



TO: THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF  
BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

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12 September 2016

## PLEASE NOTE TIME OF MEETING

Dear Sir/Madam

A Meeting of the Babergh District Council will be held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Corks Lane, Hadleigh on **Tuesday, 20 September 2016 at 5:30 p.m.**

For those wishing to attend, prayers will be said at 5:25 p.m. prior to the commencement of the Council meeting.

Yours faithfully

Deputy Chief Executive

The Council, members of the public and the press may record/film/photograph or broadcast this meeting when the public and the press are not lawfully excluded.

Any member of the public who attends a meeting and objects to being filmed should advise the Committee Clerk who will instruct that they are not included in the filming.





## PART I

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies for absence.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Members to declare any interests as appropriate in respect of items to be considered at this meeting.

3 MINUTES

To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2016 as a correct record (copy attached).

4 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Paper  
S58

In addition to any announcements made at the meeting, please see Paper S58 attached, detailing events attended by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

5 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

6 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Members of the public are able to ask a question or make a statement during this item – please refer to the 'Guide to the Procedure' – copy available on request.

Prior written notice of the intention to speak must be given to the Monitoring Officer by no later than 5.00 p.m. on Thursday, 15 September 2016 (two clear working days before the meeting).

7 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 15

The Chairmen of Committees to answer any questions from the public of which notice has been given no later than midday two clear working days before the day of the meeting in accordance with Council Procedure Rules.

8 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 16

The Chairman of the Council, the Chairmen of Committees and Sub-Committees and Lead Members to answer any questions on any matters in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affect the District of which due notice has been given in accordance with Council Procedure Rules.

9 TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF PETITIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 14

In accordance with Council Procedure Rules, the Deputy Chief Executive will report the receipt of a petition as detailed below. There can be no debate or comment on this matter at the Council meeting.

Application No. B/16/00903 - erection of 6 no. terraced two-storey dwellings; 4 no. detached two-storey dwellings; 2 no. semi-detached two-storey dwellings; and 2 no. detached three-storey dwellings with associated garages (14 no. dwellings proposed in total) (4 no. dwellings proposed as affordable housing). Construction of new estate road, footpaths, and access to Gallows Hill, land North of Castle Road, Hadleigh

Petition signed by approximately 131 residents of Babergh asking the Council to refuse the above application on the grounds of the objections made by local residents. The petition will be taken into account when the application is considered at a future meeting of the Planning Committee.

10 RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS FROM JOINT AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Changes to arrangements for appointment of External Auditors (Joint Audit and Standards Committee – 12 September 2016)

Paper  
JAC85

At its meeting on 12 September, the Joint Audit and Standards Committee considered Paper JAC85 (attached) and accepted the recommendations in the report, as set out below.

**RECOMMENDED**

**That the arrangements for appointing External Auditors at the end of the 2017/18 audit be noted.**

**That the Council opts-in to the Local Government Association (LGA) sector led body (Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA)) for the independent appointment of the Councils' External Auditor, beginning with responsibilities for the financial year 2018/19.**

11 RECRUITMENT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR – LAW AND GOVERNANCE (MONITORING OFFICER)

Paper  
S59

Report by the Assistant Director - Corporate Resources attached.

Leader of the Council – Jennie Jenkins.

12 EXTENSION OF THE APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS

Paper  
S60

Report by the Interim Assistant Director – Law and Governance attached.

Leader of the Council – Jennie Jenkins.

- 13      EAST BERGHOLT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
- Paper S61      Report by the Assistant Director – Planning for Growth attached.  
                     Business Growth and Increased Productivity Portfolio – Simon Barrett.
- 14      LAVENHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
- Paper S62      Report by the Assistant Director – Planning for Growth attached.  
                     Business Growth and Increased Productivity Portfolio – Simon Barrett.
- 15      FUTURE MODEL FOR PUBLIC ACCESS INCLUDING ACCOMMODATION
- Paper S63      Report by the Strategic Director attached.  
                     Leader of the Council – Jennie Jenkins.
- 16      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 this item, it is likely that there would be the disclosure to them of exempt information as indicated against the item.
- The author of the report proposed to be considered in Part II of the Agenda is satisfied that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.
- PART II**
- 17      FUTURE MODEL FOR PUBLIC ACCESS INCLUDING ACCOMMODATION (Exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1)
- Paper S63      Report by the Strategic Director attached.  
                     Leader of the Council – Jennie Jenkins.

For further information on any of the Part 1 items listed above, please contact Linda Sheppard on 01473 826610 or via email at [committees@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:committees@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL HELD IN  
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, CORKS LANE, HADLEIGH ON  
TUESDAY, 26 JULY 2016

PRESENT: Peter Burgoyne – Chairman

Clive Arthey	Michael Holt
Sue Ayres	Bryn Hurren
Melanie Barrett	Jennie Jenkins
Simon Barrett	Richard Kemp
Tony Bavington	James Long
Peter Beer	Margaret Maybury
Sue Burgoyne	Alastair McCraw
Tom Burrows	John Nunn
Dave Busby	Adrian Osborne
Tina Campbell	Jan Osborne
Sue Carpendale	Peter Patrick
Michael Creffield	Stephen Plumb
Siân Dawson	Nick Ridley
Alan Ferguson	David Rose
Barry Gasper	Ray Smith
Kathryn Grandon	Harriet Steer
John Hinton	Fenella Swan
David Holland	John Ward

The following Members were unable to be present:

Derek Davis, Frank Lawrenson, Mark Newman, Lee Parker, William Shropshire and Stephen Williams.

29 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Peter Beer subsequently declared a local non-pecuniary interest in [Paper S48](#) in his capacity as a Suffolk County Councillor but stated that he was able to speak and vote on the item.

30 MINUTES

**RESOLVED**

**That the Minutes of the Meeting held on [28 June 2016](#) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.**

31 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman referred to [Paper S46](#) outlining recent events attended by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

32 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

There were no questions or statements from the public.

33 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None received.

34 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

35 PETITIONS

In accordance with Council Procedure Rules, the Chief Executive reported the receipt of a petition as detailed below:-

Planning Application No B/16/00750/FUL

Full application – erection of 2 detached 2-story dwellings. Erection of detached double garage serving Plot 1 and alterations to existing vehicular access (following demolition of existing buildings) barn and land on north west side of Gents Lane, Shimpling.

Petition signed by 56 residents of the Babergh District asking the Council to determine the outcome of the above application at an open session of the Planning Committee. The petition included a reference to the proposed development being 'highly controversial' as the reason given for this request.

Receipt of the petition was reported to the Planning Committee on 13 July when Members were informed that the Ward Member had called for a decision on the application to be referred to Planning Committee. It is currently anticipated that the application would be determined by Committee on 24 August 2016 and the lead petitioner had been advised accordingly.

Members noted the position.

36 PRESENTATION BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

Peter Maddison, Lead Commissioner and Richard Buck, Review Manager for the Local Government Boundary Commission for England were in attendance at the meeting and gave a short presentation outlining the context for an Electoral Review along with a detailed explanation of the statutory process and indicative timeline for a review. Members then had the opportunity to ask questions on the review process, outline timetable and role for Councillors. Copies of the presentation slides were circulated to all Members.

Following the question and answer session, the Chairman thanked Peter and Richard before moving to consideration of [Paper S47](#).

37 ELECTORAL REVIEW FOR BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

Jennie Jenkins, Leader, introduced Paper S47, seeking Member approval for The Local Government Boundary Commission for England to carry out an Electoral Review for Babergh District Council alongside Mid Suffolk District Council.



Charlie Adan answered Members' questions on the timing of the Review and the resource implications for the Council. Members were advised that much of the data which would be needed was already held by the Council or would be provided through complementary work for the Strategic Suffolk/devolution, public services transformation agendas.

**RESOLVED**

**That The Local Government Boundary Commission for England be requested to carry out an Electoral Review for Babergh District Council alongside Mid Suffolk District Council.**

38 DESIGNATION OF HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

Jennie Jenkins, Leader, introduced [Paper S48](#), seeking Member approval to designate an officer as the acting Head of Paid Service for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils, with effect from 4 August 2016, for the intervening period before a permanent Joint Chief Executive is appointed. She informed Members that Deborah Cadman, Chief Executive for Suffolk County Council, was the candidate recommended by the Task and Finish Group for this position.

Suki Binjal, Monitoring Officer, drew Members' attention to an error in paragraph 10.1 of Paper S48, in that the current Joint Chief Executive will be leaving her position on 3 August 2016, and not 31 July 2016 as stated. She also clarified the procedure for the approval of Head of Paid Service appointments which must now be made in open session, following changes to the rules regarding such appointments.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) That Deborah Cadman, Chief Executive for Suffolk County Council, as recommended by the Task and Finish Group for designation as the Acting Head of Paid Service for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils be approved to undertake the statutory role, with effect from 4 August 2016, pending the appointment of a permanent Joint Chief Executive.**
- (2) That the Monitoring Officer be given delegated authority to make any required changes to the Council's Constitution resulting from Resolution (1) above.**
- (3) That the designated Acting Head of Paid Service be approved as the Proper Officer under S270(3) of the Local Government Act 1972.**
- (4) That the Deputy Chief Executive be designated as the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer.**

At this point the meeting adjourned for a short comfort break.

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

**RESOLVED**

**That pursuant to Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the business specified below on the grounds that if the public were present during this item, it is likely that there would be the disclosure to them of exempt information as indicated against the item.**

**The Committee was also satisfied that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.**

40 RECOMMENDATION AND REPORT FROM STRATEGY COMMITTEE (14 July 2016)

New Anglia 'Space to Innovate' Enterprise Zone – Sproughton Enterprise Park Site (Exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1)

The Minute relating to the above-mentioned item is excluded from the public record. A summary of the Minute made by the Proper Officer in accordance with sub-section 2 of Section 100(c) of the Local Government Act 1972 is set out below.

Jennie Jenkins, Chairman of Strategy Committee, introduced the recommendations of the Strategy Committee as contained in Paper S49. Members also had before them Paper S44 (previously considered by the Strategy Committee). Officers responded to questions raised by Members.

The recommendations in the report were accepted.

The public and press were re-admitted to the meeting at this point.

41 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chief Executive

Jennie Jenkins referred to Charlie Adan's final Babergh meeting and Members showed their appreciation for her contribution over the last 5 years with a round of applause. Charlie responded by thanking Members and officers for their support during turbulent times and wished the Council well for the future.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 7.20 p.m.

.....  
Chairman

				<b>S58</b>
<b>CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS - COUNCIL 20 SEPTEMBER 2016</b>				
<b>EVENT</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>CHAIRMAN</b>	<b>VICE CHAIR</b>
<b>JULY 2016</b>				
<b>Cocktail Party &amp; Beating Retreat Ceremony</b>	Wattisham Flying Station Officers' Mess	28-Jul	✓	
<b>SEPTEMBER 2016</b>				
<b>Chairman's Drinks Reception</b>	Wherstead Park, Wherstead	07-Sep	✓	
<b>Suffolk County Council Reading Challenge Presentation</b>	Chantry Library, Ipswich	08-Sep	✓	
<b>Waveney and Beccles Joint Civic Service</b>	The Church of St Michael the Archangel, Beccles	11-Sep	✓	
<b>Brick Laying Ceremony, New Build Council Housing Scheme</b>	Meadow Close, Lavenham	13-Sep	✓	
<b>Battle of Britain Commemoration &amp; Thanksgiving Service</b>	St Mary's Church, Bury St Edmunds,	18-Sep	✓	
<b>Stowmarket Town Civic Service</b>	St Peter & St Mary's Church, Stowmarket	18-Sep	✓	

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# Agenda Item 10

## BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL and MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>From: Assistant Director – Corporate Resources</b>	<b>Report Number: JAC85</b>
<b>To: Joint Audit and Standards Committee</b>	<b>Date of meeting: 12 September 2016</b>

### CHANGES TO ARRANGEMENTS FOR APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS

#### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report summarises the changes to the arrangements for appointing External Auditors, following the closure of the Audit Commission and the end of the transitional arrangements, at the conclusion of the 2017/18 audits.
- 1.2 The Councils' will need to consider the options available and put in place new arrangements in time to make a first appointment by 31 December 2017.

