments on the Car park site.

Next Steps

- Following approval from Cabinet a full detailed planning application will be submitted for approval;
- 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.

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 of different tenures.
- The scheme will offer a better retail offer to the residents of Needham Market and increase the number of jobs (subject to contract)
- Comprehensive site reuse and redevelopment, including the retention and enhancement of the listed building significance and setting and preservation of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area

- Provision of public parking, this has increased from 10 to 20 spaces following public consultation.
- Net reduction of vehicular traffic in and out of Needham Market, when compared to the offices in full use.
- Improved pedestrian routes from the High Street to the Crowley Park
- Restoration of the public duck pond and enhancement of the surrounding public amenity.
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

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

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (Further Information is contained in part 2 of the report)

- 6.1 The costs of feasibility and design work being undertaken to support delivery of the Regeneration of the Head Quarters 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)	£135,934	£86,670	N/A
Other Surveys/land investigation & Consultation commissioned directly by the Council	£54,018	£19,543	N/A
Full Planning Application & listed building consent	N/A	£29,483	N/A

- 6.2 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 (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 and this 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

- Sounding board November 2017: A project sounding board consisting of Ward Councillors, Councillors, 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.
- Pre - application submissions were made to the Planning Authority and statutory consultees as follows – 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, and to the Environmental Health Officer in January 2018.
- Cabinet briefing and all member sessions – January 2018.
- Town Council meeting 31st January 2018.
- SDRP – in 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.
- Public consultation exhibitions of the proposals were held at the Needham Market Community Café on 4th and 11th of April 2018.
- 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.
- The proposal (Option 1) was presented at Full Council, for comment, on the 21st June 2018. These comments can be found at appendix H.
- The advice from all these bodies, the responses arising from the public consultation exhibitions, councillor briefings and Full Council (21st June 2018) have been considered in developing the scheme design for the preferred option, including the associated site redevelopment mitigation strategies.

10. EQUALITY ANALYSIS

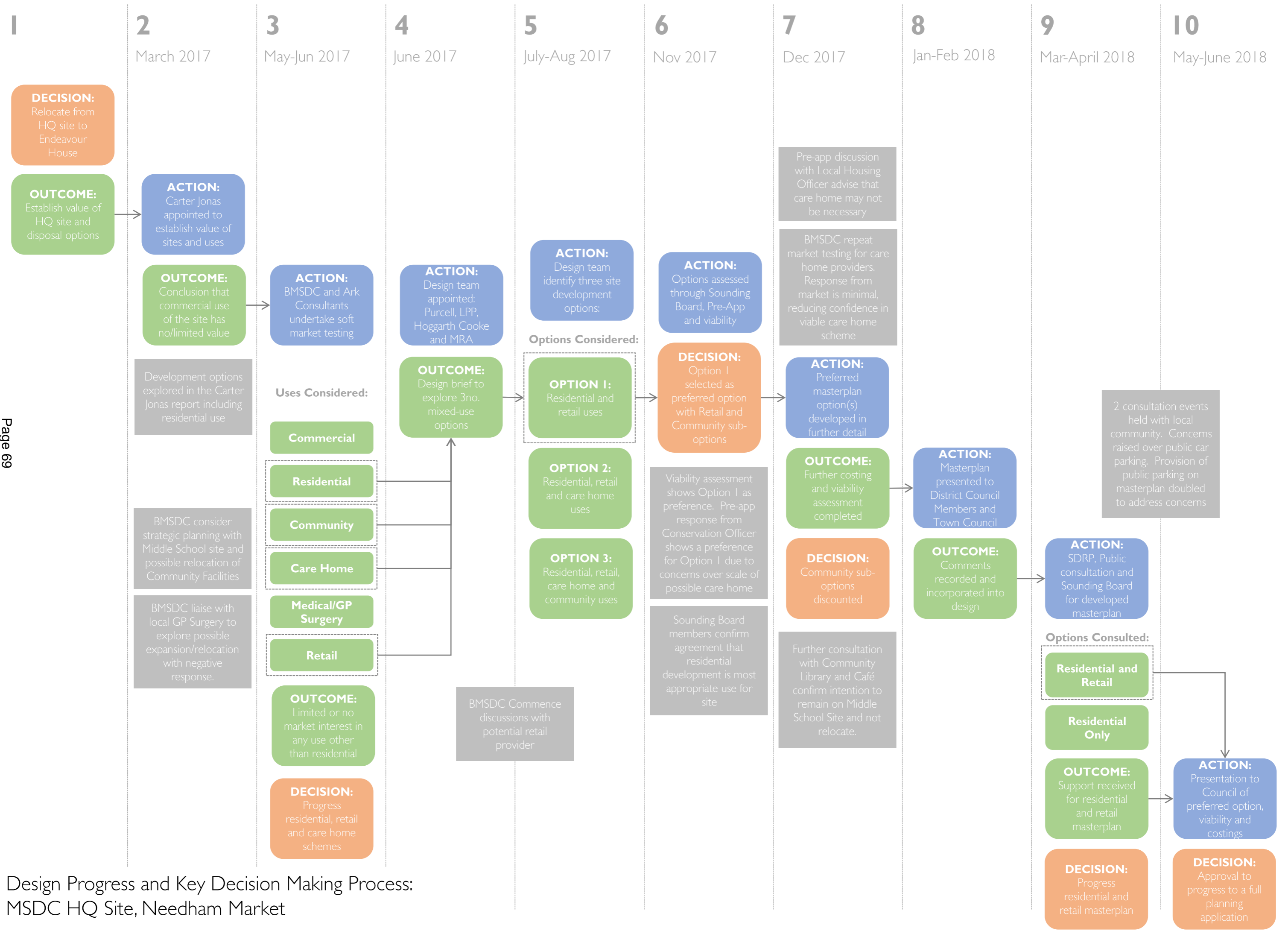
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required. There are no equality issues arising from the contents of this report and/or the recommendations.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

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	Restricted (Part 2 of the Report)
(b) Public Consultation Exhibition Boards	Attached
(c) LPP Summary of consultation responses	Attached
(d) Carter Jonas employment viability report	Attached
(e) MRA Viability Information	Restricted (Part 2 of the Report)
(f) High Level Project Plan/ Timetable	Attached
(g) Drawings 200-203	Attached
(h) Comments from Full Council 19.06.2018	To follow



Design Progress and Key Decision Making Process: MSDC HQ Site, Needham Market

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EXHIBITION ANNOUNCEMENT

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

Wednesday 4 April & Tuesday 10 April 2018

Drop in anytime from 3pm to 8pm

Needham Market Community Cafe,
The Youth Centre, School Street,
Needham Market, IP6 8BB

Representatives of Mid Suffolk, 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 Mid Suffolk members made the decision to relocate from the HQ buildings in Needham Market 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 they were 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 Stowmarket



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 Needham Market
 - 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
- The Council is still exploring retail options for the site, focused on existing retailers who may want to develop further within Needham Market



UNDERSTANDING THE SITE

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

CONSTRAINTS & OPPORTUNITIES

- Heritage (Grade II Listed building)
- Conservation Area
- Town centre / High Street
- Hurstlea Road splits the site in half
- Pedestrian and vehicular access
- Improved views from the site
- Surrounding residential amenity
- Open spaces & public amenity
- High Street retail and commercial context

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SITE DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

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

OPTIONS DEVELOPED IN NOVEMBER 2017

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OPTION 1
Residential
Retail



OPTION 2
Residential
Retail
Care home



OPTION 3
Residential
Retail
Care home
Community space

MASTERPLAN

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

MASTERPLAN - FACTS & FIGURES

- Total site area = 2.25 hectares (5.5 acres)
- Total number of residential units = 99 houses and apartments
- Mix of 1, 2 and 3 bed apartments and 2, 3 and 4 houses
- Public car parking
- High quality private and public, hard and soft landscaping
- Cycle storage and waste management facilities
- Existing community recycling facilities to be either retained on site or relocated elsewhere within the town
- Retained memorial trees and historic walls

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WEST OF HURSTLEA ROAD SITE OPTIONS

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

RESIDENTIAL OPTION



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RESIDENTIAL & RETAIL OPTION



CREATING PLACE & ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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

BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSALS

- Retention of the Listed Building & enhancement of its setting
- High-quality housing which is sympathetic to the local character
- Provision of public car parking
- Enhanced accessibility to the High Street, Crowley Park and public pedestrian routes
- Improved public realm
- Retention and management of the duck pond & improved greenspace



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 benefits
- Financially viable scheme to ensure regeneration is delivered within a suitable timeframe
- Planning and Listed building application(s)
- Business case & procurement for delivery
- Listening to the community
- Feedback and opinion
- Scheme submission to Local Planning Authority estimated for late summer 2018



MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, NEEDHAM MARKET, SUFFOLK, IP6 8DL – REDEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE FOR RESIDENTIAL LED PURPOSES

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

- In total, **274** persons attended across the two Public Consultation Exhibitions: 132 persons attended the event on Tuesday 10th April 2018 and signed the register; and 142 persons attended the second event on 10th April and signed the register.
- In total, approximately 6% of the total population (4,510*) of Needham Market attended the consultation exhibitions.
- In total, **172** written responses have been received.
- The deadline for comments to be received for inclusion was 24th April 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	65	37.8%
B	Number of persons who <u>did not agree</u> in principle with the redevelopment of the vacant site for residential led purposes	78	45.3%
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	29	16.9%
		Total 172	100%

*Population Figure Source: ONS 2012 Mid Year Estimate as set out in the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan APPENDIX A “Building the Evidence Base (June 2015)”

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**FORMER MID SUFFOLK
DISTRICT COUNCIL
OFFICES**

**131 HIGH STREET
NEEDHAM MARKET
IP6 8DL**

MAY 2018

EMPLOYMENT VIABILITY APPRAISAL

Reference: Employment Viability Appraisal – Former Mid Suffolk District Council Offices, 131 High Street, Needham Market, IP6 8DL

Client: Mid Suffolk 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

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2.0 LIMITATIONS OF REPORT.....	4
3.0 THE BRIEF	7
4.0 PLANNING POLICY OVERVIEW.....	8
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7.0 CONCLUSION	40

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
- There are a number of factors working against a successful disposal of the space in question within a reasonable timescale
- 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
- It is considered highly unlikely 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
- There is over 291,000 sq. ft. of available office space within a 10 mile radius of the property with a further 320,000 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 6 deals occurring over the last 5 years that have taken more than 10,000 sq. ft. – all of which occurred in Ipswich
- The vast majority of leasing activity occurring over the last 5 years has occurred around Ipswich. The only deals to occur in close proximity to Needham Market were small in scale with less than 700 sq. ft. taken in any one transaction (equivalent to circa 2% of the net lettable space in the subject property)
- 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. Ipswich)

- 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 a 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 Mid Suffolk 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 Mid Suffolk District Council to prepare a full planning application for residential led redevelopment of the former Council Offices HQ Site at Needham Market.

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 or a new hotel on the site. This has been further confirmed by a soft market testing exercise undertaken by Ark.

The Mid Suffolk Development Plan contains policies which seek to retain employment uses (Saved Local Plan 1998 Policy E6 / Core Strategy Focused Review 2012 Policy FC3).

The client (applicant) wishes to demonstrate that continued employment use is not suitable or viable to address the employment retention objectives of Policy E6, and 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 for the site consists of the saved policies of the Mid Suffolk Local Plan (1998), the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy (2008), and the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Focused Review (2012). The Stowmarket Area Action plan also forms part of the development plan for the area, but is not relevant to the subject site. Mid Suffolk District Council has also adopted a number of supplementary planning documents none of which are considered to be directly relevant to the subject site, except for the Suffolk County Council Parking Standards Supplementary Guidance (2014).

4.2 THE CORE STRATEGY FOCUSED REVIEW (2012)

Policy CS 1 of the Core Strategy sets out a settlement hierarchy for the District and states that most new development including new housing will be directed to the towns and the key service centres. The district's towns sit at the top of the settlement hierarchy, and include Needham Market.

Policy CS 7 contains a brownfield target which proposes that 50% of new dwellings be built on previously developed land in the district.

Policy CS 8 envisages that at least 2,132 new homes will be delivered in the district over the plan period including 510 dwellings in Needham Market.

Policy FC 2 of the Core Strategy Focused Review (2012) states that Needham Market is anticipated to deliver 470 dwellings over the relevant plan period and increases the total housing requirement in Mid Suffolk to 2,625 homes.

