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COMMITTEE:	MID SUFFOLK CABINET
DATE:	TUESDAY, 5 DECEMBER 2023 9.30 AM
VENUE:	FRINK ROOM (ELISABETH) - ENDEAVOUR HOUSE

Teresa Davis	Cabinet Member for Thriving Towns & Rural Communities
Rachel Eburne	Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources
Andrew Mellen	Cabinet Member for Performance & Resilience
Andrew Stringer	Cabinet Member for Heritage, Planning & Infrastructure
Tim Weller	Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture and Wellbeing
Richard Winch	Cabinet Member for Housing and Property

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AGENDA

PART 1

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PRESS AND PUBLIC PRESENT

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- 1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS**
- 3 **MCa/23/29 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER 2023** 5 - 14
- 4 **TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF PETITIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S PETITION SCHEME**
- 5 **QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS**
- 6 **MATTERS REFERRED BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OR JOINT AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEES**
- 7 **FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST**

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

[Forthcoming Decisions List - Mid Suffolk District Council](#)

- 8 **MCa/23/30 FINANCIAL MONITORING QUARTER 2 2023/24** 15 - 40
- Cabinet Member for Finance and Resource
- 9 **MCa/23/31 UPDATE ON THE REGULATOR OF SOCIAL HOUSING REFERRAL AND OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE POSITION** 41 - 44
- Cabinet Member for Property and Housing
- 10 **MCa/23/32 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023-24 - QUARTER 2** 45 - 82
- Cabinet Member for Performance and Resilience
- To note the information contained within the papers for the performance across the whole Council for the period 1 July to 30 September 2023 (Q2) giving the opportunity to reflect and comment on progress made against the key priorities aligned to the Corporate Plan 2019 – 2027.
- 11 **MCa/23/33 MSDC RINGFENCED FUNDING FOR RURAL TRANSPORT PROVISION - ADDENDUM RE: FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION** 83 - 84
- Cabinet Member for Thriving Towns and Rural Communities
- 12 **MCa/23/34 SKILLS & INNOVATION CENTRE ON GATEWAY 14** 85 - 98
- Cabinet Member for Housing and Property
- 13 **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 2 of the Agenda is satisfied that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.
- 14 **MCa/23/34 - APPENDICES A TO D - SKILLS & INNOVATION CENTRE ON GATEWAY 14** 99 - 210
- Cabinet Member for Housing and Property

Date and Time of next meeting

Please note that the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 9 January 2024 at 9.30 am.

For more information about this meeting, including access arrangements and facilities for people with disabilities, please contact the Committee Officer, Henriette Holloway on: 01449 724681 or Email: Committees@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

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Agenda Item 3

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **MID SUFFOLK CABINET** held in the Britten Room - Endeavour House on Tuesday, 7 November 2023

PRESENT:

Councillors:	Teresa Davis	Rachel Eburne
	Andrew Mellen	Andrew Stringer
	Tim Weller	Richard Winch

In attendance:

Councillors: Keith Scarff
John Whitehead

Officers: Chief Executive (AC)
Deputy Chief Executive (KN)
Director – Planning and Building Control (TB)
Director - Operations (ME)
Director - Corporate Resources and Section 151 Officer (ME)
Director - Housing (DF)
Director - Customers, Digital Transformation and Improvements (SW)
Corporate Manager- Governance & Civic Office, Deputy Monitoring Officer (JR)
Strategic Projects and Delivery Manager (SS)
Assistant Manager – Governance (HH)

Apologies:

None

45 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS

None received.

46 MCA/23/ 24 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 OCTOBER 2023

It was **RESOLVED**: -

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 3 October 2023 be signed and confirmed as a correct record.

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

None received.

48 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS

48.1 The Chair, Councillor Andrew Mellen, invited Councillor John Matthissen to ask his question.

48.2 Councillor Matthissen posed his question to Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture and Wellbeing:

What plans does the administration have to respond to the government consultation on disposable vapes and other tobacco products, noting that there is widespread public concern about the health and environmentally damaging effects of rapidly rising use, especially among young people. Within local government there is additional concern at the danger to staff from the numerous fires when vapes containing lithium batteries are crushed during waste processing and cause fires to break out.