#### 2. Recommendation to Council

- 2.1 That the arrangements for appointing External Auditors at the end of the 2017/18 audit be noted.
- 2.2 That the Council opts-in to the Local Government Association (LGA) sector led body (Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA)) for the independent appointment of the Councils' External Auditor, beginning with responsibilities for the financial year 2018/19.

#### 3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 External audit fee levels are likely to increase when the current contracts end in 2018.
- 3.2 There are some costs associated with the procurement, regardless of the route chosen, but it is reasonable to assume that these will be lower under the LGA Sector Led Body (SLB) approach. The cost of establishing a local or joint Auditor Panel will include the cost of recruiting independent appointees (members), servicing the Panel, running a bidding and tender evaluation process, letting a contract and paying members fees and allowances.
- 3.3 Opting-in to a national SLB provides maximum opportunity to limit the extent of any increases in audit fees by entering in to a large scale collective procurement arrangement and would remove the costs of establishing an Auditor Panel.

#### 4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 Section 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the Act) requires a relevant authority to appoint a local auditor to audit its accounts for a financial year not later than 31 December in the preceding year.

- 4.2 Section 8 governs the procedure for appointment including that the authority must consult and take account of the advice of its auditor panel on the selection and appointment of a local auditor. Section 7 and Schedule 3 provides that where a relevant authority is a local authority operating executive arrangements, the function of appointing a local auditor to audit its accounts is not the responsibility of an executive of the authority under those arrangements.
- 4.3 Section 12 makes provision for the failure to appoint a local auditor: the authority must immediately inform the Secretary of State, who may direct the authority to appoint the auditor named in the direction or appoint a local auditor on behalf of the authority.
- 4.4 Section 17 gives the Secretary of State the power to make regulations in relation to an 'appointing person' specified by the Secretary of State. This power has been exercised in the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015 (SI 192) and this gives the Secretary of State the ability to enable a Sector Led Body to become the appointing person.

## **5. Risk Management**

- 5.1 There is no immediate risk to the Councils, however, early consideration by the Councils of its preferred approach will enable detailed planning to take place so as to achieve successful transition to the new arrangement in a timely and efficient manner.
- 5.2 Providing the LGA with a decision will enable the LGA to invest, or not, in developing appropriate arrangements to support the Councils.
- 5.3 The disadvantages/risks of each option are described within the report.

## **6. Consultations**

- 6.1 The Section 151 Officers and Heads of Audit across the Suffolk authorities recently met with a representative from the LGA to discuss the three options.

## **7. Equality Analysis**

- 7.1 There are no equality implications associated with this report.

## **8. Shared Service / Partnership Implications**

- 8.1 The Suffolk local authorities collectively expressed the desire to the LGA that the same auditor be appointed across the county under the SLB option to replicate the current position.

## **9. Links to Joint Strategic Plan**

- 9.1 The appointment of an External Auditor is a statutory requirement of the Councils and as such contributes towards the fitness for purpose of each Councils' governance arrangements under the Enabled and Efficient Organisation theme.

## **10. Key Information**

### **Background to the issue**

- 10.1 The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 brought to a close the Audit Commission and established transitional arrangements for the appointment of external auditors and the setting of audit fees for all local government and NHS bodies in England. On 5<sup>th</sup> October 2015 the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (CLG) determined that the transitional arrangements for local government bodies would be extended by one year to include the audit of the accounts for 2017/18.
- 10.2 The Councils' current external auditor, Ernst & Young LLP was appointed under a contract let by the Audit Commission. Following closure of the Audit Commission the contract is currently managed by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA), the transitional body set up by the LGA with delegated authority from the Secretary of State. Over recent years we have benefited from a reduction in fees in the order of 50% compared with historic levels. This has been the result of a combination of factors including new contracts negotiated nationally with the firms of auditors and savings from closure of the Audit Commission. The Council's current planned external audit fees, excluding claims and returns, for 2015/16 are £48,812 for Babergh and £43,425 for Mid Suffolk.
- 10.3 When the current transitional arrangements come to an end on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 the Councils' will be able to move to local appointment of the auditor. There are a number of routes by which this can be achieved, each with varying risks and opportunities. Current fees are based on discount rates offered by the firms in return for substantial market share. When the contracts were last negotiated nationally by the Audit Commission, they covered NHS and local government bodies and offered significant economies of scale.
- 10.4 The scope of the future audit requirements will be specified nationally. The National Audit Office (NAO) is responsible for writing the Code of Audit Practice which all firms appointed to carry out local government audits must follow. Not all accounting firms will be eligible to compete for the work, they will need to demonstrate that they have the required skills and experience and be registered with a Registered Supervising Body approved by the Financial Reporting Council. The registration process has not yet commenced and so the number of firms is not known but it is reasonable to expect that the list of eligible firms may include the top 10 or 12 firms in the country, including our current auditor. It is unlikely that small local independent firms will meet the eligibility criteria.

### **Options for local appointment of External Auditors**

- 10.5 There are three broad options open to the Councils under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the Act):

## **Option 1 – To make a stand-alone appointment**

- 10.6 In order to make a stand-alone appointment the Councils would need to set up an Auditor Panel. The members of the panel must be wholly or a majority of independent members as defined by the Act. Independent members for this purpose are independent appointees, this excludes current and former elected members (or officers) and their close families and friends. This means that elected members will not have a majority input to assessing bids and choosing which firm of accountants to award a contract for the Council's external audit. A new independent auditor appointment panel established by the Council will be responsible for selecting the auditor.

### *Advantages/benefits*

- 10.7 Setting up an auditor panel allows the Councils to take maximum advantage of the new local appointment regime and have local input to the decision.

### *Disadvantages/risks*

- 10.8 Recruitment and servicing of the Auditor Panel, running the bidding exercise and negotiating the contract is estimated by the LGA to cost in the order £15,000 plus on going expenses and allowances. It is also unclear whether the Councils will be able to attract sufficient individuals with the required skills and experience to undertake the role.
- 10.9 The Councils will not be able to take advantage of reduced fees that may be available through joint or national procurement contracts.
- 10.10 The assessment of bids and decisions on awarding contracts will be taken by independent appointees and not solely by elected members.
- 10.11 Bids may not be received as the value of the contract will be insignificant compared to that of Option 3.

## **Option 2 – Set up a Joint Auditor Panel/local joint procurement arrangements**

- 10.12 The Act enables a Council to join with other authorities to establish a joint auditor panel. Again this will need to be constituted of wholly or a majority of independent appointees (members). Further legal advice will be required on the exact constitution of such a panel having regard to the obligations of each Council under the Act and the Council would need to liaise with other local authorities to assess the appetite for such an arrangement.

### *Advantages/benefits*

- 10.13 The costs of setting up the panel, running the bidding exercise and negotiating the contract will be shared across a number of authorities.
- 10.14 There is greater opportunity for negotiating some economies of scale by being able to offer a larger combined contract value to the firms.



### *Disadvantages/risks*

- 10.15 The decision making body will be further removed from local input, with potentially no input from elected members, where a wholly independent auditor panel is used or possibly only one elected member representing each Council, depending on the constitution agreed with the other bodies involved.
- 10.16 The choice of auditor could be complicated where individual Councils have independence issues. An independence issue occurs where the auditor has recently or is currently carrying out work such as consultancy or advisory work for the Council. Where this occurs some auditors may be prevented from being appointed by the terms of their professional standards. There is a risk that if the joint auditor panel choose a firm that is conflicted for these Councils then the Councils may still need to make a separate appointment with all the attendant costs and loss of economies possible through joint procurement.
- 10.17 Bids may be limited as the value of the contract will be insignificant compared to that of Option 3.

### **Option 3 – Opt-in to a Sector Led Body**

- 10.18 In response to the consultation on the new arrangement the LGA successfully lobbied for Councils to be able to 'opt-in' to a Sector Led Body (SLB) appointed by the Secretary of State under the Act. An SLB would have the ability to negotiate contracts with the firms nationally, maximising the opportunities for the most economic and efficient approach to procurement of external audit on behalf of the whole sector.

### *Advantages/benefits*

- 10.19 The costs of setting up the appointment arrangements and negotiating fees would be shared across all opt-in authorities.
- 10.20 By offering large contract values the firms would be able to offer better rates and lower fees than are likely to result from local negotiation.
- 10.21 Any conflicts at individual authorities would be managed by the SLB who would have a number of contracted firms to call upon.
- 10.22 The appointment process would not be ceded to locally appointed independent members. Instead a separate body is set up to act in the collective interests of the 'opt-in' authorities. The LGA are considering setting up such a body utilising the knowledge and experience acquired through the setting up of the transitional arrangements. This therefore resolves the point about conflict and governance that arises from local appointment.

### *Disadvantages/risks*

- 10.23 Individual elected members will have less opportunity for direct involvement in the appointment process other than through the LGA and/or stakeholder representative groups.

10.24 In order for the SLB to be viable and to be placed in the strongest possible negotiating position the SLB will need Councils to indicate their intention to opt-in before final contract prices and hence costs are known.

### **The way forward**

10.25 The Councils have until December 2017 to make an appointment. In practical terms this means one of the options outlined in this report will need to be in place by spring 2017 in order that the contract negotiation process can be carried out during 2017.

10.26 The LGA are working on developing a Sector Led Body and DCLG has recently approved the PSAA to become the SLB. In a recent survey, 58% of respondents expressed an interest in this option. Greatest economies of scale will come from the maximum number of councils acting collectively and opting-in to a SLB.

10.27 The Suffolk Councils' Section 151 Officers and Heads of Audit have already met with the LGA to discuss the advantages of the sector led approach. Collectively the officers would recommend this approach.

10.28 Joint Audit and Standards Committee is invited to consider the three options and to recommend to Council the preferred option to opt-in to the SLB (Option 3).

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# Agenda Item 11

## BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL and MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>From: Assistant Director – Corporate Resources</b>	<b>Report Number: S59</b>
<b>To: Council (Babergh) Council (Mid Suffolk)</b>	<b>Date of meeting: 20 September 2016 22 September 2016</b>

### RECRUITMENT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR – LAW AND GOVERNANCE (MONITORING OFFICER)

#### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek approval to extend the remit of the cross-party Task and Finish group, that was established to oversee the process to recruit the new Joint Chief Executive, to the recruitment of the permanent Assistant Director – Law and Governance (the Monitoring Officer).

#### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Joint Task and Finish group, which was formed to oversee and make recommendation to Council on the new Joint Chief Executive, also undertakes the same role for the Assistant Director – Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer).

#### 3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 There is a financial commitment in respect of the use of an executive recruitment agency, but this has been limited by extending the remit of the agency appointed for the Joint Chief Executive recruitment and can be funded through the staff savings identified in the first quarter budget monitoring report.

#### 4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 provides that it is the duty of every relevant authority to designate one of their officers to be known as the Monitoring Officer as the officer responsible for performing the duties imposed by this section and to provide that officer with such staff, accommodation and other resources as are, in his/her opinion, sufficient to allow those duties to be performed.
- 4.2 Section 7 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 provides that all appointment of officers is made on merit.
- 4.3 The Council can delegate the recruitment exercise of the appointment of the Assistant Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer to a Task and Finish group but the designation of the Monitoring Officer will be subject to Council approval.