Policy FC 3 relates to employment. It states that good quality sites and premises will be made available for employment uses in each of the district's three towns, including Needham Market. It states that policies will be introduced to protect existing employment sites from loss to other inappropriate uses.

4.3 THE SAVED POLICIES OF THE MID SUFFOLK LOCAL PLAN (1996)

Saved Policies HB1 and HB8 relate to safeguarding the character of conservation areas and listed buildings. The subject site includes one Grade II listed building and lies within a conservation area and within the setting of several listed buildings.

Saved Policy H2 allows for the principle of new residential development within the district's towns providing that they protect the character of the settlement and its landscape setting.

Saved Policy E6 relates to the retention of (B Use Class) employment uses within existing industrial and commercial premises. It states that the local planning authority recognises the importance of existing industrial and commercial sites as providing local employment opportunities. In considering applications for a change of use or redevelopment of existing premises to non-employment generating uses, the Council will expect a significant benefit for the surrounding environment particularly in terms of improved residential amenity or traffic safety.

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 conservation of 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.

Paragraph 22 of the NPPF advises that planning policies should avoid the retention of land for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of it being used for that purpose.

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. 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 importance 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 131 High Street, Needham Market is owned by Mid Suffolk District Council.

The site contains a 1980's office building (B1 Use Class) of circa 36,000sqft (net) accessed separately from both the High Street and Hurstlea Road (to the rear). The existing accommodation is set over 2-3 floors and 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 (west of the High Street and east of Hurstlea Road) extends to approximately 1.32 hectares (3.25 acres) – as can be seen in Figure 1 below.

Internally it is currently configured with a number of work stations in an open plan environment for a range of different departments. In addition there are staff rooms, lecture theatres, the council chamber and training rooms.

Floor plans are provided on the following pages – Figures 2, 3 and 4.



Figure 1 – Site Boundary / Location Plan – Existing Buildings

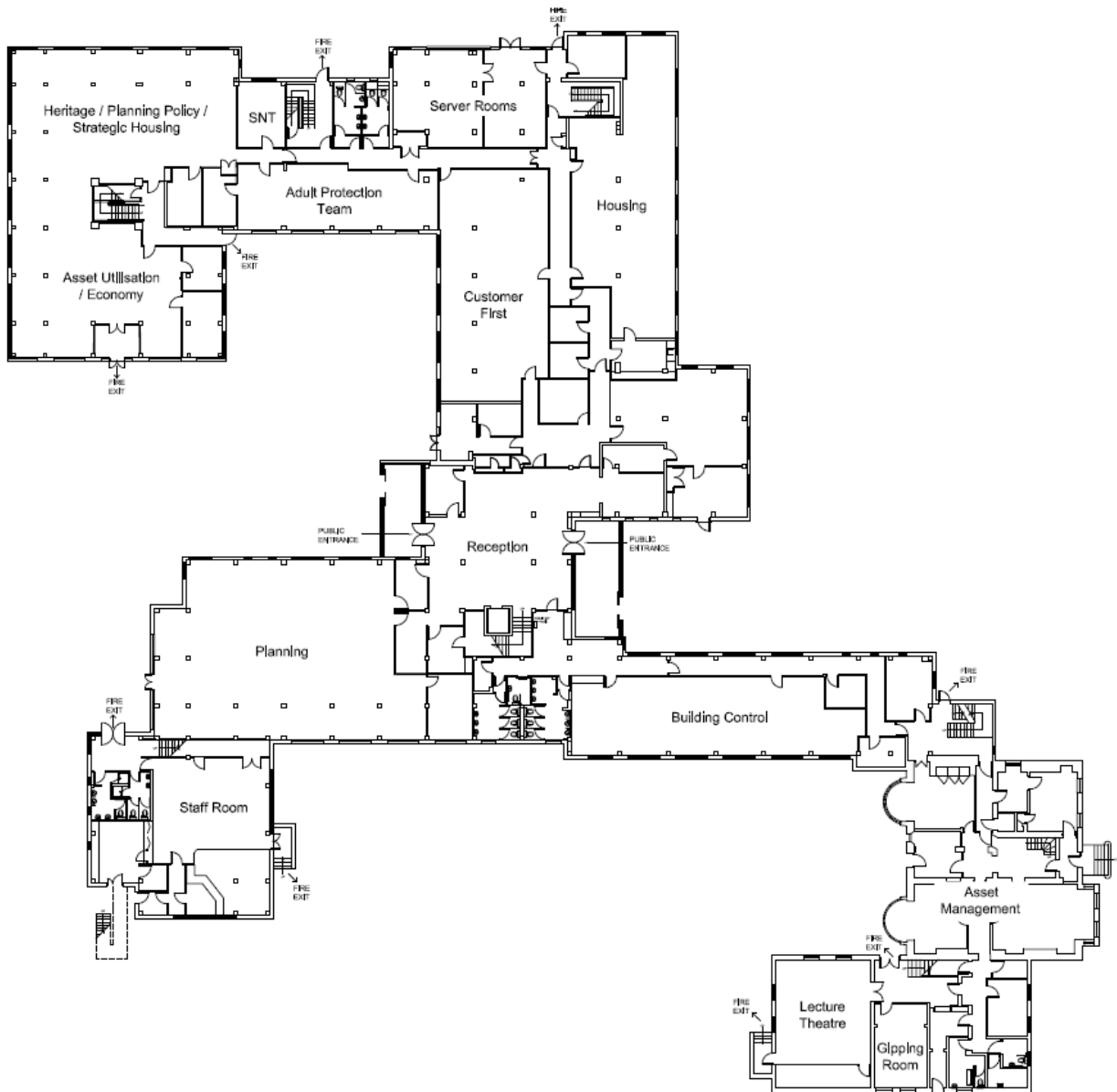


Figure 2 – Ground Floor Plan (Not to Scale)

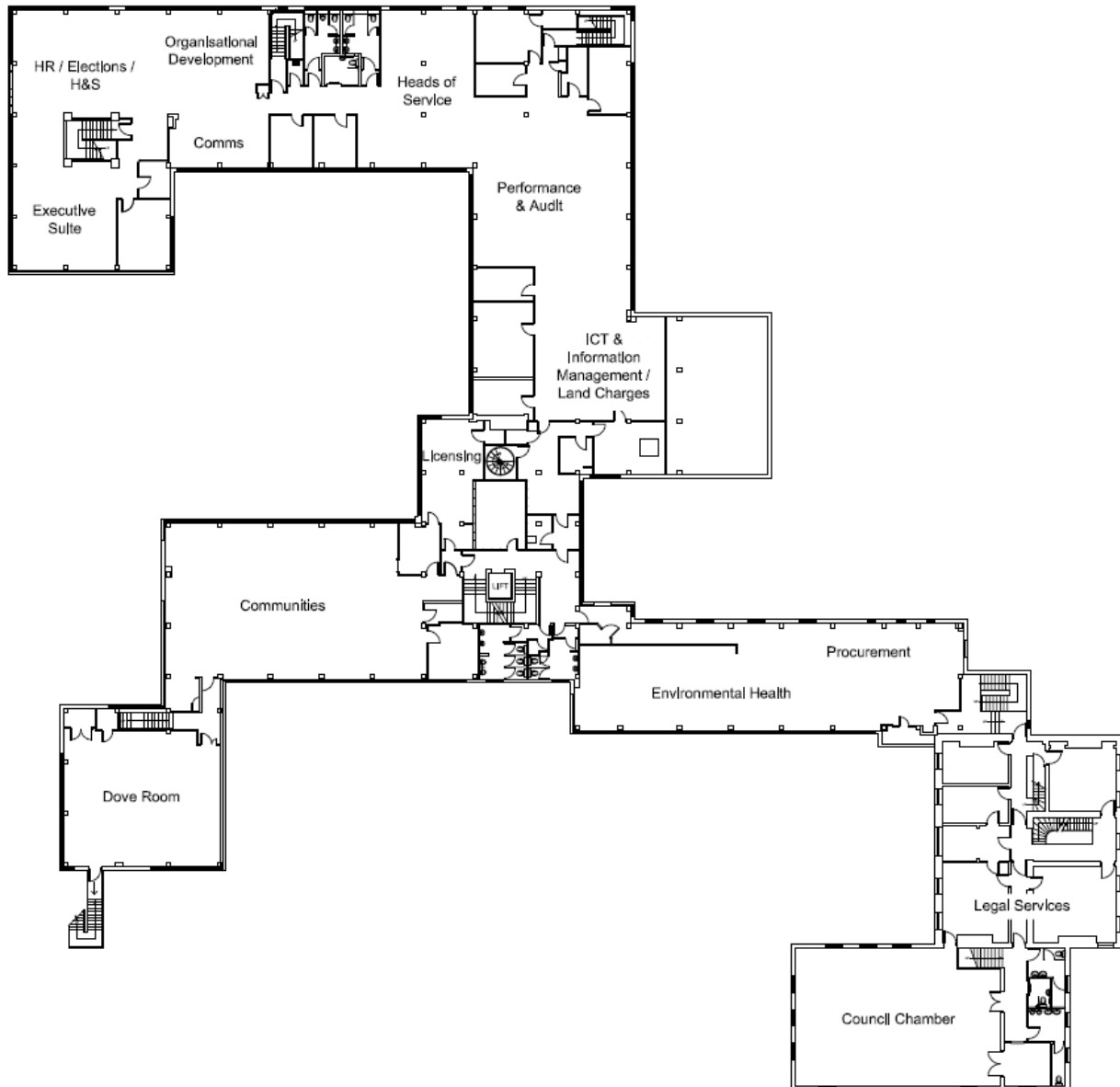


Figure 3 – First Floor Plan (Not to Scale)

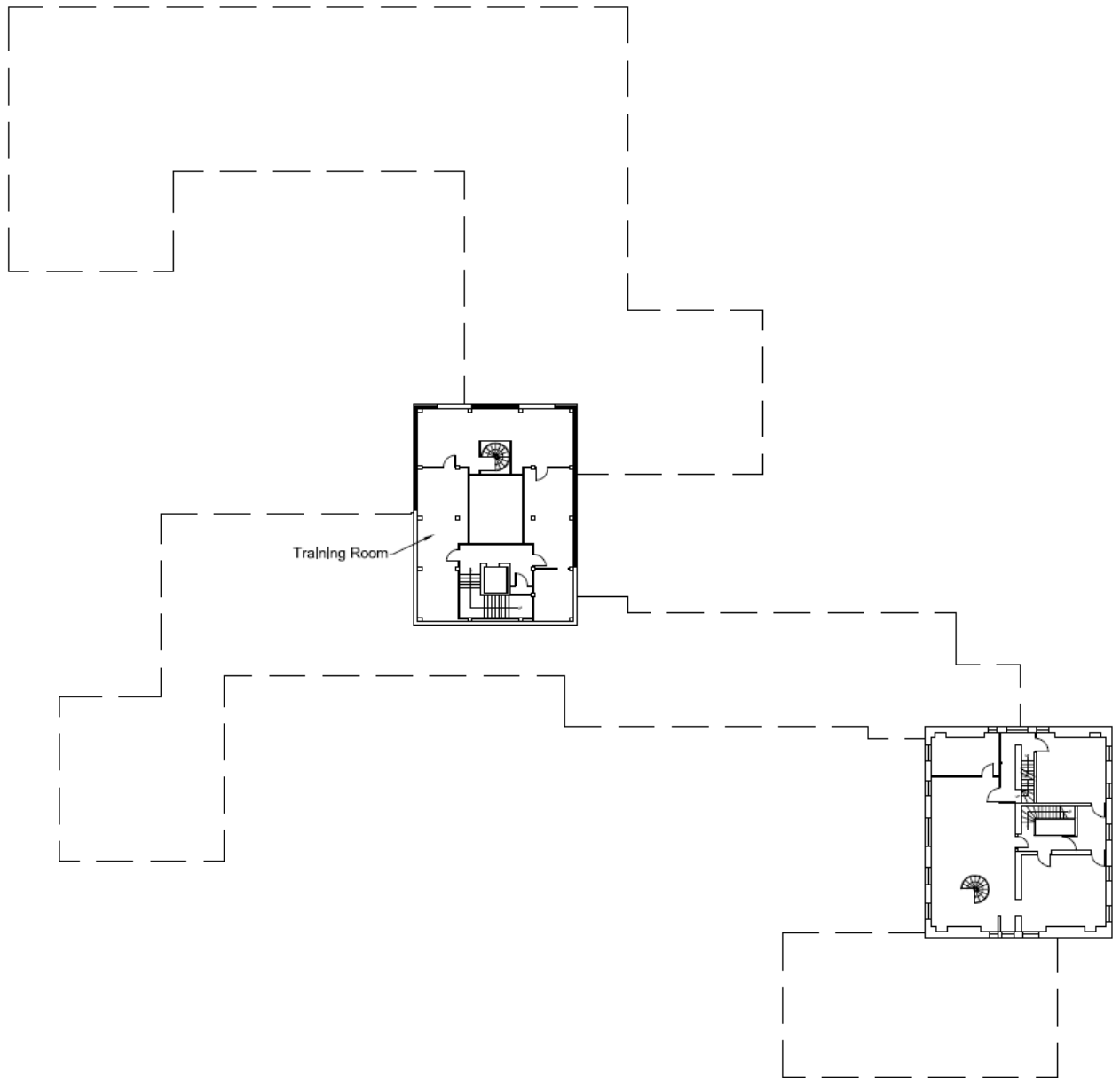


Figure 4 – Second Floor Plan (Not to Scale)

6.0 RESTRICTIONS TO CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT USE

6.1 PROPERTY LOCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS & STATISTICS

6.1.1 Property Location

The site is located within the Mid Suffolk district, covering 87,107 hectares with a population of 86,837 people. Over 70% of the population live in villages and rural areas. The district is characterised by historic market towns, villages and attractive countryside. Needham Market served as the administrative centre until the Council relocated to Ipswich in 2017.