48.3 The Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture and Wellbeing responded:

48.4 The administration does propose to respond to the Department of Health and Social Care's consultation on all three questions posed, including the proposal to introduce new powers for local authorities in England and Wales, to issue fixed penalty notices to enforce age of sale legislation of tobacco products and vapes. Thinking about health, although for public health safety and chiefly environmental reasons many are opposing disposable vapes, vapes are recognised as one of the best ways for smokers to reduce smoking. Suffolk 's local authority and health partners prescribe vapes as part of their work to encourage smokers to quit tobacco. Looking at retailers; retailers are legally obliged to promote and fund the recycling of vapes. However, we know that the reality is not uniform across Suffolk. Neither Mid Suffolk's waste team nor all Suffolk County Council's trading standards teams have enforcement powers against retailers, who fail to comply with the waste electrical and electronic equipment regulations. For example, by not displaying or giving information about recycling to customers or not collecting or being part of a recycling scheme. So requesting the Government to bring forward enforcement powers will form part of this administration's response to the consultation.

48.5 Turning to the size of the problem. Research by independent organisation material focus reveals that approximately 5 million disposable vapes are thrown away each week in the UK. That equates to around 8000 per week in Suffolk. Research tells us that 73% of vapers don't recycle. So, by my rudimentary calculations that's over five and a half thousand disposable vapes discarded across the county every week. Disposable vapes can be recycled with electrical items at any of Suffolk's 11 recycling centres. Many supermarkets and retailers and retailers collect vapes in battery collection tubes in store, however, many don't have clear information or signage for customers about this.

48.6 Touching on Counsellor Matthiessen's point about fire. Incorrect disposal of vapes into kerb-side recycling or residual waste collections can cause fires resulting in the loss of valuable recycling materials, risk to our officers and

the general public. Vapes contain lithium-ion batteries, which can ignite if damaged, when litter is crushed in a waste collection vehicle or moved by machine to a waste handling facility. The Environmental Services Association reports that 48% of all waste fires in the UK each year are caused by lithium-ion batteries, costing £158m annually to waste operators fire service and the environment. Although it's often difficult to determine the exact cause of a fire, investigations are always conducted by our Fire Rescue service. Since February 2022, a total of seven fires in Suffolk's waste transfer stations, recycling centres and material recycling facilities have been attributed to batteries, such as those found in vapes.

48.7 Finally, addressing prospect of a ban. A number of UK organisations including the Local Government Association, the Waste and Resources Action programme among others, have called for a ban on disposable vape. The European Union are considering a ban, France is introducing a ban next month to join Germany, Australia and New Zealand and research from the Scottish Government also indicates a ban maybe eminent. So this administration similarly supports a ban on disposable vapes, and will make its position known to the Secretary of State for Department of Health and Social Care.

48.8 The Chair invited Councillor Matthissen to ask a follow up question:

48.9 Councillor Matthissen asked the following question:

In the interim of waiting for Government to respond to those that call for banning disposal vapes, will we be working with Trading Standards and the police and also the Planning Department, because I know a shop window in Stowmarket which seems to be covered in pictures of disposable vapes. It is a shop which is just about to open. I wonder whether that falls within our advertising planning control regime.

48.10 Councillor Weller responded:

48.11 In terms of working with trading standards, I touched on it, in my response that Trading Standards don't have powers currently, an amendment to legislation is required in order to enable that, but we'll be asking for that via the consultation.

48.12 The Director for Planning and Building Control responded to the question relating to the shop window and advised that Councillor Matthissen to forwarded photographs of the shop in question, because shops could be advertising on their own premises, but it might be possible for Planning Enforcement to investigate.

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

There were no matters referred from the Overview and Scrutiny or the Joint Audit

and Standards Committees.

50 FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST

Councillor Rachel Eburne requested that the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan be added to the Forthcoming Decisions List.