#### 5. Risk Management

- 5.1 This report is most closely linked to the Council's Significant Risk No 5c. Key risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
Failure to recruit a suitable candidate to the Assistant Director – Law and Governance role means that the clear governance arrangements may not be developed that enable the right decisions to be taken that are appropriate for the environment that we are operating in.	Unlikely	Bad	Use of the same qualified specialist recruitment agency as the Joint Chief Executive role to advertise the benefits of the AD role and to search for suitable candidates.

## 6. Consultations

6.1 None

## 7. Equality Analysis

7.1 This report does not raise any equality issues that would affect those with protected characteristics.

## 8. Shared Service / Partnership Implications

8.1 This report covers the process to appoint a permanent Assistant Director – Law and Governance (the Monitoring Officer) across Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils and will involve councillors and staff across the two councils.

## 9. Links to Joint Strategic Plan

9.1 The Assistant Director – Law and Governance role is key to leading the work around strengthening governance within the Enabled and Efficient Organisation theme of the Joint Strategic Plan.

## 10. Key Information

10.1 The Assistant Director – Law and Governance role has been filled on an interim basis since July 2015 by Suki Binjal.

10.2 The role was advertised on a permanent basis earlier in 2016, but it was not possible to make an appointment from the pool of candidates at that point in time. Following the unsuccessful recruitment the interim arrangement with Suki Binjal was extended.

- 10.3 With the Joint Chief Executive role currently being out to advertisement, the opportunity has been taken to re-advertise the Assistant Director – Law and Governance role at the same time. The specialist recruitment agency, Gatenby Sanderson, is being used to recruit both roles.
- 10.4 The Assistant Director – Law and Governance will hold the statutory officer role of the Monitoring Officer and hence has to be appointed by Council.
- 10.5 The new Joint Chief Executive will hold the statutory officer role of Head of Paid Service and the recruitment process for this role is being overseen by the Joint Task and Finish group as agreed by Council in June 2016.
- 10.6 Due to the important working relationship between the two statutory officer roles and the fact that they are both Council appointments, it is proposed that the Joint Task and Finish group that is overseeing the recruitment of the Joint Chief Executive role undertakes the same function for the Assistant Director – Law and Governance role.
- 10.7 The membership of the Joint Task and Finish Group is:
- Babergh District Council  
Jennie Jenkins – Leader of the Conservative Group  
Clive Arthey – Leader of the Independent Group  
Sue Carpendale – Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group
- Mid Suffolk District Council  
Nick Gowrley – Leader of the Conservative Group  
Andrew Stringer – Leader of the Green Group  
Penny Otton – Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group
- 10.8 The Assistant Director – Law and Governance role is currently being advertised, with a closing date of 30 September. Longlisting, shortlisting and final interviews will take place during October and early November, with a recommendation for appointment being made to Council in November.

Authorship:  
Katherine Steel  
Assistant Director – Corporate Resources

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# Agenda Item 12

## BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL and MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>From: Interim Assistant Director – Law and Governance</b>	<b>Report Number: S60</b>
<b>To: BDC Council MSDC Council</b>	<b>Date of meetings: 20 September 2016 22 September 2016</b>

### EXTENSION OF THE APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS

#### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 places a duty on local authorities to promote and maintain high standards of conduct for elected and co-opted members. This includes the requirement to have a Code of Conduct with which Members must comply.
- 1.2 The Act also requires that authorities adopt arrangements for dealing with complaints about potential breaches of the Code of Conduct by Members. This must include provision for the appointment of at least one Independent Person per Council.
- 1.3 In September 2014, following a recruitment exercise, the Council appointed three Independent Persons for a period of two years with an option to extend for a further two years. This report recommends extending those appointments.

#### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Council agrees to extend the appointment of the individuals listed in Appendix A, as Independent Persons for the Council for a further period of two years.

#### 3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 A pool of four independent persons has been established by Suffolk County Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Babergh District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council (although only three persons have been appointed for Babergh and Mid Suffolk). Each Council will pay for one person at a cost of £300 per annum. A Council will additionally pay the independent person at a cost of £50 per complaint which has been the subject of an investigation.

#### 4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 The Localism Act 2011 places a duty on Councils to appoint “independent persons” pursuant to section 28 (7) of the Act.

#### 5. Risk Management

- 5.1 This report is most closely linked with the Council’s Significant Business Risk No 5c. Key risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
Failure to develop clear governance arrangements that enable the right decisions to be taken that are appropriate for the environment that we are operating in	Low	Bad	Transitional arrangements with other Suffolk Councils

## 6. Consultations

- 6.1 The arrangements set out in this report have previously been approved by Full Council in 2014.

## 7. Equality Analysis

- 7.1 The recruitment exercise undertaken in 2014 was informed by an equality impact assessment to ensure the advertising channels used and targeted communication was designed to attract candidates from diverse backgrounds.

## 8. Shared Service / Partnership Implications

- 8.1 Four of the Suffolk local authorities have agreed to participate in the arrangements for a pool of “Independent Persons”.
- 8.2 Although the other Suffolk Councils have made their own arrangements to appoint, there is in place a programme of joint briefings and training events for all Independent Persons within Suffolk.

## 9. Links to Joint Strategic Plan

- 9.1 This decision underpins the Enabling and Efficient Organisation theme : Strengthened and clear governance to enable delivery.

## 10. KEY INFORMATION

- 10.1 The Localism Act requires Councils to appoint at least one independent person whose views should be obtained and taken into account before a decision is taken on a breach of a Code of Conduct complaint.
- 10.2 The role of Independent Person is defined within the Localism Act 2011. The functions of the Independent Person(s) are -
- a. they must be consulted by the authority before it makes a finding as to whether a member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct or decides on action to be taken in respect of that member (this means on a decision to take no action where the investigation finds no evidence of breach or, where the investigation finds evidence that there has been a breach, on any resolution of the complaint, or on any finding of a breach and on any decision on action as a result of that finding);



- b. they may be consulted by the authority in respect of a standards complaint at any other stage; and
- c. they may be consulted by a member or co-opted member of the Council against whom a complaint has been made.

10.3 In summer 2014, Babergh District Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and Suffolk County Council collaborated on the recruitment of Independent Persons. The other Suffolk councils made their own arrangements to make appointments. Three people were recommended to Council at this time – Hazel Clark; Carey Godfrey and Susannah Westwood. A short paragraph about each person is included in Appendix A.

10.4 All three have performed the role well, and the relevant Monitoring Officers are satisfied with the support that they have received. The three have all indicated that they wish to continue in the role. The independent persons are paid an annual retainer of £300 and then a £50 fee for each case considered. This Council will pay only one annual retainer for access to this pool of Independent Persons.

10.5 The Localism Act requires that the appointment of the independent person(s) must be agreed by Council. The appointment is recommended for a further period of two years.

10.6 In two years' time there will be a full recruitment exercise. The current Independent Persons will be able to reapply if they wish.

**11. Appendices**

Title	Location
A. Biographies of Recommended Independent Persons	Attached

**12. Background Documents**

12.1 Localism Act 2011 Appointment of Independent persons report to Council 25 September 2014 and 26 September 2014.

<http://bdcdocuments.onesuffolk.net/assets/Uploads/Committees/Committee-Reports/Reports-2014-15/P55.pdf>

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## BIOGRAPHIES OF RECOMMENDED INDEPENDENT PERSONS

### **Hazel Clark**

Ms Clark has been an Independent Person for the last two years. Ms Clark is a Fee-paid Employment Judge at the London Central Employment Tribunal, appointed in 2004. Between 2004 and 2014, Ms Clark was also an Independent Member of Police Misconduct Panels, sitting on internal police disciplinary hearings with senior police officers. Ms Clark has recently been appointed as a Legally Qualified Chair of Police Misconduct Panels in the Eastern region. Ms Clark lives in East Suffolk.

### **Carey Godfrey**

Mr Godfrey has been an Independent Person for the last four years. He was previously Suffolk County Council's Drug and Alcohol Team Co-ordinator, and is a former Independent Member of Suffolk Police Authority. He is an Independent Member on the County Permanence (Adoption) Panel, and was the Suffolk and Norfolk Local Crime: Community Sentence Co-ordinator for the National Probation Service. Mr Godfrey lives in Otley.

### **Susannah Westwood**

Ms Westwood has been an Independent Person for the last two years. Ms Westwood has had a career in the public sector, working within the health sector, housing associations and most recently with Essex County Council as a Senior Commissioning Manager in Social Care. Ms Westwood is currently a Director with Strategic Arc Ltd, providing consultancy in the social care, housing and health sector. Ms Westwood lives in Sudbury.

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# Agenda Item 13

## BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>From: Assistant Director - Planning for Growth</b>	<b>Report Number: S61</b>
<b>To: COUNCIL</b>	<b>Date of meeting: 20 September 2016</b>

### EAST BERGHOLT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

#### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides details of the local referendum that was held in relation to the East Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 In the light of the outcome it recommends that Council makes (adopts) the Plan.

#### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That, the East Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan be formally made (adopted) as part of the District Council's Development Plan and used to help determine planning applications where relevant.

#### 3. Key Information

- 3.1 The Strategy Committee resolved at its meeting on 14 July 2016 that the East Bergholt Neighbourhood Development Plan should proceed to a local referendum. The local referendum was held on 8 September 2016.
- 3.2 The format of the local referendum question was:

*'Do you want Babergh District Council to use the neighbourhood plan for East Bergholt to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?'*

- 3.3 The count took place on 9 September 2016 and more than 50% of those who voted were in favour of the Plan. The results of the local referendum were:

Response	Votes Cast	Percentage of total
YES	1100	94.75
NO	61	5.25
Total	1161	100

- 3.4 The result of the local referendum now enables the District Council to formally 'make' adopt the East Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan once made will formally become part of the Development Plan. It will therefore be used in conjunction with existing planning policy documents to help determine planning applications where relevant.

3.5 The District Council is only able to exercise further discretion at this point if it considers that the Plan would be in breach of any environmental legislation or any of the Convention Rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act, 1998). The Plan is not in breach of either pieces of legislation.

3.6 The report presented to the Strategy Committee on 14 July 2016 confirmed that, the East Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan as modified to incorporate the Examiner’s Recommendations, complies with the ‘Basic Conditions’ as set out in Paragraph 8(2), Schedule 4B the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990. Accordingly the East Bergholt Neighbourhood Development Plan should be duly made. The formal Decision Statement is appended to this report.

**4. Financial Implications**

4.1 The District Council receives £20,000 from the Department of Communities and Local Government for each neighbourhood plan once a referendum date has been set following a successful examination. This sum is paid to meet the District Council’s costs and will be sufficient in this case.

4.2 The East Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan once ‘made’ (adopted) enables the parish council to receive 25% of any Community Infrastructure Levy receipts from development in its area.

**5. Legal Implications**

5.1 The neighbourhood plan has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations, 2012 (as amended). It has also had regard to the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations, 2004 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2010.

5.2 Once ‘made’ (adopted), the East Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the Development Plan and, where relevant, be used to determine planning applications.

**6. Risk Management**

6.1 The key risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
Legal challenge to the content of the neighbourhood development plan or order and/or judicial review of the District Council’s decisions.	Unlikely	Bad	Ensuring that the relevant Regulations are followed and that the decision-making processes are clear and transparent.

## **7. Consultations**

7.1 The District Council undertook formal consultation on the content of the submission draft East Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan from 18 January to 1 March 2016.

## **8. Equality Analysis**

8.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising directly from the content of this report.

## **9. Shared Service / Partnership Implications**

9.1 This report relates to matters affecting Babergh only.

## **10. Links to Joint Strategic Plan**

10.1 The making (adoption) of the neighbourhood plan will enable the District Council to fulfil its corporate priorities, in terms of housing delivery, business growth and community capacity building.

## **11. Appendices**

11.1	Appendix 1	Final Decision Statement	Attached
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### Authorship

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**Babergh District Council**  
**East Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan – Final Decision Statement**

On 8 September 2016 a local referendum was held in which more than half of those who voted did so in favour of the East Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan. Accordingly Babergh District Council has decided to ‘make’ the Plan.