The district's economy and housing market are heavily influenced by other larger towns on the A14 including Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich, Felixstowe and Cambridge. The county town of Ipswich, is situated to the south of Needham Market, offering a full range of facilities and employment opportunities gathered around core businesses of insurance and related information technology development.

Needham Market lies to the south of Mid-Suffolk District between the towns of Bury St Edmunds (18.8 miles to the northwest) and Ipswich (9.2 miles to the southeast). It is located about 3.5 miles southeast of Stowmarket. The town's railway line has acted as a physical barrier to the settlement's expansion to the east, while a further impediment to the north and west have been landscape constraints including designation of the countryside as a Special Landscape Area in the Mid Suffolk Local Plan. The town has relatively easy access to the A14 and the A140.

A small market town with a population of approximately 4,528 according to the 2011 census, it has a range of shops and services, local employment, including a business park and bus and rail links to the higher-tier settlements of Ipswich and Stowmarket. The majority of retail offerings in the town are located along the High Street and a few of the ancillary roads that lead from it namely Hawkes Mill Street, Bridge Street and Station Yard with predominantly local businesses operating in the area, although the East of England Cooperative is located nearby. In addition there are local leisure facilities including Needham Market Football Club.

The property is situated off the High Street (B1113) within a primarily residential area to the north of the town centre.

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 5).

It is evident that the office is situated in a 45-64 dominant age group zone and adjacent to a 65+ zone. There is a small cluster of 16-29 year olds to the west of the property however its scale is insignificant when compared to the overwhelming number of 45 year old plus age groups in the wider area.

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

These statistics are not favourable and highlight the lack of 'working age' people within reasonable commuting distances to the property. Again, the proximity of Ipswich (and indeed other populous areas) has an impact with a greater cluster of people that would fall within the right age brackets for employers.

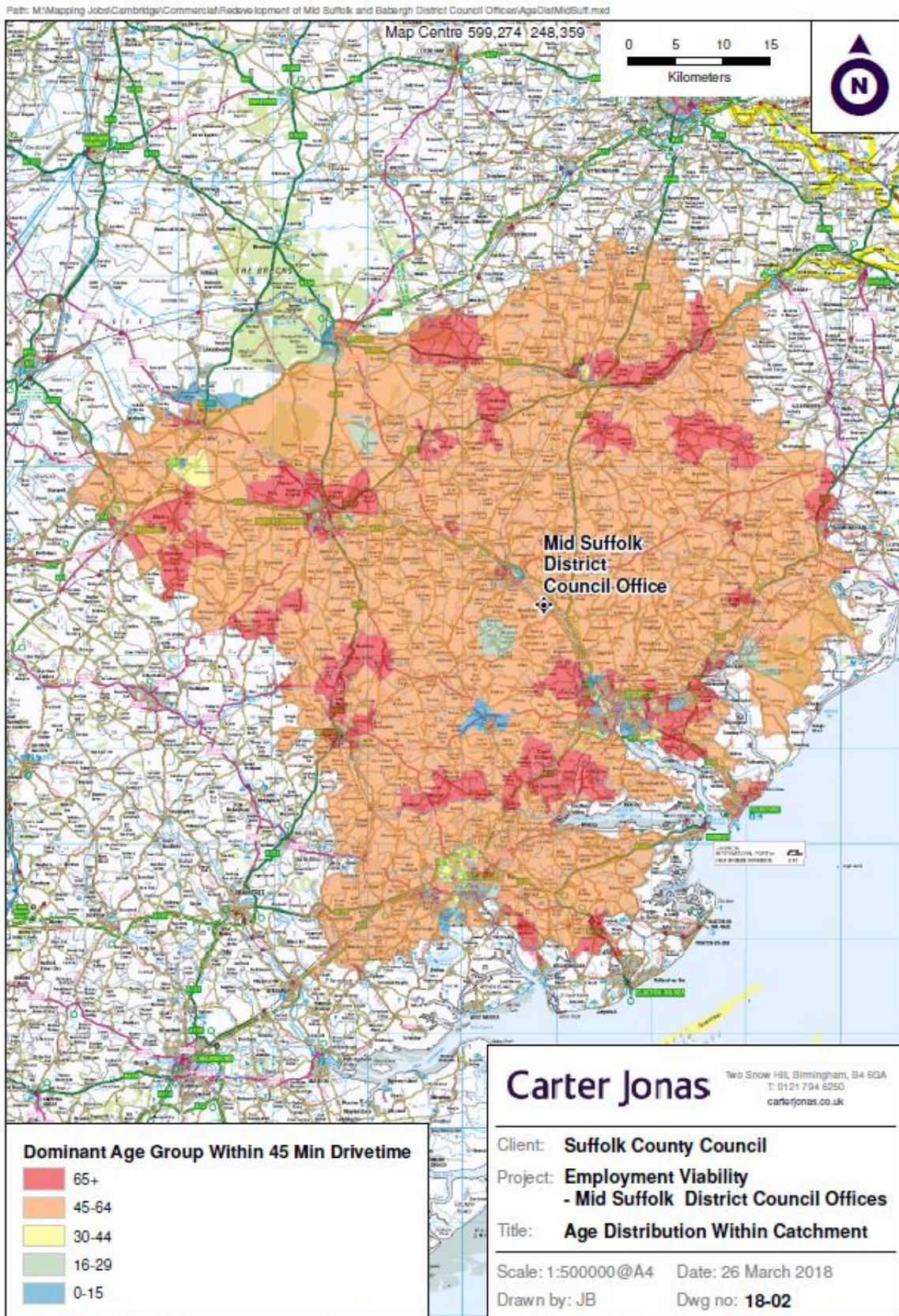


Figure 5 – Age Distribution within 45 Minute Drive Time Catchment

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 6).

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).

The property is mostly adjacent to zones with 10-25% degree qualified people (i.e. the lowest two brackets) with the most highly degree qualified areas (e.g. 40% +) tending to be found around Colchester or the edge of the 45 minute drive time catchment area.

For the most part, the 45 minute catchment tends to hold between 10% and 25% degree qualified people. This indicates that the area lacks numbers of suitably qualified people who are more likely to hold office based jobs and therefore have a demand for the type of space available within the subject property.

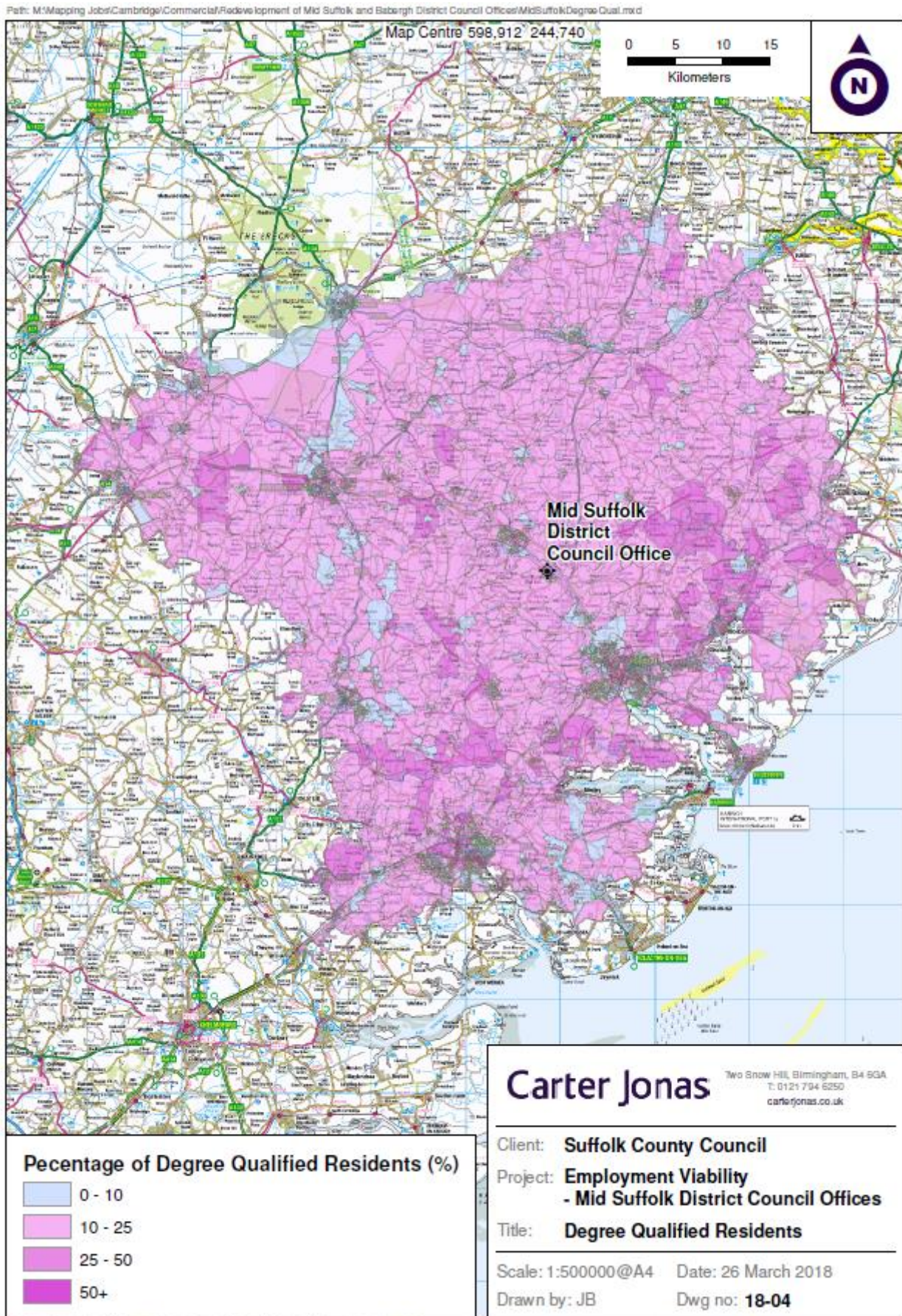


Figure 6 – Degree Qualified Residents within 45 Minute Drive Time Catchment

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.

Needham Market 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 Needham Market. This radius (as can be seen in Figure 7) encompasses Ipswich which is a considerably larger regional commercial centre. It is important to take this into account when analysing the market trends occurring and forecasts for the future.