The Plan as made becomes part of the Development Plan for the area and will be used where relevant to help the District Council decide planning applications. This decision was taken by Full Council on 20 September 2016.

**Reason for Decision**

In accordance with the provisions of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations, 2012 (as amended) the District Council appointed an independent examiner to assess the submitted East Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan.

The examination was undertaken by Rosemary Kidd DipTP MRTPI a ‘suitably qualified and experienced’ person who was independent of the plan making process via written representations. The Examiner concluded that subject to modification the Plan would comply with the ‘Basic Conditions’ as set out in Paragraph 8(2), Schedule 4B the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990.

The Strategy Committee at its meeting on 14 July 2016 agreed with the suggested modifications and concurred that the Plan so modified would comply with the Basic Conditions. The Strategy Committee therefore resolved that the East Bergholt Neighbourhood Development Plan should proceed to a local referendum.

The local referendum was held on 8 September 2016. The format of the local referendum question was:

*‘Do you want Babergh District Council to use the neighbourhood plan for East Bergholt to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?’*

More than 50% of those who voted were in favour of the Plan. The results of the local referendum were:

<b>Response</b>	<b>Votes Cast</b>	<b>Percentage of total</b>
YES	1100	94.75
NO	61	5.25
Total	1161	100

The result of the local referendum enables the District Council to formally make the East Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan unless it considers that the Plan would be in breach of any EU obligation or any of the Convention Rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act, 1998).

At its meeting on 20 September 2016 Babergh District Council decided that the Plan was not in breach of this legislation and that it should be made part of the Development Plan for the district.

Dated: 20 September 2016



# Agenda Item 14

## BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>From: Assistant Director - Planning for Growth</b>	<b>Report Number: S62</b>
<b>To: COUNCIL</b>	<b>Date of meeting: 20 September 2016</b>

### LAVENHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

#### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides details of the local referendum that was held in relation to the Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 In the light of the outcome it recommends that Council makes (adopts) the Plan.

#### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That, the Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan be formally made (adopted) as part of the District Council's Development Plan and used to help determine planning applications where relevant.

#### 3. Key Information

- 3.1 The Strategy Committee resolved at its meeting on 9 June 2016 that the Lavenham Neighbourhood Development Plan should proceed to a local referendum. The local referendum was held on 8 September 2016.
- 3.2 The format of the local referendum question was:

*'Do you want Babergh District Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Lavenham to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?'*

- 3.3 The count took place on 9 September 2016 and more than 50% of those who voted were in favour of the Plan. The results of the local referendum were:

<b>Response</b>	<b>Votes Cast</b>	<b>Percentage of total</b>
YES	490	91.25
NO	47	8.75
Total	537	100

- 3.4 The result of the local referendum now enables the District Council to formally 'make' adopt the Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan once made will formally become part of the Development Plan. It will therefore be used in conjunction with existing planning policy documents to help determine planning applications where relevant.

3.5 The District Council is only able to exercise further discretion at this point if it considers that the Plan would be in breach of any environmental legislation or any of the Convention Rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act, 1998). The Plan is not in breach of either pieces of legislation.

3.6 The report presented to the Strategy Committee on 9 June 2016 confirmed that, the Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan as modified to incorporate the Examiner's Recommendations, complies with the 'Basic Conditions' as set out in Paragraph 8(2), Schedule 4B the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990. Accordingly the Lavenham Neighbourhood Development Plan should be duly made. The formal Decision Statement is appended to this report.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

4.1 The District Council receives £20,000 from the Department of Communities and Local Government for each neighbourhood plan once a referendum date has been set following a successful examination. This sum is paid to meet the District Council's costs and will be sufficient in this case.

4.2 The Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan once 'made' (adopted) enables the parish council to receive 25% of any Community Infrastructure Levy receipts from development in its area.

#### **5. Legal Implications**

5.1 The neighbourhood plan has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations, 2012 (as amended). It has also had regard to the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations, 2004 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2010.

5.2 Once 'made' (adopted), the Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the Development Plan and, where relevant, be used to determine planning applications.

#### **6. Risk Management**

6.1 The key risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
Legal challenge to the content of the neighbourhood development plan or order and/or judicial review of the District Council's decisions.	Unlikely	Bad	Ensuring that the relevant Regulations are followed and that the decision-making processes are clear and transparent.

## **7. Consultations**

7.1 The District Council undertook formal consultation on the content of the submission draft Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan from 4 January to 16 February 2016.

## **8. Equality Analysis**

8.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising directly from the content of this report.

## **9. Shared Service / Partnership Implications**

9.1 This report relates to matters affecting Babergh only.

## **10. Links to Joint Strategic Plan**

10.1 The making (adoption) of the neighbourhood plan will enable the District Council to fulfil its corporate priorities, in terms of housing delivery, business growth and community capacity building.

## **11. Appendices**

11.1	Appendix 1	Decision Statement	Attached
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### Authorship

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Strategic Planning

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## Babergh District Council Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan – Final Decision Statement

On 8 September 2016 a local referendum was held in which more than half of those who voted did so in favour of the Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan. Accordingly Babergh District Council has decided to ‘make’ the Plan.

The Plan as made becomes part of the Development Plan for the area and will be used where relevant to help the District Council decide planning applications. This decision was taken by Full Council on 20 September 2016.

### Reason for Decision

In accordance with the provisions of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations, 2012 (as amended) the District Council appointed an independent examiner to assess the submitted Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan.

The examination was undertaken by Janet L Cheesley BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI a ‘suitably qualified and experienced’ person who was independent of the plan making process via written representations. The Examiner concluded that subject to modification the Plan would comply with the ‘Basic Conditions’ as set out in Paragraph 8(2), Schedule 4B the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990.

The Strategy Committee at its meeting on 9 June 2016 agreed with the suggested modifications and concurred that the Plan so modified would comply with the Basic Conditions. The Strategy Committee therefore resolved that the Lavenham Neighbourhood Development Plan should proceed to a local referendum.

The local referendum was held on 8 September 2016. The format of the local referendum question was:

*‘Do you want Babergh District Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Lavenham to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?’*

More than 50% of those who voted were in favour of the Plan. The results of the local referendum were:

Response	Votes Cast	Percentage of total
YES	490	91.25
NO	47	8.75
Total	537	100

The result of the local referendum enables the District Council to formally make the Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan unless it considers that the Plan would be in breach of any EU obligation or any of the Convention Rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act, 1998).

At its meeting on 20 September 2016 Babergh District Council decided that the Plan was not in breach of this legislation and that it should be made part of the Development Plan for the district.

Dated: 20 September 2016

# Agenda Item 15

## BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>From: Communities and Public Access</b>	<b>Report Number: S63</b>
<b>To: Council</b>	<b>Date of meeting: 20 September 2016</b>

### FUTURE MODEL FOR PUBLIC ACCESS INCLUDING ACCOMMODATION

#### 1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to set out options and a strategy to deliver a future Public Access operating model for the councils. This encompasses a new Public Access Strategy and options for future accommodation for the councils and outlines options for the existing office sites in Hadleigh and Needham Market, should either or both be vacated.

The Public Access Strategy takes a whole system approach and supports collaborative work with partners in order to enable communities to do more for themselves, where they can or as they may do already, generating less demand on public services. Together with developing self-service options, this will mean we can focus more attention on those that really need our help.

#### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To agree the principles of the emerging Public Access Strategy as set out in Section One page 8 to 18.
- 2.2 To agree one of the four accommodation options available as set out below for the co-location of the Councils headquarters. The options and the detailed business case of each are set out in Section Two page 19 to 28
  - (a) Option 1 – Locate to Hadleigh offices, or
  - (b) Option 2 – Locate to Needham Market offices, or
  - (c) Option 3 – Share accommodation in Endeavour House with Suffolk County Council and other public sector partners, or
  - (d) Option 4 – Build a new building for the councils.
- 2.3 To consider and note the key information available including the indicative timetable relating to the development of the Hadleigh site, contained in Part II of Paper S63.
- 2.4 That the Strategic Director, in conjunction with the Leaders of the councils, be authorised to make any minor changes to the recommendations as set out above as may be necessary.

### **3. Financial Implications**

- 3.1 The overall aims of the Public Access Strategy are to transform our services to be more efficient and reduce cost to both councils and the public, through delivering effective self-service options. Where up-front investment is needed this will be on an invest-to-save basis as identified in our Medium Term Financial Strategy. The costs and savings associated with the Public Access Strategy (both revenue and capital) will be refined over the coming weeks and included in the proposed budgets for 2017/18 and beyond. However, the largest spend associated with the delivery of the strategy is likely to be ICT, of which a substantial proportion has already been incorporated and approved in the Capital Programme.
- 3.2 The full financial implications in relation to the accommodation options are explained in detail in Section Two of this report.
- 3.3 The financial implications in relation to the site options are explained, partly in Section Three of this report and partly in the Part II confidential paper, where commercially sensitive information is contained.

### **4. Legal Implications**

- 4.1 The Council has the legal powers to carry out and give effect to the recommendations as set out in this report.
- 4.2 The General Power of Competence (GPC) was introduced by the Localism Act 2011 (the Act), and took effect in February 2012. In simple terms, it gives Councils the power to do anything an individual can do provided it is not prohibited by other legislation.
- 4.3 The scope and some limitations of the General Power are set out in sections 1 to 6 of the Localism Act 2011. In summary, the GPC enables Councils to do things -
- (a) an individual may generally do
  - (b) anywhere in the UK or elsewhere
  - (c) for a commercial purpose or otherwise, for a charge or without a charge
  - (d) without the need to demonstrate that it will benefit the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area (although in practice councils will want to realise such benefits)

But there are some limitations on the General Power, either because they are not things which an individual can do or because they are excluded by the Act.

The GPC will not:

- (a) provide councils with new powers to raise tax or precepts or to borrow
- (b) enable councils to set charges for mandatory services, impose fines or create offences or byelaws, over and above existing powers to do so and
- (c) override existing legislation in place before the Localism act 2011.

- 4.4 Where using the GPC for charging or trading purposes, the recipient should agree to the service being provided, the income from charges should not exceed the cost of provision and, where things are done for commercial purposes, this must be done through a specified type of company.
- 4.5 Notwithstanding the limitations outlined above, the GPC remains a broad power.
- 7.6 The Local Government Act 1972 (the Act), allows Councils to dispose (or acquire land if necessary) of land held by them in any manner they wish.
- 7.7 However, subject to section 123 of the Act states that except with the consent of the Secretary of State, a Council shall not dispose of land under this section, otherwise than by way of a short tenancy, for a consideration less than the best that can reasonably be obtained.
- 7.8 Accordingly, it is considered best practice not to dispose of land without an independent valuation.

## 5. The Decision

- 5.1 Work has been ongoing since 2013 on the Public Access and Accommodation Strategies. As part of this activity seven options have been rationalised to four and a full options appraisal for those four options have been worked up and are presented in this report.
- 5.2 Members should be mindful of the aims and objectives of the Joint Strategic Plan, the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the future sustainability of both councils in taking their decision today.
- 5.3 Therefore in taking its decision on the matters in this report there will be an opportunity for all members to debate the principles of the emerging Public Access Strategy and the options available for the headquarters Accommodation. However, there will not be an opportunity to move amendments (other than minor typographical or corrective changes) to the options available for the Headquarters Accommodation for the reasons said above.

## 6. Risk Management

- 6.1 This report is most closely linked with the following Councils' Corporate / Significant Business Risks as detailed below from the Corporate Risk register.

Risk details	Mitigation	Likelihood	Impact	Score
<b>Public Access Strategy: Section One</b>				
2a: Failure to understand our local businesses and their needs and failure to engage and support them to thrive	Open for Business approach/programme; Networking with Chambers of Commerce and Local Enterprise Partnership; Research into local businesses; Connect businesses to Growth Hub	2	3	6

<b>Risk details</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Score</b>
5a: Failure to develop our use of technology to enable us to be efficient and cost effective in everything we do.	Strategic ICT resource from SCC now part of Senior Leadership Team / Consolidating mobile and telephone technology to enable staff to work more flexibly / Continuing to integrate applications to allow systems and procedures to be consolidated to make joint teams more efficient and resilient / Alignment of strategy with SCC to make investment under 4 key themes of the cloud, mobile working, big data and social and collaboration tools.	2	3	6
5b: Failure to convert our data into accurate, up to date and easy to interrogate insights, evidence and intelligence that supports delivery of the strategic priorities and failure to adequately protect the data that we hold	Data mapping exercise to provide a register of information and their attributes / Internal Audit to undertake periodical Information Assurance Audit compliance / New information sharing intranet launched / Work with Suffolk partners to join up information held	3	3	9
5g: Failure to implement more efficient and effective public access arrangements	MITIGATION: Development of a new public access model / Maximising use of digital technology / Self-service capabilities supplemented with supported assistance / Understand customer base / Introduction of customer relationship officers / Complement "open for business" approach / Involvement of customers in design	2	3	6
<b>Accommodation and Site Options</b>				
4c: Failure to make best use of land	Map public sector estate and share with partners; Take	3	3	9



<b>Risk details</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Score</b>
and buildings across Suffolk System	opportunities to co-locate with others; Develop for delivery of homes and jobs			
5f: Failure of the Councils to become financially sustainable in response to funding changes	MITIGATION: Continued development of the strands within the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) / Alignment of resources to priorities / Use of one-off funding to change the business model and support functions during change / Early identification of initiatives for the 2017/18 budget / Engagement of councillors to understand options / Modelling and analysis to understand impact	2	4	8

6.2 Other key risks associated with accommodation options are set out below in Section Two at page 19.

## **7. Consultations**

7.1 Our consultation and communications plan is detailed below. It includes all service users and local communities using our services; all councillors; communities in Hadleigh and Needham Market through their respective town councils, and our workforce.

7.2 The plan in place supports the delivery of the Public Access and Accommodation Strategy by providing appropriate messages to those impacted or that need to be involved in the decisions about future delivery. This plan covers all stakeholders; residents, businesses, staff and communities. A summary of the plan is given below and covers ways in which we have and will continue to communicate our Public Access and Accommodation Strategy and its developments. It covers activities leading up to the decisions contained in this paper and the subsequent activities including developing and designing new digital services for, and with the public.

### **7.3 Objectives of communications and consultations**

- (a) To support the Public Access Programme through timely, interactive, internal and external communications.
- (b) Ensure consistency by establishing the key messages and ensuring all information is the same throughout each communication.
- (c) Ensure all communications are jargon-free and in plain English.

- (d) Stakeholder mapping to identify key stakeholders, both internal and external.
- (e) Set principal channels of communications for each audience.
- (f) Highlight elements of the Public Access Programme that will impact specific stakeholder groups.
- (g) Provide opportunities for two-way communications – where necessary to give key stakeholders and audiences the opportunity to ask questions and receive answers.
- (h) Identify key milestones for communications activities.

#### 7.4 **Components of the Communications Strategy and Plan**

- (a) Key audiences and stakeholder groups
- (b) Key messages
- (c) Internal and external channels
- (d) Approach and timescales
- (e) Governance
- (f) Monitoring, measurement and feedback mechanisms

#### 7.5 **Communications Activity**

Communication and consultation has been ongoing throughout the life of the development of the Public Access Strategy and the accommodation review, for approximately the past three years.

Recently there have been a number of communications via face-to-face meetings including the monthly Employee Forums, joint Union and HR meetings, staff briefings by the Leaders of the Councils on 24 July and 3 August, and presentations to all Members through their political groups. Public Access and Accommodation items have been added as ‘standing items’ to the agenda for every meeting of the Senior Leadership Team, Extended Leadership Team and Corporate Managers’ Network.

Updates have also been provided regularly through our established internal communications channels of the ‘Working Together’ fortnightly email update and the CONNECT intranet site. Information also featured in the August edition of the ‘Town and Parish Council Newsletter’.

A “post-decision” timetable of activity has been drawn up to support the second phase of the programme from 26 September until the end of October, again to ensure all stakeholders are kept informed through all available channels. During this period, a detailed programme of communications for the subsequent phases will be produced, focusing on continued information-sharing, greater engagement and wider involvement.

## **8. Equality Analysis**

- 8.1 The initial Equality Impact Assessment that has been carried out is at Appendix A. It examines which protected classes might be affected by the implementation of the Public Access Strategy and decisions about future headquarters accommodation.
- 8.2 The initial assessment highlights that all protected classes may be affected and recommends that a further assessment is carried out alongside future work on the Public Access Strategy implementation plan, and to support any accommodation moves, to make sure any negative impacts are identified and sufficiently mitigated.

## **9. Shared Service / Partnership Implications**

- 9.1 This strategy is supporting the ambitions and objectives of the Transformation Challenge Award (TCA), developing collaborative working with partners across the whole Suffolk System on new Public Access arrangements and reducing the public sector estate across the county.

## **10. Links to Joint Strategic Plan**

- 10.1 The Public Access vision is to create cohesive, sustainable and empowered communities that can thrive and become more resilient. It therefore encompasses, how we work with our communities, the tools we need to support us, the changes we need to make to services to enable this and where we will locate our services.
- 10.2 The aim of the Public Access Strategy is to support us to deliver the outcomes in the Joint Strategic Plan and support us to be enabled, efficient, flexible, agile, innovative, collaborative and accessible. It takes a whole system approach and supports collaborative work with partners in order to enable communities to do more for themselves, generating less demand on public services. Together with developing self-service options, this will mean we can focus more attention on those that really need our help.
- 10.3 This report supports the delivery of the following specific Joint Strategic Plan aims:
  - (a) More efficient public access arrangements
  - (b) Digital by design
  - (c) Making best use of land and buildings across the Suffolk system
  - (d) Community led solutions to deliver services and manage assets

This Public Access Strategy and the accommodation options are fundamental to supporting the delivery of the Joint Strategic Plan. Both will support the creation of an enabled and efficient, customer focused organisation that works in and with its communities.

## 11. **Section One: Public Access Strategy**

### 11.1 **Part 1: Vision for Public Access and the case for change**

The world of government and the public service sector is being transformed by technology, new ways of working, a severely constricting financial environment and public expectations.

We cannot stand still. We have to enable our communities to become more resilient and to rely less heavily on public sector services and resources. To do this we must develop our communities and use new technologies, such as SMS text messaging and new call centre technology, to establish improved ways of working that are better for our residents, simpler for our staff and cheaper for the councils.

Our vision is for the councils to have much improved public access arrangements, making it easy for anyone to do business with the Councils through channels that:

- (a) Are effortless to navigate
- (b) Promote individual and community self service
- (c) Are available when the customer requires them
- (d) Make work more straightforward and enjoyable for our staff
- (e) Reduce confusion for the public about who does what across the Suffolk System

This new Public Access Strategy devolves control and responsibility. It fosters community resilience and will enable us to learn from each interaction. It is customer focused, and promotes an evidenced understanding of the bespoke requirements of individuals, a culture of collaboration and continuous refinement of the way we do business.

### 11.2 **Part 2: Current Position**

The current ways the public access the councils' services are antiquated, confusing, difficult and bureaucratic. To achieve the Councils' Joint Strategic Plan ambitions, these must be transformed and resources refocused in line with public demand, need and vulnerability.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils currently have many different ways for the public to make contact. There are face to face service points in the council buildings at Needham Market and Hadleigh and in Sudbury at the Sudbury Advice Centre. These deal with the very low volumes of unannounced walk-in demands to make payments, or with enquires about any council services. This is supplemented by individual services who may visit residents or businesses, have duty rotas or make appointments for customers to come and see them, for example, to seek planning advice.

Alongside this face to face provision the public can make contact via telephone, although we know that often it can be difficult to get an answer and / or to get to the right person to answer an inquiry. There are many numbers publicised and some arrangements that appear confusing from the outside. There are two switchboards,

as well as call centre at Hadleigh that takes calls for services including benefits, council tax and housing repairs for Babergh. Calls about housing repairs for Mid Suffolk are taken elsewhere. For waste collection questions a customer needs to call the depot in Stowmarket. For planning, building control and other services separate numbers are published for the individual departments. This arrangement is inefficient, unproductive and presents a muddled picture from a customer perspective. Public enquires are often misdirected creating dissatisfaction, for customers, frustration for staff and additional call volumes.

There are generic email boxes that are managed by some service teams to answer electronic enquires. Some services have developed online electronic services, for example, an online benefits application. However, there is not a consistent approach. Additionally, online services are not integrated with the back office and are difficult to locate on the current websites. The websites do not support access via mobile technology despite approximately 40% of users accessing our sites in this way.

As we have no Customer Relationship Management (CRM), system we cannot be insight and intelligence led because we do not currently have data to help us fully understand the customer contact landscape. However, the current levels of contact that are measured across various channels are as follows:

<b>Channel</b>	<b>Total contacts / users</b> (1 <sup>st</sup> June – 31 <sup>st</sup> July)	<b>Average contacts per day</b> (in line with opening hours)
Face to Face (at Needham and Hadleigh receptions)	1,206	28
Telephone Calls (to Call Centre)	22,263	518
Website Sessions	155,456	2,548

Our current operating model relies heavily on customers contacting us. This can create inequality as arrangements are not tailored or designed around those in need who may struggle to make contact or come to us.

In summary, current arrangements for public access are expensive, confusing, complex and frustrating for residents, businesses, staff and councillors. We do not systematically collect or collate detailed customer based information nor do we have data and insight about how often individuals contact us, or what they contact us for. Neither do we have data that supports understanding and designing services around individual residents' needs.

### 11.3 Part 3: Future Arrangements

The traditional model of public sector service delivery is obsolete. The Joint Strategic Plan recognises this and contains a commitment to deliver more efficient Public Access arrangements. The aim of the Public Access Strategy is to support

us to deliver these outcomes in the Joint Strategic Plan and to become enabled, efficient, flexible, agile, innovative, collaborative and accessible. It takes a whole system approach and supports collaborative work with partners in order to enable communities to do more for themselves, generating less demand on public services. Together with developing self-service options this will mean we can focus more attention on those that really need our help.