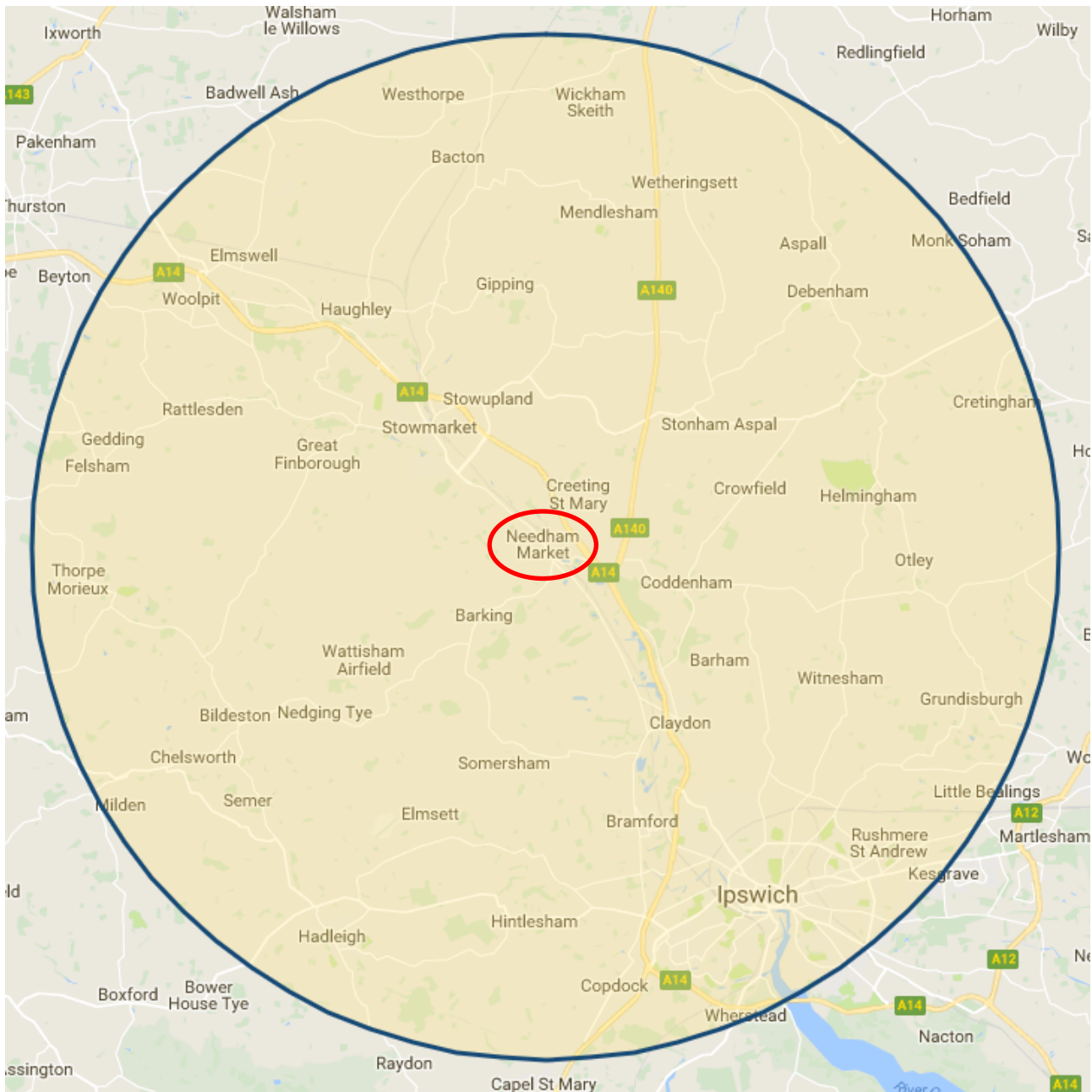


Figure 7 – Office Market Search Radius – Needham Market + 10 Miles

6.2.2 Office Availability

Within a 10 mile radius of the town there are currently 492 existing and proposed offices providing over 4.08 million sq. ft. of office space which compares very closely to the five year average of 4.05 million sq. ft.

There are circa 109 existing offices suites (including those under renovation) providing around 291,454 sq. ft. of available space in total.

The majority of available and proposed office space is centred on Ipswich with small clusters of smaller office suites scattered around peripheral villages and towns.

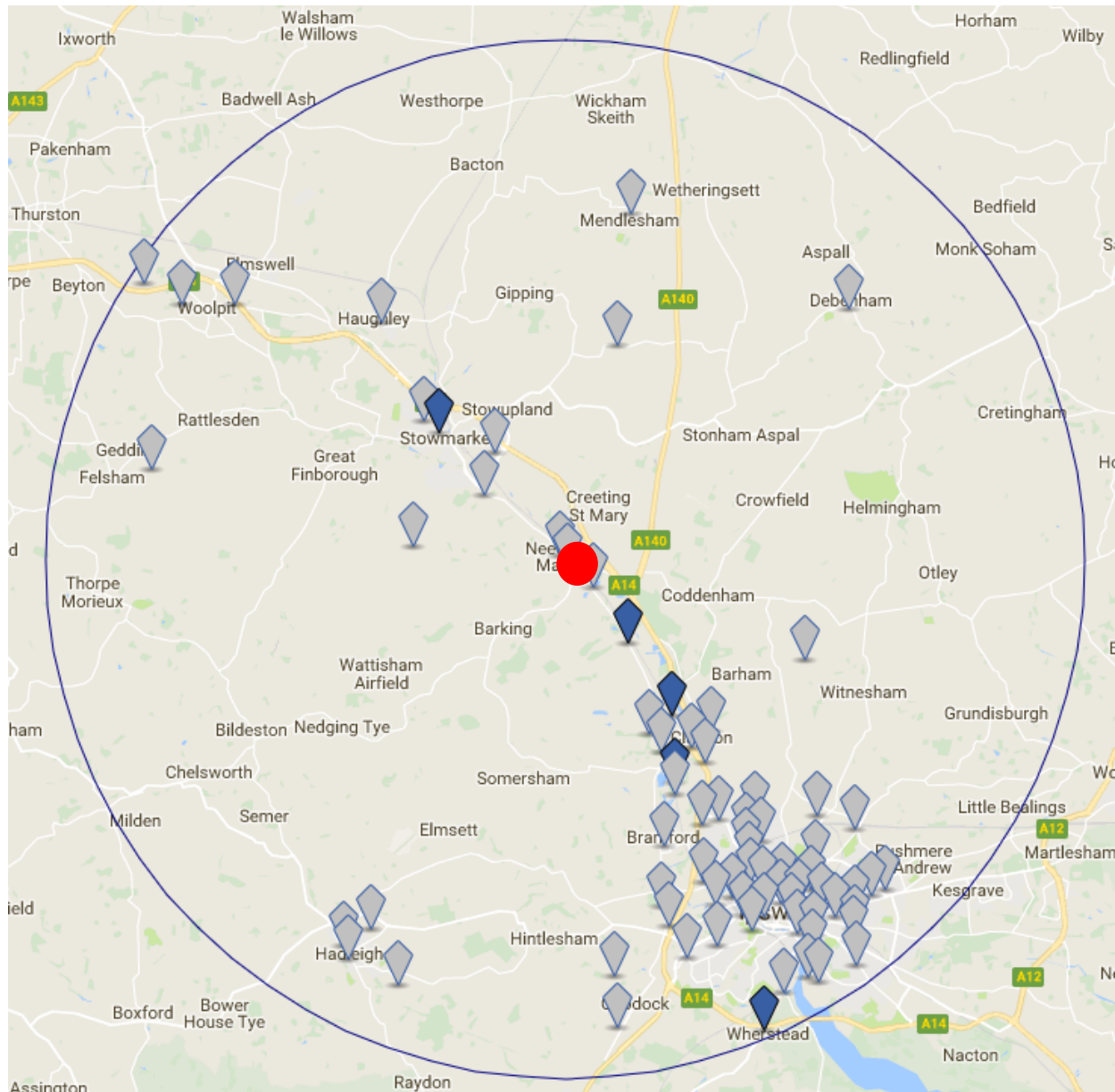


Figure 8 – Offices that are Existing and / or Under Renovation

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

Note – Not all property markers are shown on the map

Of the existing space available, the average available office / suite size is 7,043 sq. ft.

There are four offices currently on the market that are offering in excess of 20,000 sq. ft. (generally in a series of office suites within a single building). These are:

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 9 – Franciscan House, 51 Princes Street, Ipswich

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 and the M2. 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 10 – Hyde Park House, 1 Crown Street, Ipswich

St Clare House, Princess Street, Ipswich: 40,980 sq. ft. of purpose built office space in close proximity to junction 5 of the M2 and 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 11 – St Clare House, Princess Street, Ipswich

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 12 – Berkeley Business Centre, Connexions 159, Princes Street, Ipswich

In addition there is a further 321,412 sq. ft. of office space that is either proposed or under construction although only 106,340 sq. ft. of this space is available and on the market as such. This includes:

Building Address	Building Name	Building Park	Building Status	Year Built	Rentable Building Area	Total Available Space (SF)
Crockatt Rd		Hadleigh Enterprise Park	Under Construction	2,018	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	
Princes St	Birketts		Under Construction	2,018	50,000	
Mill Ln	Office Buildings		Proposed		56,510	56,508
88-96 Princes St			Proposed		40,300	40,300
TOTALS					321,412	106,340

As can be seen in Figure 13, the majority of this space is situated in Ipswich which further highlights the focus of the local market place on this core employment area. There are a handful of proposed offices elsewhere including some at Stowmarket East – a new light industrial / warehouse park with a proportion of office accommodation included in a recent planning application.

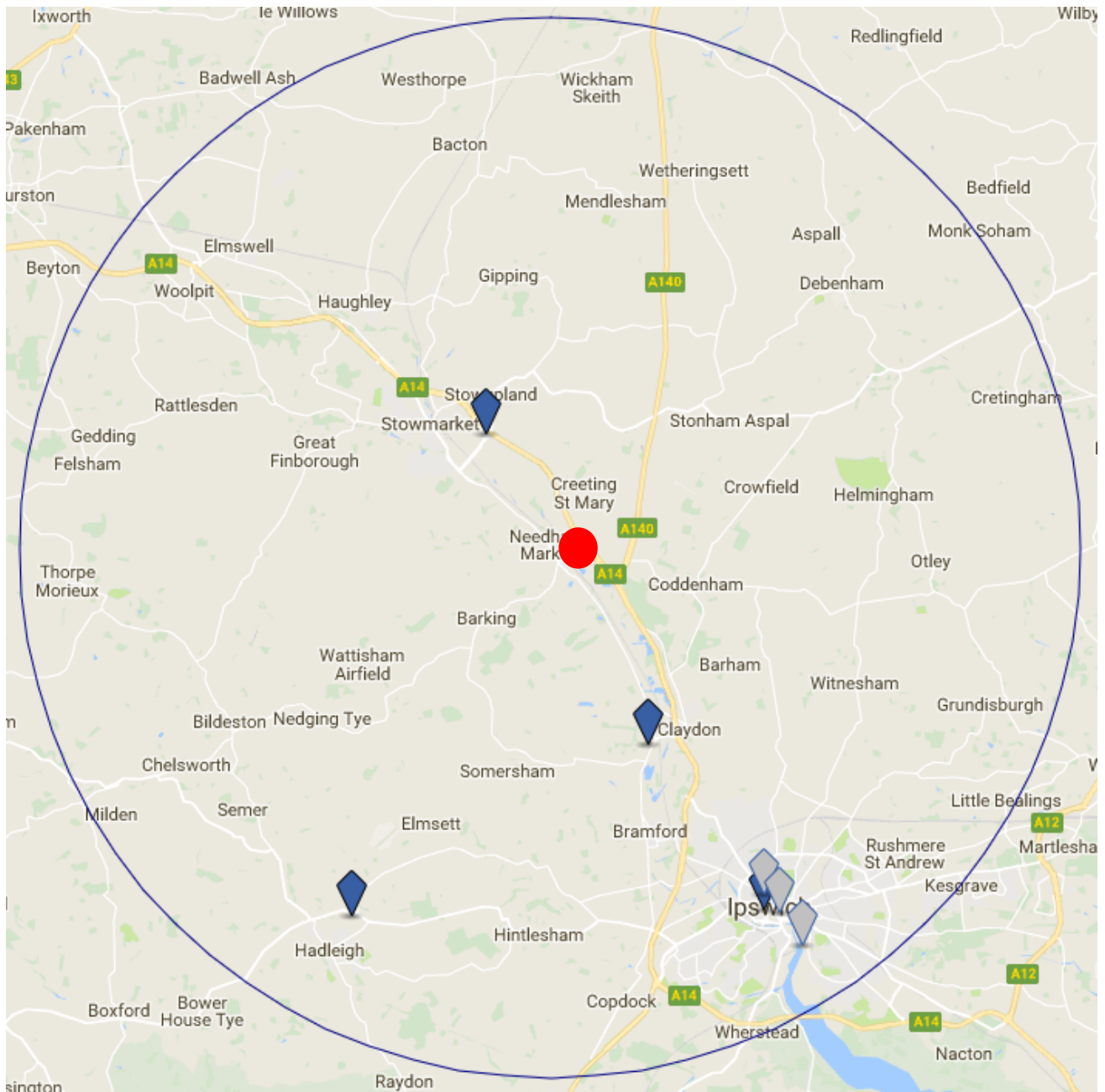


Figure 13 – Office Space that is Proposed or Under Construction

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

Note – Not all property markers are shown on the map

The level of availability within the area has risen slightly since 2016 (228,605 sq. ft.) and has started to return to levels of recent peaks – as per 2014 where circa 324,432 sq. ft. was available. This rise in available office space indicates a decline in demand for office space with little change throughout 2017 and 2018 (to date).