The Joint Strategic Plan sets out a new understanding of our purpose in the community, of how and where we can add most value. It states that:

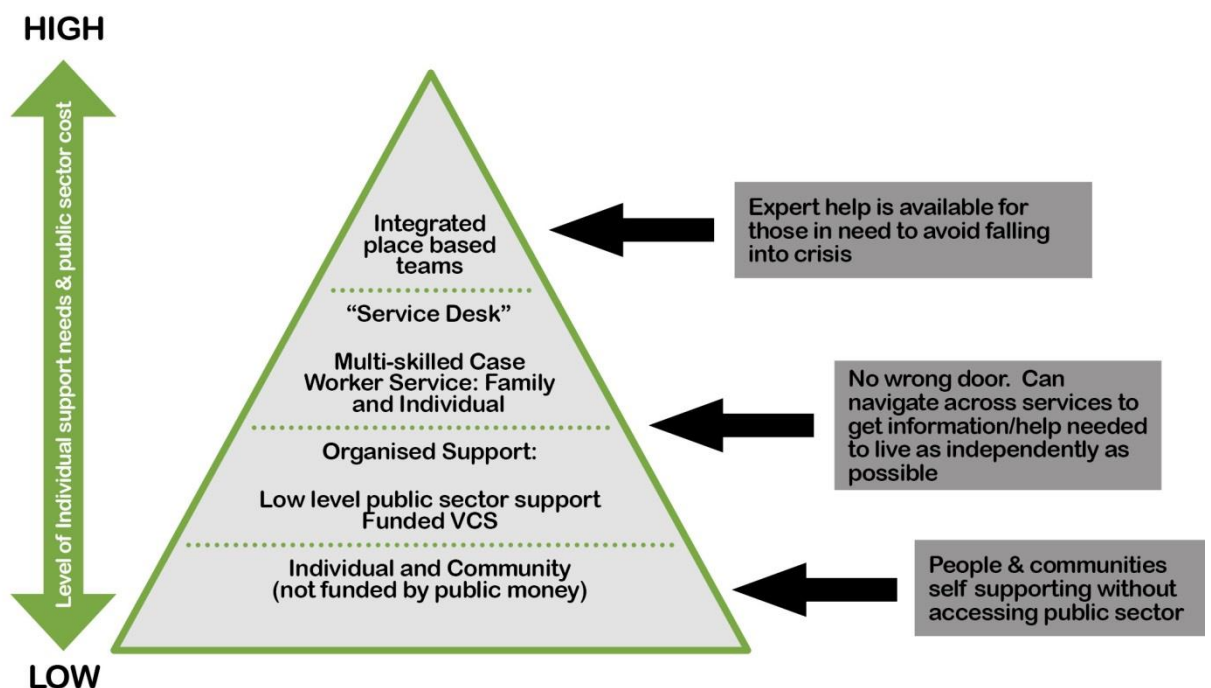
- (a) We will introduce customer relationship officers who will ensure our customers and residents receive the appropriate support for their needs.
- (b) We will undertake work to understand our customer base to maximise lower-cost digital access and to make sure that the ways our customers can access us are the most efficient and effective from both perspectives.
- (c) We are providing an ‘Open for Business’ approach to our business customers to make sure they get the right support.

Our proposed Public Access Strategy builds from this and from an understanding that our purpose is to:

- (a) Support individuals and communities to become self-serving wherever possible
- (b) Better target our resources by providing tailored support to people that need it and not to those that don't
- (c) Be consistently easy to do business with looking to make it easier still.

The diagram below illustrates the proposed operating model.

**Public Access – What it will look like**



(Joint Strategic Plan, page 23)

Successful operation of this model will require us to get better at understanding:

- (a) Our different customer segments and how we can tailor our offer to give people what they value (which will vary according to segment) and how we focus resources towards those in need and the vulnerable.
- (b) What we mean by a customer focussed culture and how we use this to drive efficiency and productivity.
- (c) How we make things easy for our customers and staff. Easier is cheaper and better.
- (d) What the public value from us and what is not important.
- (e) The power of data, technology and insight through closer collaboration with our ICT partners at Suffolk County Council.
- (f) The importance of driving compliance and consistency in the way we work, requiring a move away from old ways of working to a new operating model.
- (g) Identifying efficiencies and improvements by developing and using a consistent change methodology that supports agile.
- (h) How we can eliminate avoidable contact, failure demand and change customer behaviour to reduce contact and costs.
- (i) How system wide interventions across the public sector can reduce costs.

## **12. Our Five Key Access Channels**

Our strategy is based around five main access channels. Each of these will remain available for the full term of this strategy. However, through deepening our insight into customer capability and behaviour, and supporting communities to support themselves we will promote a shift towards more productive channels by stimulating customer interest in easier ways of doing business with us. All channels will be developed based on the whole Suffolk System so that over time complexity about 'who does what' for the customer is reduced.

### **12.1 Face to Face**

Our current offices aren't easily accessible to those people located some distance from the offices or in locations not well connected to either Hadleigh or Needham Market. However, the Councils must maintain a face to face service option. It is recommended that we provide one access point in each district and that opportunities to share this with other public sector partners, for example the Job Centre and town councils are identified to maximise the use of the public sector estate and minimise the Councils' costs. These access points are separate from locations in the districts where place based teams described below might be located.

The service points should provide facilities for staff or members to meet the public by appointment and have the facilities to use Skype and other technology to connect to officers at the Headquarters building to improve access and reduce

travel costs and time. We might need to supplement this with a mobile visiting offer for those people that need it. Our profiling work would help us identify these residents initially and over time as individual requirements change.

The advantages of developing digital services as detailed below, will reduce reliance on face to face access points as anyone should be able to access services from anywhere. The face to face points will play an important role in supporting people to get online and use digital services. Although in low bandwidth areas this is not always possible, and not everyone has access to a computer, it does mean that residents can use libraries or be supported by their friends and family to use online services. At the moment between 10% to 15% of all online benefits and council tax reduction applications are completed on the claimants, friends or family member's computer.

## 12.2 Telephone

In the short to medium term, the most common access channel will continue to be the phone. In order to reduce the confusion created by the plethora of current numbers and to make sure the cost of calling the council is only charged at local call rate it is recommended that the Councils move to one phone number which is an '03' number and channelled exclusively through our customer contact centre, which will probably be located at one of our satellite offices.

The contact centre will be supported by new telephone technology and MS Dynamics CRM that will enable us to create and build a single view of each customer making each interaction an opportunity to learn more about that customer.

The councils' main number will be supported by IVR (interactive voice response) technology that will give options to connect directly to teams or people with the expertise to answer the enquiry. Over time, we can develop the skills and knowledge base of our customer services team in order to deal with a broader range of transactions and in more depth, potentially removing the need for the IVR options.

Centralising telephone contact in one call centre will give us an understanding of call handling times, abandonment rates, types of enquiry and the effectiveness of transfers to other parts of the business. It will also enable us to develop a suite of management reports that illustrate the overall contact landscape.

Directing telephone contact through one number opens up our ability to provide flexible working options for all staff.

## 12.3 Email

We will create and promote a single email address for the councils. Emails to this address will be received in our contact centre and blended into all the transactions to be handled by our contact centre agents through our CRM system. Handling all email contact in this way will enable us to improve the service we offer by enabling us to produce management information on contact received and response times and quality.

Again, by managing emails through one address we can consider increasing our hours of operation to offer and enhance our ability to provide flexible options for staff.



## 12.4 Online - Digital Services

A large proportion of residents will already be conducting much of their household business online, for example, banking, paying bills or shopping. People prefer to do business this way because organisations have made it the easiest, most effortless option. It can also deliver significant savings as illustrated below freeing up resources to devote to those with complex needs.

*Socitm (Society of IT Managers) Insight March 2012 Cost per contact channel for enquiry*

Access Channel	Average Cost per enquiry
Face to Face	£8.62
Telephone	£2.83
Self Service – Website	£0.15

We know that our digital services will need to be developed to take account of the low broadband speed in some parts of the districts. We can do this, for example, by having a low bandwidth website without pictures or functions that would require faster broadband speeds to work effectively.

We will develop the use of CRM to support the development of tailored digital services. This will enable residents or businesses to log into our website and see only the information they have selected is relevant to them.

In summary we will evolve our two current websites firstly into one clearer, simpler site that improves access from mobile and tablets to the existing online services and information that the Councils' have. This site will then continue to evolve as other supporting IT projects reach completion, for example new arrangements to view and comment on planning applications will be available when that project is completed. Development will then continue with the use of CRM to allow people to log in and see their information and only what they want to view. We will always be working with our public to develop services, and be open to new advances in technology and trends, for example developing a Babergh and Mid Suffolk app if needed.

## 12.5 Webchat and SMS

Webchat is a system that allows organisations to chat to web users, whilst they are using digital services in order to support them to complete their transaction digitally, rather than give up and use the telephone. It therefore provides a rich source of information about how people interact with our digital services, for example, what they are finding difficult to locate which can be used to redesign services to make them more user friendly.

We will make webchat available via our website during normal office hours. Webchat contacts will again be blended into all other transactions handled by our

contact centre. Over time we could seek to develop our capacity to offer webchat 24/7 by utilising artificial intelligence to understand common enquiries and responses.

SMS text messaging is almost universally used to remind people that they have appointments or keep them informed if something goes wrong, like a power cut. Through our CRM system we will develop the capability to use text messaging to support service delivery in ways that are now expected of modern services.

## 12.6 **Integrated Place based teams**

Our objective is to become digital by design not digital only. Our plan is to complement the five main access channels with services that are designed for those who are the most in need or vulnerable supported by integrated place based teams. For example, the Sudbury Connect Project which focuses on keeping people healthy, independent and safe in their own homes through improved access to local support networks and integrated solutions to health, care and wellbeing issues.

Our approach mirrors the integrated neighbourhood health, social care, community healthcare and mental health teams where practitioners are co-located in order to provide better support for patients. These arrangements promote stronger local neighbourhood networks improving community resilience. They make it easier to support the wider public and voluntary sector network and enable people who do not meet the thresholds for formal interventions to access support (from family, friends or within the community) reducing demand on public services.

## 12.7 **Delivering the Public Access Strategy**

- 12.8 The section below details connections and elements that underpin the delivery of the Public Access Strategy.
- 12.9 Organisational culture drives behaviours, decisions and choices about where people place effort. It determines what people pay attention to (and what to ignore) in powerful ways that affect qualitative and quantitative performance.
- 12.10 There is strong evidenced correlation between culture and performance. The Councils' focus on developing a modern, networked organisation over the past 5 years echoes the research that InLoGov has done on 21<sup>st</sup> century public organisations. The approach of using Organisational Development has already involved analysing, understanding and using a mixture of 'levers' to shift the organisation. Areas such as developing leadership, organisational design, ICT infrastructure, networked projects and working, agile project management are already becoming well established within the organisation
- 12.11 Developing a high performing customer focussed culture will be key to delivering the public access strategy. Developing and designing digital services means we need to focus more on what our residents and communities need and ask for, not less. We will support and develop our staff as part of our organisational development plan to put residents, businesses and community needs at the centre of everything that the Councils' do.

## 12.12 **Service redesign using Insight**

12.13 Technology provides us with real opportunities to transform the way we work. By harnessing the power of technology and data we can gain a much better understanding of our public demand and where our resources should be targeted. It will open up opportunities to create improved ways of working moving away from a one size fits all approach to a model that responds to the actual requirements of individual residents, businesses and communities.

12.14 The key aims of all service redesign work will be to have services that:

- (a) Are better for residents, businesses and communities and simpler for staff and cheaper for the Councils.
- (b) Focus on people and their communities.
- (c) Modernise how we work using technology.
- (d) Enable digital services.
- (e) Reduce unnecessary contact and demand caused by service failures.
- (f) Take advantage of improving superfast Broadband access.
- (g) Reduce reliance on paper documents and records.
- (h) Supports channel shift and demand reduction to reduce our costs.
- (i) Use insight to understand our communities and segment service provision based on need.

Over time, we will continue to identify ongoing improvement in our ways of working using research, data management and analysis.

## 12.15 **Digital by Design**

12.16 Digital by default is a national government programme which is underpinned by the digital service standard. Its aims are to develop digital government services and support citizens to use them, as default. For example the only way of applying for Universal Credit is online.

12.17 However our joint strategic plan sets out that we will be digital by design, not digital by default, recognising the difficulties we currently have in Suffolk with broadband coverage. It states that we will develop our use of technology to enable us to be efficient and cost-effective in everything we do.

12.18 We are developing and implementing the countywide Digital Suffolk initiative, to improve access to information and the ability to make transactions digitally. This includes:

12.19 The Cloud – providing secure, resilient, and agile data infrastructure. This means that staff can access what they need to work, from anywhere at anytime and similarly for public facing digital services.