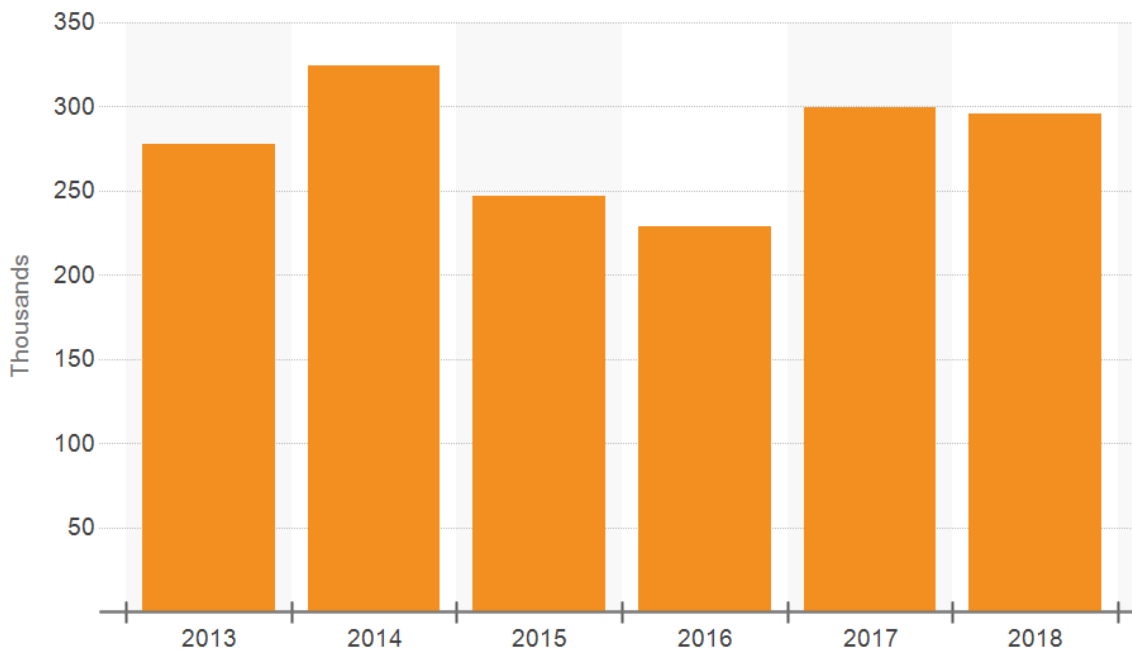


Figure 14 – Existing Office Availability – Needham Market + 10 miles

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 7.2% in the current quarter from a recent 5 year low in Q4 2016 of 5.6%.

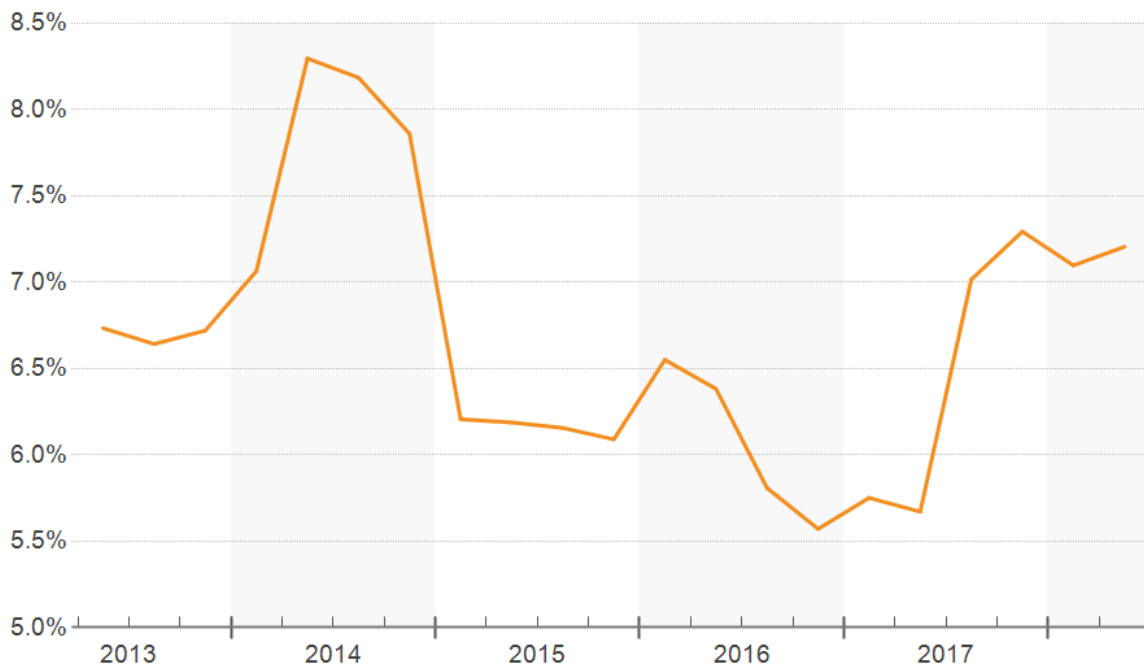


Figure 15 – Office Availability Rate – Needham Market + 10 miles

6.2.3 Office Leasing Demand

In 2015 around 39,027 sq. ft. was let (as seen in Figure 16) which was followed by two years of similar better results with 53,827 sq. ft. in 2016 and 59,325 sq. ft. in 2017. This compares to the five year average of 48,115 sq. ft.

Over the last 5 years circa 295,000 sq. ft. has been leased with 127 deals recorded of between 100 sq. ft. and 19,966 sq. ft. resulting in an average deal size of 2,322 sq. ft.

The vast majority of office demand in the area has been at the lower end of the market with 87% of office deals taking less than 5,000 sq. ft. in any one deal.

There have only been 6 deals of 10,000 sq. ft. or over the last 5 years (all of which occurred in Ipswich – further confirming its dominance within the regional office market) including:

- **Elm House and Elm Court, 25 Elm Street, Ipswich:** 19,966 sq. ft. leased in September 2015.
- **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
- **Suffolk Enterprise Centre, Felaw Street, Ipswich:** 14,726 sq. ft. leased in December 2016
- **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

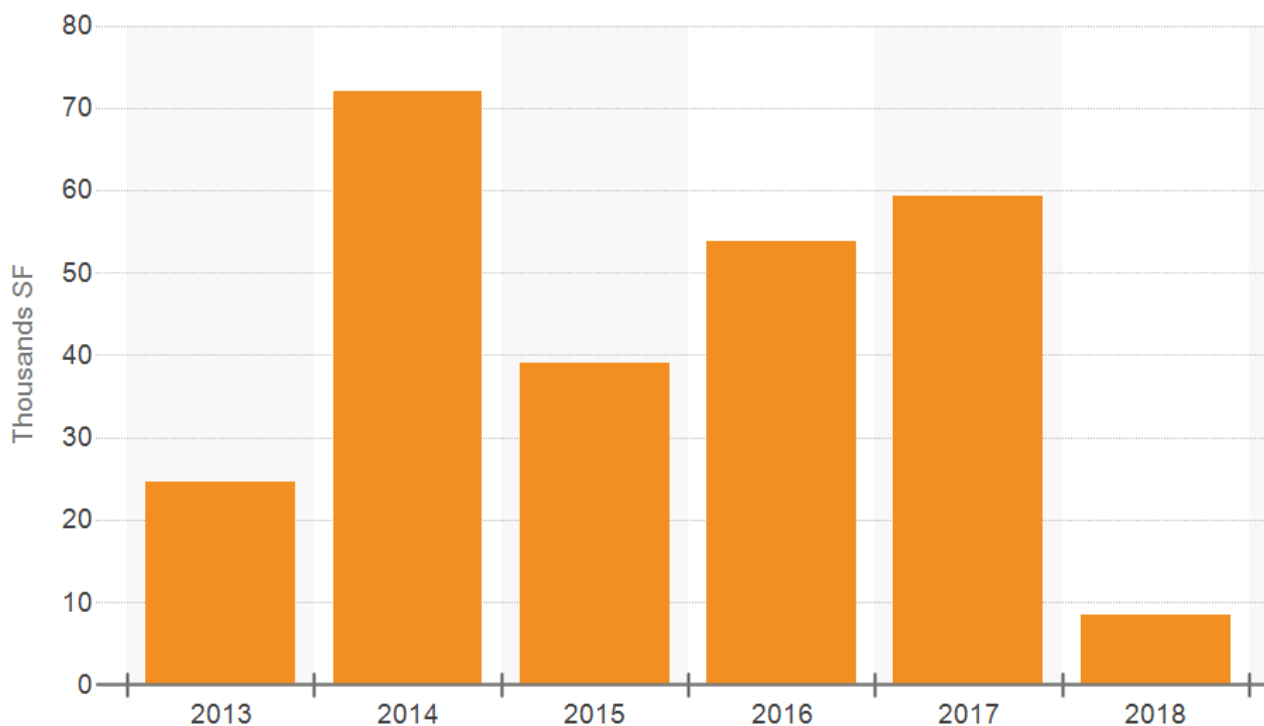


Figure 16 – Office Deals Done – Needham Market + 10 miles

As is evident in Figure 17, the vast majority of leasing activity occurring over the last 5 years has occurred around Ipswich. The only deals to occur in close proximity to Needham Market were small in scale and included the disposal of 680 sq. ft. at Norfolk House, Williamsport Way back in November 2014. The next closest disposals were in Claydon (761 sq. ft. to 3,500 sq. ft.) and Stowmarket (100 – 476 sq. ft.).

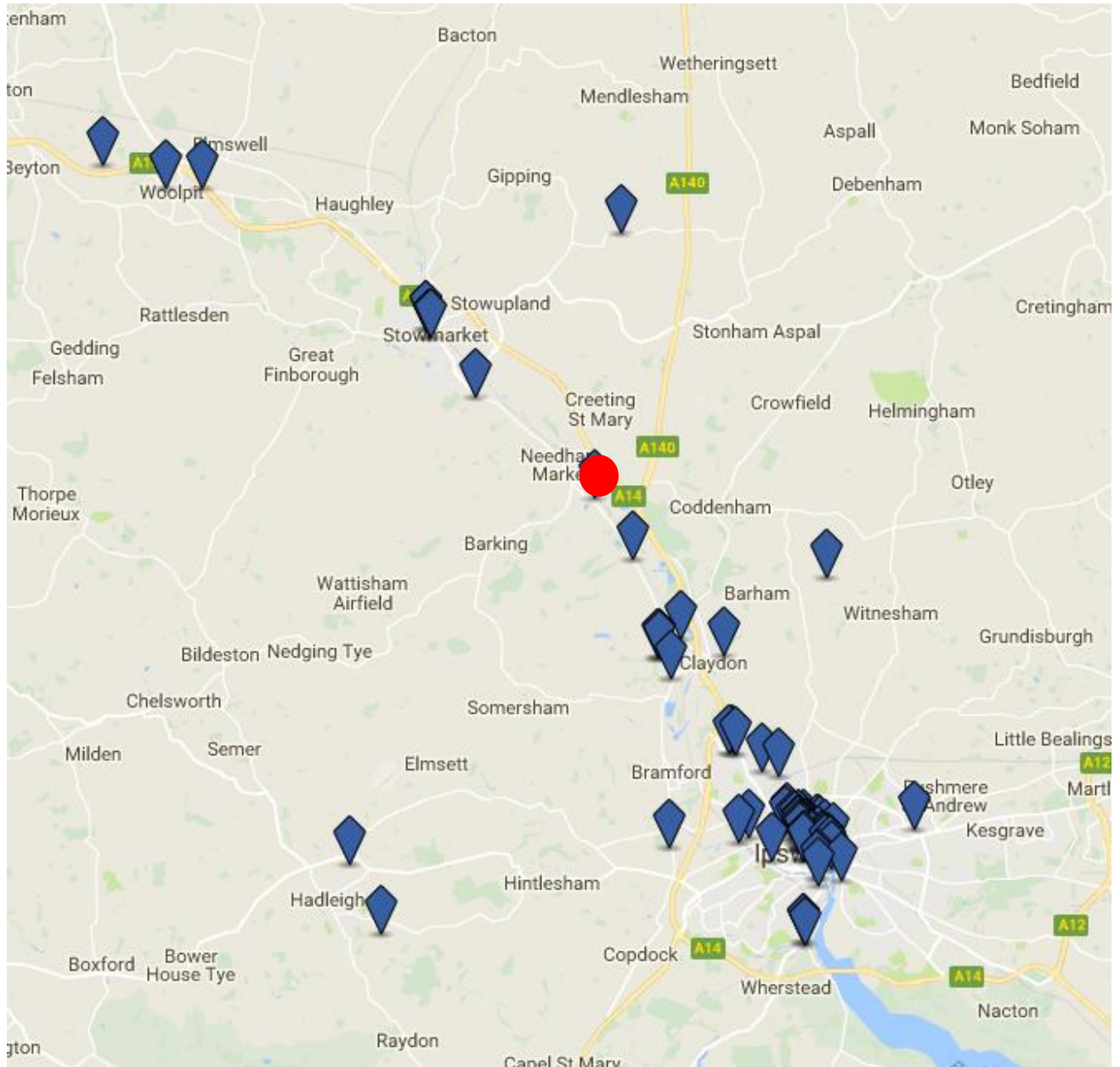


Figure 17 – Office Deals Done – Needham Market + 10 miles

Over the last 5 years, offices have remained on the market for 16.4 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 11 months (as per Figure 18).