- 12.20 Mobile ways of working technologies – supporting new ways of working from anywhere and role-based workstyles for example we are currently piloting tablets for environmental health rather than laptops.
- 12.21 Big data – enabling service modelling and analysis by turning data into intelligence in order to understand and segment customers based on need and vulnerability. This element of the strategy is central to providing services with the knowledge they need in order to target services to those that need them.
- 12.22 Social and collaboration tools – driving business and social productivity. This element of the strategy is to provide the council with many new technologies such as Webchat, SMS and tools to support the use of Social Media such as Facebook and Twitter to support different ways of working. This includes telephony technology in order to improve call centre management and resourcing and customer relationship management in order to manage all customer transactions through one technological platform.
- 12.23 Our IT strategy provided by Suffolk County Council will underpin all our efforts to transform services delivering key enablers. These include the computers staff need to do their job, Customer relationship management (CRM) to gain understanding and knowledge about why the public contact us, new call centre technology enabling a more targeted and efficient service, and mobile telephones and technology so that where ever staff are they can be contacted and connected to a resident.

#### 12.24 **Public Access: Summary**

- 12.25 The public access vision is to create cohesive, sustainable and empowered communities that can thrive and become more resilient. It therefore encompasses, how we work with our communities, the tools we need to support us, the changes we need to make to services to enable this and where we will locate our services. It will require the councils to change the way things work now for the benefit of the public. The following examples illustrate where we are now and where we will be in one year's time.

##### ***Phone Enquiries:***

*Now* – If you call us now for an enquiry the first challenge is knowing which number to use. We have many published external telephone numbers. As a consequence many of the current enquiries go through to the wrong area causing delays and frustration.

If you call the contact centre and all of our lines are busy, your call keeps ringing and our system doesn't inform us that you are waiting. So at peak times several of our calls go unanswered.

*The future* – we will publish a single contact number for the two councils. This will lead to an automated answering system which will allow you to choose the service you require. For those things which can be self-served, such as ordering a brown bin or paying for a service, these will be handled automatically.

Other enquiries will go to a new call centre with a modern phone system to allow us to answer your call quickly and efficiently.

### **Website Enquiry:**

*Now* - Currently if you have a general enquiry and try to find an answer on our websites it is not easy to find what you are looking for. We have too many pages, much of the information is out of date and the search facility is poor.

*The Future* – We will have a single shared website for the two councils. The website will be designed to make it much easier for you to carry out your transactions with us. Clear up to date information, with easy to access transactions for paying or requesting services. To account for the variable internet speeds across the two districts the website will have simple icons which use very little band width and we will make the site as easy as possible to navigate and access even in slow broadband speed areas.

### **Benefits Claimants:**

*Now* - As a benefits claimant living in Claydon or Freston and working part-time in Ipswich – if you visit the Shared Revenues Partnership office in the centre of Ipswich to provide evidence or ask a question – you are currently asked to travel out to Needham Market or Hadleigh to handle your enquiry.

*The Future* – You can submit your evidence online and most issues will be resolved on a self-serve basis via the web or an automated phone system. If you do need to see an advisor you will be able to in Ipswich, or our customer access points in the districts. For some complex cases we will provide extensive support via telephone, video link or a personal visit.

### **Planning Enquiry:**

*Now* – Most planning applications are completed online via the planning portal. If necessary, you can have an appointment with a duty planner in Needham Market or Hadleigh and you have to travel to us.

*The Future* – We will have a single joint website, which will be kept fully up to date and easier to navigate so that more people will be able to self-serve and complete their planning enquiries online. At the customer access points in the districts appointments can be made to meet or video conference a planning officer. If you are based away from these – there will be the potential (if needed) for the planning officer to arrange to meet you at the site as they can work flexibly from one of our locally shared offices across the Public Sector.

### **Building Control:**

*Now* - You can call in for an inspection and you can visit the office to talk with a Building Control Officer.

*The Future* – We will continue to maintain our commercial viability and competitive edge by being flexible and sensitive to all our customers. You will be able to book an inspection appointment by phone, online and if you need to see an officer, you can also do this at our customer access points. Alternatively, you could make an arrangement for them to see you nearer to home, or on-site. If you have a general enquiry you will be able to access the latest guidance and information on our new website.

### ***Housing Repairs:***

*Now* – housing repairs are currently handled by a contractor in Babergh and an in-house repairs team in Mid Suffolk. Contacts are mainly by phone and in Babergh these go via the call centre. In Mid Suffolk some pass through the switch board, some via the call centre, some direct to the administrators in the team and others to the work supervisors. This confusion can cause delay and frustration. Jobs are then booked with either the contractor or the repairs team.

*The future* – both councils have already decided to bring responsive repairs in-house through a new In-house Repairs and Maintenance service we aim to review what we repair and the service standards for this to have a common, decent homes approach in both councils. Requests will be either on-line or via a single contact number routed through the call centre. We aim to reduce the number and length of calls taken by the team freeing up resource to be able to book jobs in a more efficient manner with the most efficient routes and to monitor delivery performance to help improve productivity.

### ***Meeting Expectations:***

*Now* – many of our customers expect to be able to do what they want to do with us at the times that work for them. They are familiar with the service other organisations provide which enables them to order products and pay bills online or on the phone at any time of the day or night.. We only offer this facility for some services such as making planning applications.

*The future* - To meet the expectations of most of our residents we will provide the same simple, self-service 24hr facility.

## **12.26 Public Access Strategy Key next steps**

- |   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| (a) Begin service transformation with services  | Aug – Oct 2016    |
| (b) Development and delivery of a detailed Public Access Implementation plan including EQIA | end Sept onwards  |
| (c) Develop detailed plan for new face to face arrangements                                 | Oct – Dec 2016    |
| (d) Develop customer insight needed to create call centre                                   | Oct – Dec 2016    |
| (e) Launch new joint website  | Oct – Dec 2016    |
| (f) New tablets, laptops and mobile phones for staff  | Oct – March 2017  |
| (g) New call centre technology  | Jan – March 2017  |
| (h) New paperless ways of working   | Jan – March 2017  |
| (i) Develop CRM and start implementation  | April – June 2017 |
| (j) New face to face arrangements in place  | April - June 2017 |
| (k) Next iteration of joint website   | Oct – Dec 2017    |

### 13. Section Two: Headquarter Accommodation Options Appraisal

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have been considering their headquarters accommodation options since the integration of the Councils two staff teams into one fully integrated workforce in 2013.

As a result of our emerging Public Access Strategy work, and as recognised by Strategy and Executive Committees in 2014, we now have an opportunity to reconsider the location for the headquarters as discussed in the accommodation review. In reports to Executive (X/51/14) and Strategy (P63), it was recognised and recommended that:

- (a) The integration process was well advanced, but that there was a need to deal with a number of practical issues such as ICT and organisational development, and that an Accommodation Strategy was essential in dealing with these issues
- (b) The status quo was not an option for accommodation and that the occupation of both buildings resulted in inefficiencies and costs; and was a block to full integration, and collaboration
- (c) Future savings and costs were important factors, but more important was the quality of the arrangements for the public, staff, Members and partners.
- (d) Future accommodation must be able to support agile working, team working and collaborative working – in essence the fourth priority of *Smaller, Smarter, Swifter*. There was a strong desire to move on from a traditional local government management style.

There are now four options which this report will consider. They are:

Option 1: Locate to Hadleigh Offices or

Option 2: Locate to Needham Market Offices or

Option 3: Share accommodation in Endeavour House with Suffolk County Council  
and other public sector partners or

Option 4: Build a new building for the Councils

### 14. **Strategic Context**

The historic headquarters of the Councils, in Hadleigh and Needham Market, both continue to be used to provide accommodation for staff and deliver services to communities. The two buildings offer traditional, inflexible, segmented working space and the Councils are incurring avoidable revenue and capital costs as a result of maintaining two separate office headquarters. With the likelihood of reduced traditional funding arrangements continuing and the Councils finances being stretched for the foreseeable future, it is essential that we develop an accommodation strategy and use our existing property assets to contribute towards our aim to be financially sustainable Councils.

Our current traditional approach to office accommodation provision does not support the Councils with their aims and objectives around collaboration, rationalising the public sector estate and integration of the two councils. It should be noted that Public Sector Hubs have been created in the West at West Suffolk House and in the East at Riverside to support collaboration.

## 15. Options Appraisal

An options appraisal has been undertaken for each of the four options. The appraisal includes; the financial viability, benefits, disadvantages and risks. Each appraisal should be compared against the baseline case below which sets out the current shared running costs under the existing accommodation arrangements.

Description	Costs
Annual cost of current provision at Needham Market and Hadleigh combined	£1,083,885

In a table for each option presented below, information is provided about costs, where costs are estimated they are shown marked (E).

In addition there is a narrative which sets out; benefits and disadvantages. The narrative also provides additional qualitative information where it is appropriate to the options appraisal.

### 15.1 Costs and Risks applicable to all options

There will be a range of costs which apply to all options. These have not been included in the tables but are outlined below.

- (a) Removal costs
- (b) Costs associated with transitional arrangements, i.e. overlap of lease costs and existing arrangements or costs associated with decanting whilst building maintenance occurs.
- (c) Increase in staff journey times. We will be working with staff to look at how flexible working arrangements can be used to support working from home and across the districts to mitigate the impact of additional travel to work.
- (d) Provision of Green Travel plan

Risk Description	Mitigation Measures
The cost of upgrading ICT Infrastructure where not already provided for, will significantly impact on capital borrowing.	To make financial provision for these costs if Options 1 or 4
Opportunities to work with Public Sector colleagues collaboratively and in a whole system way will be more difficult	Make provision for the additional travel and resources required to work collaboratively.
If current buildings are retained, the Councils have a liable for current catch-up repairs and the ongoing repairs and improvements to any buildings in their ownership.	To make financial provision in revenue and capital programme.



The cost of re-modelling the existing building will require capital investment.	Provision will have to be made in the capital programme for the remodelling
The Councils are unable to maintain their identities if they share accommodation in a public service village.	Branding and identity will be prioritised as part of negotiations with Suffolk County Council
A suitable site may not be available immediately, applicable to option 4	Make additional financial provision and return to the options appraisal
Construction could be delayed or costs could increase, applicable to option 4	Make additional financial provision
Vacating either or both existing Headquarter sites has a socio-economic impact in Needham Market and Hadleigh	Awareness and understanding of likely impact (see section 18 below) and ensure sites are redeveloped

## 16. Socio and Economic Impact

- 16.1 It is difficult to ascertain the exact social and economic impact on Hadleigh and Needham Market in the event that a decision is made to vacate one or both the current office sites. There are many variable factors to consider and we do not have access to how much the workforce spends in the local high streets. However, we should assume that there will be an impact through any decision that removes the HQs and the workforce from either or both locations. There has been a gradual reduction in impact on both Hadleigh and Needham Market over the last three years as both offices are not fully occupied.
- 16.2 There are mitigation measures that will come through from the redevelopment of either or both sites. Carter Jonas were asked to provide an overview of the social and economic impact of redevelopment of the current sites which is summarised in Appendix B.

## 17. Option 1 – Locate to Hadleigh Offices

### 17.1 Description of the Hadleigh Offices

The Hadleigh property comprises a number of inter-linked (and listed) buildings. The accommodation is inefficient in planning terms with a significant amount of irregularly shaped space, poor circulation routes and cellularisation caused by structural walls. The specification is low, with single-glazed windows and perimeter trunking. The building was refurbished in the 1980s and has been well-maintained since. However, the inefficiency of the internal layout, combined with the Listing of the space, makes the building unsuitable in many ways for meeting key organisational objectives. Circulation throughout the buildings is poor with many restricted corridors, pinch points and changes in level.

A scheme to extend and connect the listed properties including the construction of a central, showcase, tiered council chamber was recognised with an architectural award in the 1980's for the intuitive and sympathetic manner in which the listed buildings were incorporated into a holistic scheme.

The listed building elements generally comprise a solid masonry structure with timber floors and tile covered pitched roofs. Windows throughout comprise single glazed, timber framed units.