The average number of months a property is on the market for has generally fallen since Q4 2015 (despite a rise in Q3 2016) mirroring the level of demand for space over the last couple of years across this search area.

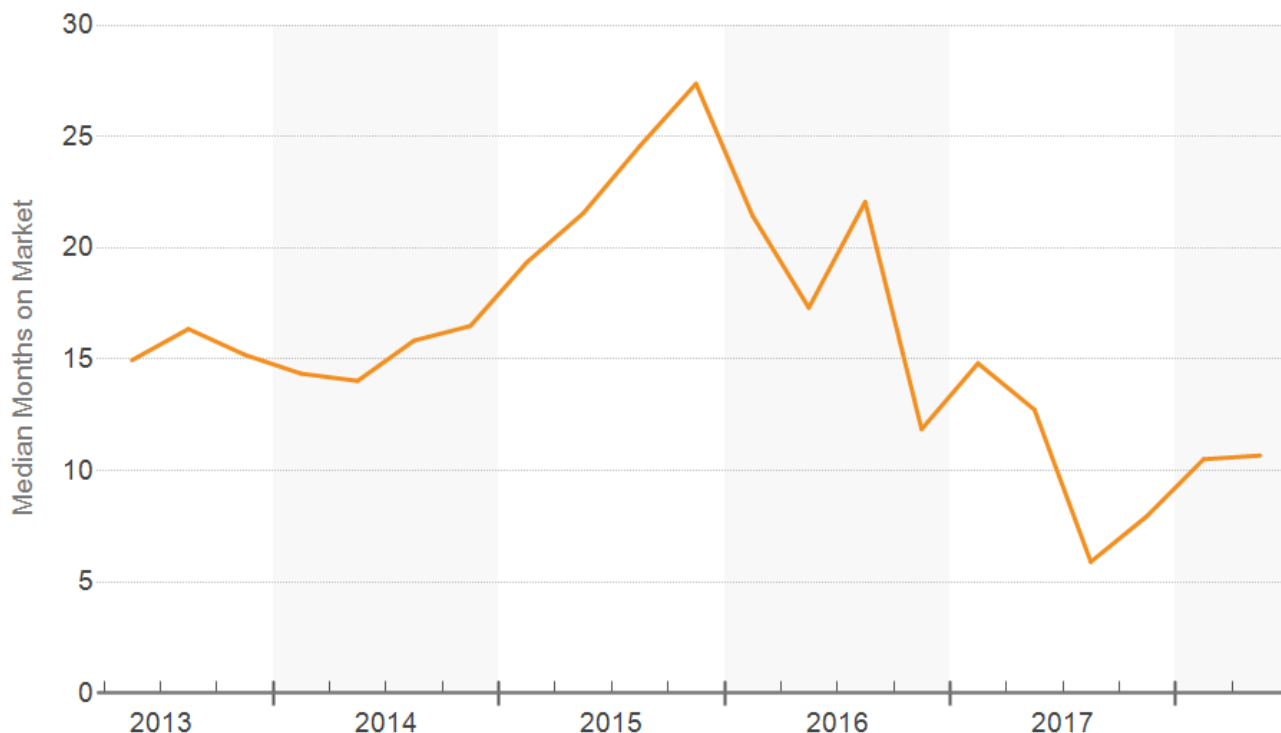


Figure 18 – Average Number of Months of the Market - Needham Market + 10 miles

6.2.4 Office Rents

Average asking rents in the area are currently around £10.92 per sq. ft. which is a slight improvement following on from a recent low in Q1 2015 of £9.06 per sq. ft.

Average achieved rents, by comparison, currently stand at around £8.16 per sq. ft. with net effective rents around £7.86 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.

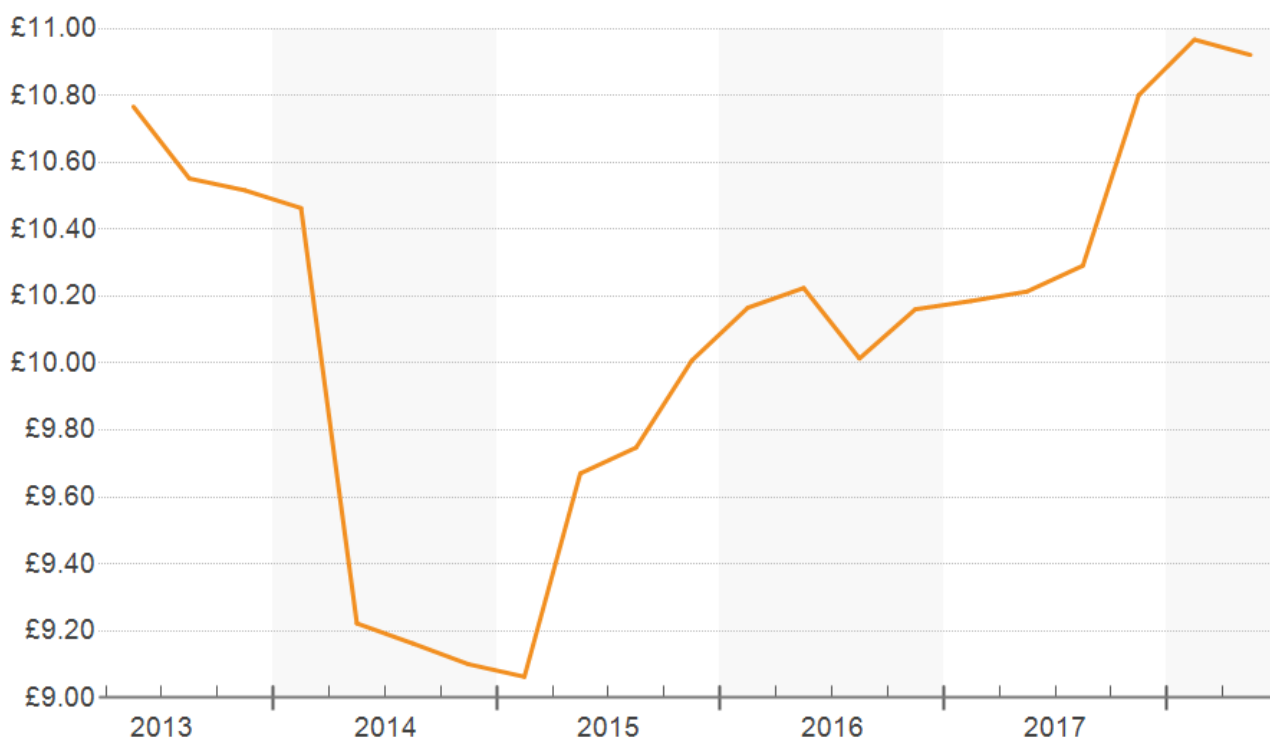


Figure 19 – Average Office Asking Rents – Needham Market + 10 miles

6.2.5 Office Occupiers

Within 10 miles of the town there are around 302 known office occupiers in 182 buildings although there are only 37 that occupy more than 5,000 sq. ft. in 29 buildings.

Of these larger occupiers there are only 28 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 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. 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.

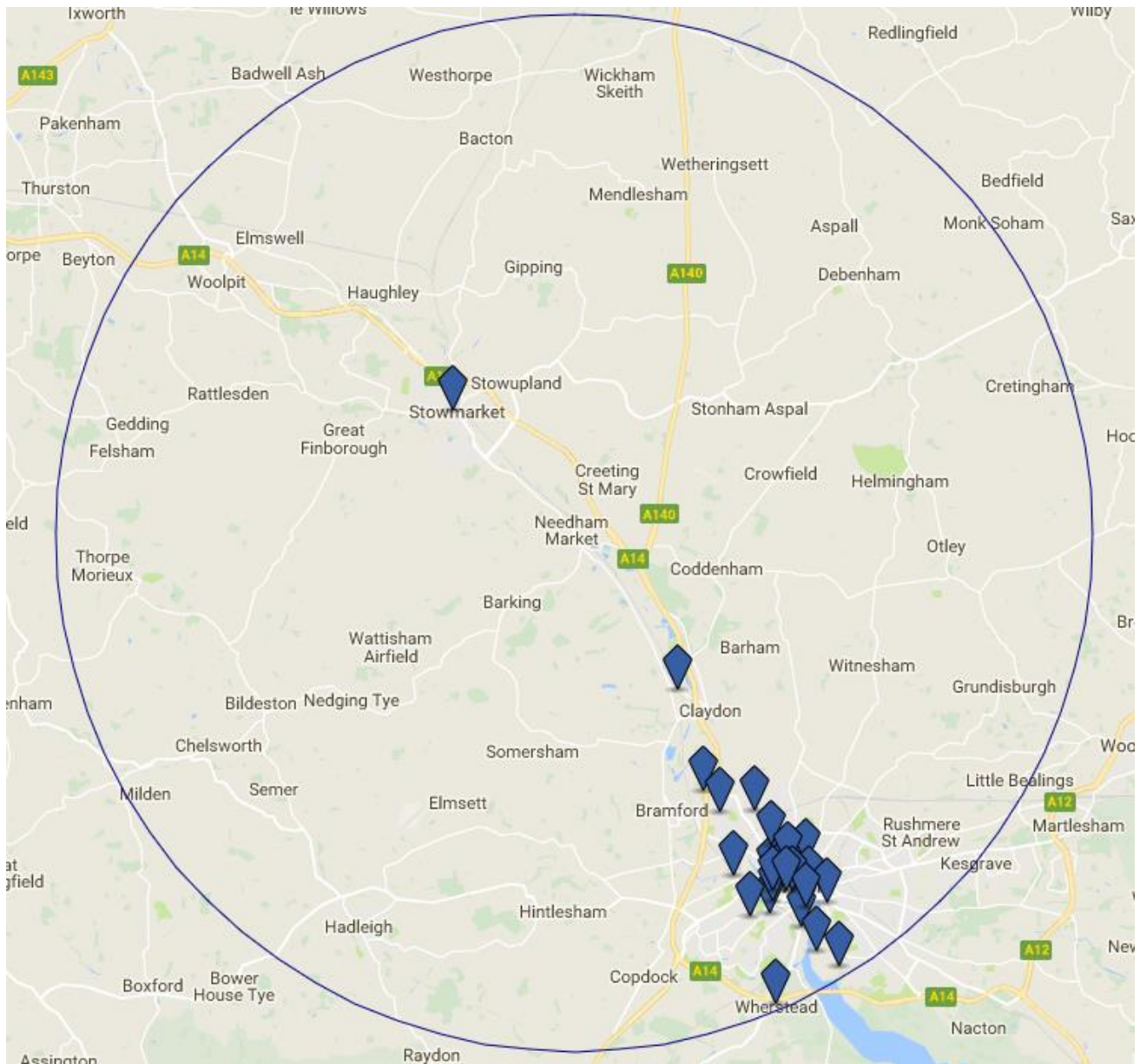


Figure 20 – Known Office Occupiers of more than 5,000 Sq. Ft. of Space

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

Company Name	Building Name	Address	City	SF Occupied	Industry Type
Willis Limited		15 Friars St	Ipswich	188,314	Insurance
Eastern Electricity	Suffolk House	Civic Dr	Ipswich	60,000	
Birketts	Birketts	Princes St	Ipswich	50,000	Law Firms
Nwes Property Services	Suffolk Enterprise Centre	Felaw St	Ipswich	30,373	Real Estate
ISG Plc	Jackson House	Eight-Six Sandyhill Ln	Ipswich	25,781	Business Services
Prettys	Elm House & Elm Court	25 Elm St	Ipswich	19,966	Law Firms
Scrutton Bland	Fitzroy House	3 Crown St	Ipswich	15,792	Accountants
MLM Group Ltd	North Maltings & Kiln	Felaw St	Ipswich	14,971	Engineers/Architects
Flowgroup plc	Suffolk Enterprise Centre	Felaw St	Ipswich	14,726	Agri / Mining / Utilities
Gotelee Solicitors		31-41 Elm St	Ipswich	11,496	Law Firms
Hope Church	Highland House	114 Fore Hamlet	Ipswich	10,450	Personal Services
Derivco Ipswich	Crown House	Crown St	Ipswich	10,000	Business Services
Atkins Ltd	Beacon House	53-65 White House Rd	Ipswich	9,166	Engineers /Architects
Killik & Company LLP	Crown House	Crown St	Ipswich	9,000	Financial Institutions
Crown Mortgage Management Ltd	Crown House	Crown St	Ipswich	8,901	Personal Services
Direct Line Group Ltd		31 Princes St	Ipswich	8,371	Insurance
WS Training Ltd		37-43 Fore St	Ipswich	8,251	Business Services
Ludologic Ltd	Crown House	Crown St	Ipswich	8,000	Computers/Data Processing
New India Assurance Company	Crown House	Crown St	Ipswich	8,000	Financial Institutions
Larking Gowen Group		Claydon Business Park	Ipswich	7,440	Accountants
Sharedband Ltd		40-50 Princes St	Ipswich	7,230	Communications
Savills		40-50 Princes St	Ipswich	6,150	Real Estate
Suffolk Constabulary		10-10a Museum St	Ipswich	6,096	Government
Netscout	Fraser House	23 Museum St	Ipswich	5,550	Computers/Data Processing
Turning Point	Sanderson House	17-19 Museum St	Ipswich	5,536	Personal Services
Suffolk Chamber of Commerce	Suffolk Enterprise Centre	Felaw St	Ipswich	5,438	Government
Craft Media	St Vincent House	1 Cutler St	Ipswich	5,400	Business Services
MyGo	Fraser House	23 Museum St	Ipswich	5,295	Business Services

6.2.6 Office Market Analysis – Conclusion

Needham Market as an office location pales into insignificance when compared to Ipswich which clearly dominates the regional supply of and demand for office space. This is partly due to its scale and established supply of good quality office space but also accessibility (train station / better road connections) as well as the extent of available amenities, all of which are sought-after by office occupiers.

Although Ipswich is a relatively strong regional centre servicing a cluster of local businesses, it is evident that the office market in the wider area has remained relatively flat over the last 5 years with little change in demand and supply seen (only 30,000 sq. ft. less space currently available by comparison to the 5 year average). This is further compounded by the absence of proposed office space in the area with only 106,000 sq. ft. in the pipeline (in other words circa 2.5% of the existing office stock) and the amount of time that newly refurbished stock has remained on the market post completion (Berkeley Business Centre, for instance, was fully refurbished in August 2016 however still remains fully available). These two factors clearly reflect a lack of confidence in the amount of demand for good quality office space in the area.

This lack of demand for newly refurbished and proposed office space also extends to second hand office stock. Office suites within the four properties currently available in the local market which offer a similar amount of combined office space to the subject property have remained available on the market for an average of 42 months (3.5 years) (although some suites within these buildings have been available for up to 103 months (8.5+ years)). This is despite their more attractive location (all are in close proximity to Ipswich town centre and the railway station) and reasonable asking rents / terms in general. This is by no means a micro trend linked to these buildings alone. The average time that all office suites (second hand / refurbished / proposed) have remained on the market over the whole 10 mile radius from the property in the last 5 years has been recorded at over 16 months.

Although take up of office space in the last couple of years has improved slightly on the 5 year annual take up levels but only marginally (circa 8,500 sq. ft. per annum more, on average, in 2016 / 2017 by comparison to the 5 year average) the average deal size remains small with only 2,322 sq. ft. leased by transaction. Nearly 90% of office deals in the area involved the disposal of 5,000 sq. ft. or less. The subject property alone represents around 9 months' worth of office supply for the local area with around 15 to 22 individual leasehold disposals required to fill it (based on average deal sizes for the area) over at least a 16 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 (again reinforcing the appeal of Ipswich over alternative locations in the immediate area), 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 £10.92 per sq. ft.) following a recent dip to circa £9.00 per sq. ft. in 2015, although average achieved rents are closer to £8.16 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 28 occupiers that could, based on their industry type, be considered suitable for the space. However as they are all located in Ipswich, it is highly likely that it will be impossible to build an attractive enough proposition for relocation away from easily accessible public transport, additional office occupiers and local amenities. 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.

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 16 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 allow for the refurbishment / subdivision of space (which will certainly be required when considering the average deal sizes occurring) as asking rents 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.

Although the property is well situated within the town with good accessibility to local facilities 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 4,528 residents in the town with the wider catchment area primarily made up of small villages (before larger towns are reached including Stowmarket 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 Heathcare: 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.

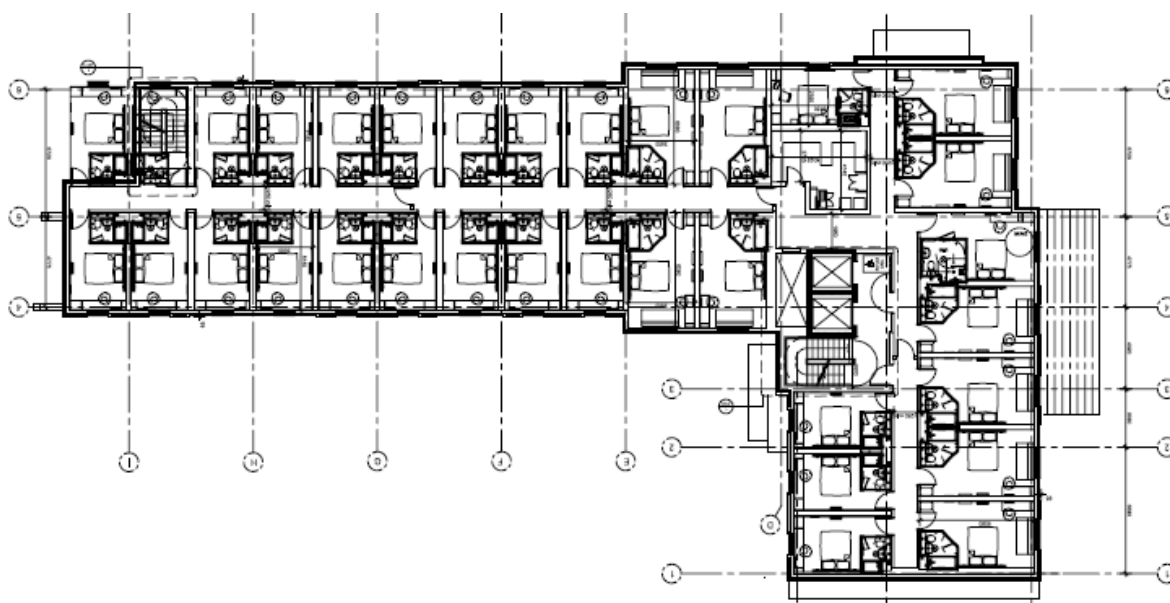


Figure 21 - Typical Floorplan - Travelodge Hotel

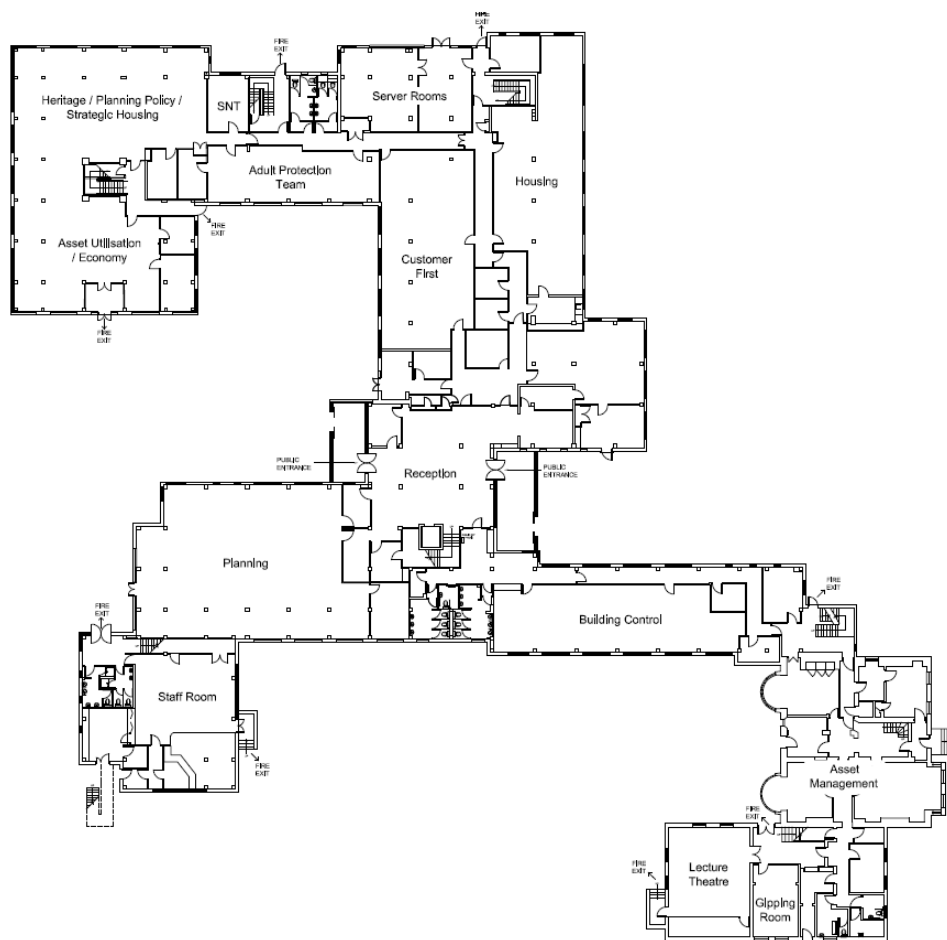


Figure 22 – Ground Floor of Subject Property

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 Needham Market considered too small a location to warrant another hotel; particularly with the new Stowmarket hotel capturing a lot of the local demand (including Needham Market within this catchment).

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, Stowmarket 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 one Grade II listed building with a large two-storey side extension and is partly within a Conservation Area. The former Council Offices building, which links to the listed building with a significant post war extension, was designed and developed in the early 1980's for the sole use of the District Council. There have been subsequent modifications made to the property which mainly related to the internal configuration.

6.4.3 Building Configuration & Divisibility

The building is arranged on a rough figure floor plate (i.e. irregular in shape and layout), generally open plan with limited communication, escape stairs and welfare areas clustered in central areas. The footprint of the total building is arranged on the approximate basis of:

- Gross internal area of 4,350 m² (46,824 sq. ft.)

With the net lettable area broken down as:

- Ground floor – 1,750 m² (18,838 sq. ft.)
- First floor – 1,778 m² (19,139 sq. ft.)
- Second floor – 202 m² (2,174 sq. ft.)

As stated previously, the building was designed for single tenant occupation. Therefore, consideration would have to be put towards the physical separation of the space to accommodate multiple occupiers whilst providing suitable facilities, services, circulation spaces and access.

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 it stands there is a non-lettable area percentage of approximately 15% which is in line with other buildings that were designed for single occupancy. This percentage will increase once the unique features within the building are taken into account including the council chamber, lecture theatre and staff room which are not considered suitable for commercial letting.

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 85% to 60%; 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 22 suites. As such, 22 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.
- Guttering and rainwater goods overhaul.
- Failed glazing.
- Glazing and joinery details.
- Brickwork and masonry details.
- Boundary walls.