The accommodation is heavily cellularised which is influenced by the configuration of the listed buildings. In addition, where the buildings have been extended, the structure of the extension, via a timber frame with supplemental steel tensioning, significantly constrains the internal layout which is uneconomic.

Power and data distribution is generally by perimeter trunking; air conditioning is provided to a number of isolated rooms by local units with remote external condensers.

*Source LSH Report*

The Hadleigh building will require substantial alteration to provide modern open plan working space, which supports an agile, networked culture. ICT infrastructure will require significant upgrade to meet the Councils IT Strategy requirements. The building will accommodate approximately 295 desks but this will mean utilising all of the available floor space, leaving very little capacity for meeting rooms and breakout space.

## 17.2 Financial Viability

Description	Costs (Revenue)	Costs (Capital)
Annual Running Costs	£470,608	
Catch- Up repairs		£365,000
ICT upgrade Costs		£500,000 (E)
Re-modelling existing building to modern standards		£1,700,000 (E)
Capital Cost of 1 Satellite Office		£100,751
Annual Running Cost of Satellite Office	£87,642	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£588,250</b>	<b>£2,663,751</b>
Source LSH and Carter Jonas Reports		

## 17.3 Benefits

- (a) The Hadleigh office has a fully functioning Council Chamber.
- (b) Annual revenue running costs are low.
- (c) Costs for one satellite office only will be required to support this option.
- (d) The Councils will have a workforce in the Babergh District.

## 17.4 Disadvantages

- (a) The ICT infrastructure requires significant upgrade to support the requirements of the whole workforce. The cost of upgrade has been estimated at £500,000.
- (b) Changes to the way the workplace is used, headcount numbers and service delivery mean that the buildings are no longer fit for purpose. This building is inefficient, oversized, costly and in the wrong locations for service delivery.
- (c) There is insufficient car parking on site for the full integrated staff team.
- (d) There will be significant capital costs to re-model the existing building to a standard which supports delivery of services in an agile, networked organisation. Detailed costs are not available. However a broad estimate has been provided using an industry standard office fit out methodology.
- (e) The Councils would have an ongoing financial liability for repairs and improvements to the buildings and site, to ensure they are maintained in good condition. There will also be cost implications to ensure that the working environment remains in-line and up-to-date with standards expected of office buildings as these evolve.
- (f) Capital value to be achieved from the redevelopment of the site will be lost.
- (g) Efficiencies, whole system working and collaborative opportunities across Suffolk would be more difficult.
- (h) Public transport services to Hadleigh are limited.
- (i) There will be an impact on the local economy in Needham Market through staff moving to Hadleigh.

## **18. Option 2 – Locate to Needham Market**

### **18.1 Description of the Needham Market Office**

The property comprises a four storey listed building, (Hurstlea House) which dates from the mid 1800's and has been extended to the rear over two storeys; the Mid Suffolk Council Chamber is located within the first floor of the 1960's extension. Annexed to the listed building is a substantial, two storey office building of steel framed construction which dates from the early 1980's.

The listed building element forms office accommodation which is heavily cellularised reflecting the layout of the original dwelling house – it is therefore inefficient in terms of use and occupation. Circulation is via principal and secondary staircases and that building has no lift. The building is constructed of solid masonry, with single glazed, timber sash windows, timber doors and a slate covered pitched roof. Internally, the building is provided with carpet tile floor finishes to timber floors and surface mounted light fittings to plastered ceilings. Power and data installations are accommodated within perimeter trunking. The incoming gas supply for the whole building is located within the basement. There is no air conditioning within the building.

The 1980's element of the building is constructed via a steel frame with cavity masonry cladding; windows comprise single glazed, aluminum framed units with a

tile covered pitched roof. Internally, the building is provided with carpet tile floor finishes to concrete floors. Ceilings comprise suspended ceilings with recessed modular light units, the majority of the lighting was changed in 2012 to LED fittings. Power and data installations are accommodated within perimeter trunking and power poles. There is a central lift within the building. The incoming water and electrical supplies are located within the ground floor. There are a number of wall mounted air conditioning units located within isolated cellular rooms.

The site sprawls over a large site incorporating many separate external areas. The main entrance to the site is via the High Street and the reception is suited to this function. Visitors arriving by car use a further entrance to the rear of the property. There are substantial grounds which incorporate sections of the original, stone boundary to the settlement which falls within the listing.

There are two further, single storey, timber framed outbuildings which comprise a generator housing and external sports store.

*Source LSH Report*

The Needham Market building will require substantial alteration to provide modern open plan working space, which supports an agile, networked culture. The building has a significant backlog of catch up repairs. The building will accommodate approximately 295 desks but this will require utilisation of all the available floor space with limited capacity remaining for meeting rooms and breakout space.

## 18.2 Financial Viability

Description	Costs (Revenue)	Costs (Capital)
Annual Running Costs	£613,277	
Catch- Up repairs		£1,778,000
Re-modelling existing building to modern standards		£1,700,000 (E)
Capital Cost of 1 Satellite Office		£100,751
Annual Running Cost of Satellite Office	£87,642	
Totals	£700,919	£3,578,751
Source LSH and Carter Jonas Reports		

## 18.3 Benefits

- (a) ICT infrastructure is in place.
- (b) The site is geographically central for both Council districts and would minimise travel costs for visiting officers.
- (c) Needham Market has rail and bus links.

- (d) Costs for one satellite office only will be required to support this option.
- (e) The Councils will maintain a workforce in the Mid Suffolk District.

#### **18.4 Disadvantages**

- (a) Changes to the way the workplace is used, headcount numbers and service delivery mean that the buildings are no longer fit for purpose. This building is inefficient, oversized, costly and in the wrong locations for service delivery.
- (b) There is insufficient car parking on site for the full integrated staff team.
- (c) There will be significant capital costs to re-model the existing building to a standard which supports delivery of services in an agile, networked organisation. Detailed costs are not available. However a broad estimate has been provided using an industry standard office fit out methodology.
- (d) The Councils would have an ongoing financial liability for repairs and improvements to the buildings and site, to ensure they are maintained in good condition. There will also be cost implications to ensure that the working environment remains in-line and up-to-date with standards expected of office buildings as these evolve.
- (e) Capital value to be achieved from the redevelopment of the site will be lost.
- (f) Efficiencies, whole system working and collaborative opportunities across Suffolk would be more difficult.
- (g) There will be an impact on the local economy in Hadleigh through staff moving to Needham Market.
- (h) A high level of costs relating to catch up repairs to achieve a thermal insulation standard which is acceptable is required.

### **19. Option 3 – Share accommodation in Endeavour House with SCC and other public sector partners**

#### **19.1 Description of the Endeavour House Option**

The property consists of five floors and was built in 2003 it is located in central Ipswich alongside Ipswich Borough Council. The accommodation provides a modern open space working environment which is occupied by a range of Suffolk County Council services and other Public Sector Partners. The building has a fully functioning Council Chamber.

The Councils could lease office space in Endeavour House. The proposed lease provides for 295 desks on one floor, use of meeting rooms and facilities. In addition the Councils will have use of SCC buildings throughout the County for meetings and touch down points for officers to meet and work.

#### **19.2 Financial Viability**

Description	Revenue Costs	Capital Costs
Annual Running Costs inc. Lease Costs (295 desks)	£633,000	
Fit out costs		£50,000 (E)
Capital Cost of 2 Satellite Offices		£201,502
Annual Running Cost of Satellite Offices	£175,284	
Totals	£808,284	£251,502
Source LSH and Carter Jonas Reports		

### 19.3 Benefits

- (a) The proposed lease agreement will enable the Councils to be flexible about the space, number of desks and facilities required over time.
- (b) There will not be any financial liability for repairs and improvements to buildings or upgrade of environment to meet changing working environments.
- (c) The ICT services and infrastructure are in place through existing working arrangements with Suffolk County Council.
- (d) Capital value from the redevelopment of both sites can be achieved.
- (e) Provides 'turn-key' access to office environment for new ways of agile 21<sup>st</sup> Century working – open plan, quiet office space with breakout areas, on site facilities
- (f) The Councils will be able to access all SCC Buildings across Suffolk for workspace and meetings. This will enable staff to work across a range of places, in a flexible way.
- (g) Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils will be located within a 'Public Sector Village' enabling a collaborative approach to service delivery
- (h) Endeavour House has very good public transport links for visitors.

### 19.4 Disadvantages

- (a) The Councils headquarters will not be located in their districts.
- (b) Revenue costs are higher than Options 1 & 2 in terms of running costs, but the capital financing costs associated with having to refurbish the Hadleigh or Needham Market offices would not be incurred.
- (c) There are costs of setting up and running two satellite offices.

## 20. Option 4 – Build a new building for the Councils

## 20.1 Description of the new build Option

This option describes the costs associated with building a new headquarters for the councils. It is assumed that the site would be on the Ipswich fringe, as recommended by Lambert Smith Hampton and therefore includes the cost of setting up and running two satellite offices. The costs given below are estimated as clearly it would not be until further work commenced that a more accurate cost estimate could be provided. The costs also do not include the purchase of a site or second phase fit out.

## 20.2 Financial Viability

Description	Revenue Costs	Capital Costs
Construction Build Costs (not including land or fit out)		£7,300,000
Annual Running Costs	£500,000	
Capital Cost of 2 Satellite Office		£201,502
Annual Running Cost of Satellite Office	£175,284	
Totals	£675,284	£7,501,502
Source LSH and Carter Jonas Reports		

## 20.3 Benefits

- (a) The Councils could build in any chosen location subject to land availability.
- (b) The design of any new building can be tailored to aspirations to provide an environment for new ways of working – open plan, quiet office space with breakout areas, on site facilities subject to viability.
- (c) Revenue running costs and repair costs will be lower.
- (d) Capital value from the redevelopment of both existing sites will be achieved.

## 20.4 Disadvantages

- (a) The building could take several years to complete. A site will be required, planning approval and construction could lead to a timeframe which is two to four years from point of decision.
- (b) A broad estimate of costs using an industry standard office fit out methodology, which assumes a cost of approximately £4,000.00 per person. Using the benchmark of 295 desks this could be in the region of £1,7M should be added to the build costs.

(c) The capital costs for a new build will be high. Borrowing will be required to fund the capital costs. Interest and minimum revenue provision (MRP) charges have not been included in the revenue costs.

(d) The £7.5M is an estimate for build costs only and does not include the cost of land and associated development costs e.g. surveys, planning permission etc.

**21. Summary table of Options 1 – 4**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Revenue Costs</b>	<b>Capital Costs</b>
1 Locate to Hadleigh Offices	£588,250	£2,663,751
2 Locate to Needham Market Offices	£700,919	£3,578,751
3 Share accommodation with Suffolk County Council in Endeavour House	£808,284	£251,502
4 Build a new building	£675,284	£7,501,502



## 22. SECTION THREE: SITE OPTIONS

- 22.1 The attached Part II confidential report outlines the site assessment of the options for each of the current office sites at Corks Lane, Hadleigh and High Street, Needham Market, should either or both be vacated. It outlines current thinking, makes recommendations on how to take proposals forward if required, and starts to consider the potential of each site. This work will be developed fully as part of the Assets and Investments framework. Due to the commercially sensitive nature of the information this is a Part II report.

## 23. CONCLUSIONS

- 23.1 This report has presented the Public Access Strategy for the councils and four options for re-location of the Councils' headquarters building. Council is asked to:
- (a) approve the emerging Public Access Strategy
  - (b) Choose one of the four accommodation options
  - (c) Note the information relating to site options contained above and in the Part II confidential report.

## 24. Appendices

Title	Location
(a) Equality Impact Assessment	Attached as Appendix A
(b) Socio and Economic Impact	Attached as Appendix B

## 25. Background Documents

Executive October 2014 X/51/14 and Strategy P63

Executive September 2015 X/36/15 and Strategy R44

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Public Access Transformation

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# Agenda Item 17

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

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