Internally the space looks tired 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 building extension was constructed in 1980 and 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 is gas fired.
- The building lacks any heat recovery.

A copy of the building's Display Energy Certificate has been provided which identifies the fact that the office has a rating of D (86). The rating is relatively low and is well below the expected standards of construction today. The most recent EPC have been requested.

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 Mid Suffolk Development Plan contains policies which seek to retain employment uses, with any planning application for a change of use or redevelopment of an existing premises to non-employment generating uses expected to provide a significant benefit for the surrounding environment in terms of improved residential amenity and traffic safety. Furthermore, the Core Strategy policy makes provision for additional jobs in the district and states that sites and premises will be made available for employment uses in the district's towns.

Paragraph 22 of the NPPF, however, advises that planning policies should avoid the retention of land for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of it being used for that purpose.

The report has highlighted a number of factors that make the continued use of the property, and site in general, unsuitable and unviable for employment related (specifically office, care home and hotel) uses. These include:

- The fact that the property is poorly located with unfavourable age and qualification related demographic statistics - for B1 Class Uses
- 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 for reuse/ conversion to office, care home and hotel uses

Property Location / Demographics

The property is located in a market town setting and in a primarily residential area although it does have a wide range of services / facilities. Access is restricted primarily to 'B roads' although regional A roads are relatively close by. This is supplemented by bus and rail links to the higher-tier settlements of Ipswich and Stowmarket.

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 and adjacent to a 65+ 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 22 individual lettings to fill the property.

The amount of office space in question represents about 9 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, 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 the 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.

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.

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES REDEVELOPMENT - DRAFT PLANNING PROJECT PROGRAMME (11th May 2018)

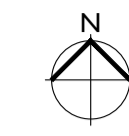
Preferred Option: Residential & retail (convenience goods) uses

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	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 w/c 13.8.18)																												
*10	Determination of planning & listed building applications - Grant PP, LBC & S106 Completion																												19.11.18
Scheme Design (Purcell):																													
*11	Retail option development																												
12	Scheme revisions following Council's pre-application advice																												
13	Preparation of Design & Access Statement																												
14	DAS revisions following LPP review																												
Flood Risk & Drainage (MLM):																													
15	Preparation of FRA & Drainage Report																												
16	Updates following LPP review																												
Heritage & Archaeology (Purcell):																													
17	Updating of HIA following pre-application advice																												
Transport (WSP):																													
18	Preparation of Transport Statement																												
19	Updates following LPP review																												
Ecology (Adonis):																													
20	Breeding Bird Surveys (March to June)																												
21	Bat Surveys (May to September)																												
22	Preparation of Ecological Impact Assessment & Mitigation report																												
Site Investigation/ Contamination (REC Ltd):																													
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	Preparation of Utilities Report																												
Noise & Lighting Assessments (Sharps Redmore & Ingleton Wood)																													
28	Preparation of Noise & Lighting Assessments																												
29	Updates following LPP review																												
Costings & Viability Assessments (MRA & Hoggarth Cooke):																													
*30	Preparation of costings & viability reports (Toolkit Viability Assessment)																												
31	Updates during determination period to take account of S106 & negotiation																												
Key Dates:																													
32	Cabinet Briefing 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)																												

Notes:
There are no elections scheduled for 2018

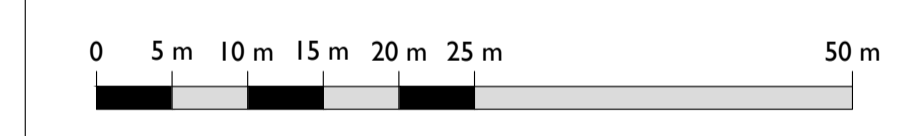
Risks/ Notes
 *4 Publicised events held at Needham Market Community Café on 4th & 8th April 2018 (3pm - 8pm)
 *10 assumes determination at the local level - LPA to confirm which DC committee will be determining the applications - Requirements for referral to Sec of State tbc
 *10 A/B -Babergh/ Mid Suffolk Development Control Committees A & B
 *11 Council's passing of Retail Sequential Test awaited
 *30 A separate Employment Viability Report has been prepared by Carter Jonas to address local plan employment retention policies

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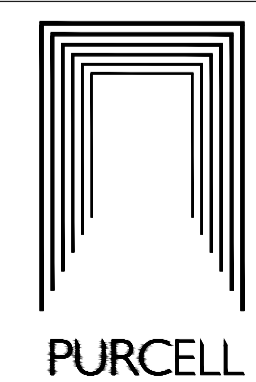
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Key Plan
 not to scale



ISSUE	DATE	DRAWN	CHECKED	DESCRIPTION
First Issue	11 May 2018	EL	PB	
CLIENT		Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils		
PROJECT		Redevelopment of MSDC Offices		
DRAWING TITLE		Ground Floor Masterplan		
SIZE & SCALE		A1L	1:500	
DRAWING STATUS	ISSUED FOR COMMENT			

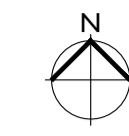
JOB NUMBER 238094
DRAWING NO. 200
REVISION -



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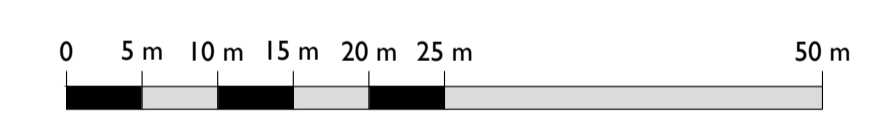


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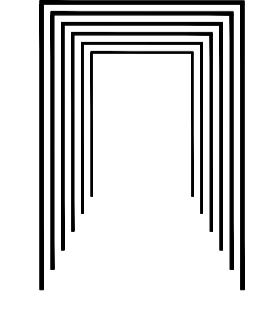
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First Issue 11 May 2018	EL	PB		
ISSUE	DATE	DRAWN	CHECKED	DESCRIPTION
CLIENT		Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils		
PROJECT		Redevelopment of MSDC Offices		
DRAWING TITLE		First Floor Masterplan		
SIZE & SCALE		A1L	1:500	
DRAWING STATUS	ISSUED FOR COMMENT			

I First Floor - Masterplan
201 1:500 @ A1

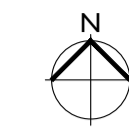
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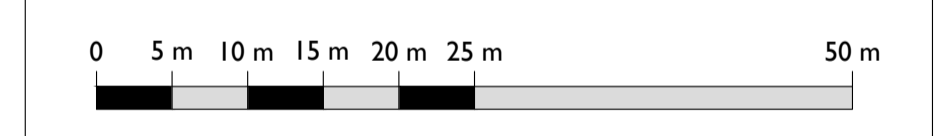
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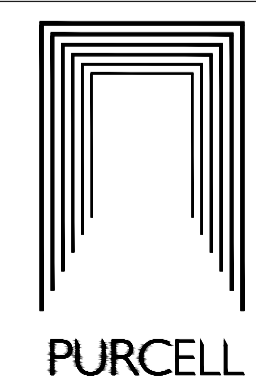
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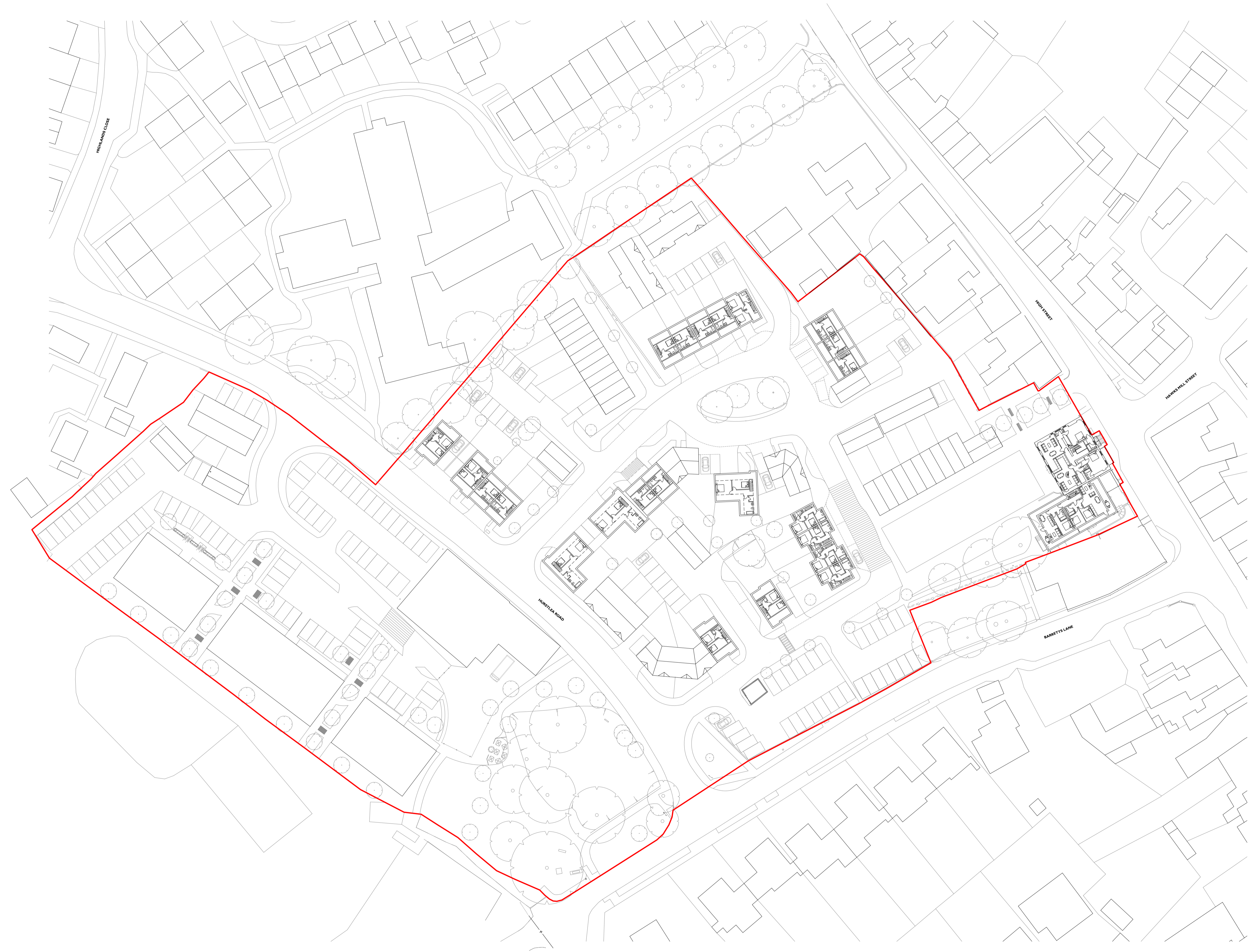
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First Issue	11 May 2018	EL	PB	
CLIENT		Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils		
PROJECT		Redevelopment of MSDC Offices		
DRAWING TITLE		Second Floor Masterplan		
SIZE & SCALE		A1L	1:500	
DRAWING STATUS		ISSUED FOR COMMENT		

JOB NUMBER 238094
DRAWING NO. 202
REVISION -

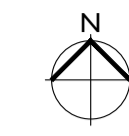


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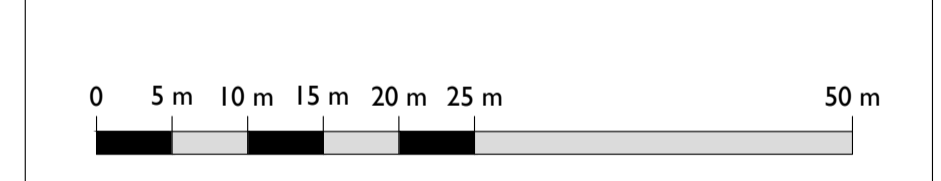


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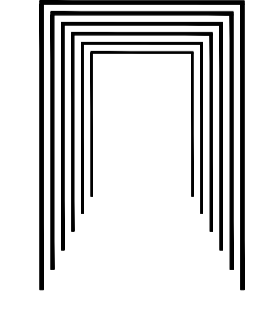
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ISSUE	DATE	DRAWN	CHECKED	DESCRIPTION
First Issue	11 May 2018	EL	PB	
CLIENT	Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils			
PROJECT	Redevelopment of MSDC Offices			
DRAWING TITLE	Third Floor Masterplan			
SIZE & SCALE	A1L 1:500			
DRAWING STATUS	ISSUED FOR COMMENT			

JOB NUMBER 238094
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Agenda Item 13

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Agenda Item 14

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