51 MCA/23/25 BUILDING SERVICES TRANSFORMATION

- 51.1 The Chair invited the Cabinet Member for Housing and Property to introduce the report.
- 51.2 Councillor Richard Winch introduced the report and proposed the recommendation as detailed in the report.
- 51.3 Councillor Rachel Eburne seconded the recommendation.
- 51.4 In response to questions from other Members attending the meeting, regarding the HRA Business Plan and the customer satisfaction survey in appendix A, Councillor Winch responded that this administration had inherited the current Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business plan, which did not provide enough data and details for the numbers to be understood. Therefore, the current administration had inherited a problem that it had to deal with and which it aimed to resolve. In relation to the tenant survey, there were only two ways to measure the result of a survey. One was value for money and the other was satisfaction. The Council needed to move to a position where the people were happy with the services provided and Councillor Winch stated that the Council was not currently in a position to do this. There were cost implications and a need to achieve value for money for the community. This was a difficult balance to accomplish but the aim was to achieve this by the end of the administration's term.
- 51.5 The Director for Housing advised Members that she did not anticipate having any problems getting tenants into properties. A property stock survey was being undertaken with the initial aim of surveying 50% of the housing stock by next year. However, the team was now working towards surveying 100% of the housing stock by next year. In the past Building Services had been underfunded and this was currently being addressed.
- 51.6 In response to Members concerns of the pressures for the HRA Business Plan, the Director for Housing assured Members that progress had been made since last year and she will ensure that a successful HRA Business Plan will be produced.
- 51.7 During the debate Councillor Rachel Eburne stated that tenants had been let down by the previous administration and that this would have an effect on the investments that could be made in the years ahead.
- 51.8 Councillor Andrew Stringer stated that tenants relied on and trusted the Council, as their landlords. However, some repairs were not being

undertaken and this large amount of money needed to be invested into the services to bring everything up to standard. Councillor Stringer was content to invest this amount of money into the building service.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED: -

That Mid Suffolk Cabinet agreed to the release of £672k from reserves to expedite the completion of outstanding repairs and enable delivery of the next phase of the Building Services Transformation and Improvement Programmes.

REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet approval is required to release this level of resource from reserves.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

2.2 *Delay the request for release of the required resources until February 2024, when the HRA budget for 2024/25 is agreed* – This option is not recommended because it would slow down improvements to the quality of tenants' homes by taking significantly longer to clear outstanding repairs, while also risking greater deterioration of the Council's housing assets. A delay in the release of resources to deliver long term change would mean losing several months of lead in time required for commissioning of contracts and staff recruitment; in turn this would delay positive impacts for tenants and their homes.

2.3 *Do nothing* - This option is not recommended because it would not help to clear the backlog of outstanding repairs to tenants' homes. In addition, the more fundamental, long term transformational improvements to service provision referred to above could not be taken forward because these also require additional resource.

Any Declarations of Interests Declared: None

Any Dispensation Granted: None

52 MCA/23/26 UPDATE OF THE INSULATION SCHEME FOR MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

52.1 The Chair invited the Cabinet Member for Housing and Property to introduce the report.

52.2 Councillor Richard Winch introduced the report and proposed the recommendation, as detailed in the report.

52.3 Councillor Eburne seconded the recommendations.

52.4 Councillor Rachel Eburne enquired that as Aron Insulation accessed other grants, would it be possible to get data from them on heating homes and would the Council be able to access the same grants as Aron Insulation.

- 52.5 Councillor Winch agreed that it was key to get access to how many homes were getting additional grant money.
- 52.6 Councillor Andrew Mellen queried how this scheme would be promoted and Councillor Winch responded that the scheme would be promoted through posters, village magazines, social media and the Council's website as outlined in the plan in the attached appendix.
- 52.7 Councillor Andrew Mellen questioned if there was a capacity to deliver and how many homes would be eligible. The Director for Housing responded that Aron Insulation was a large organisation and were well resourced to manage this scheme.
- 52.8 Councillor Winch responded to questions from other members attending the meeting and that the scheme was straightforward to access, and he did not foresee any issues, unless it was a complicated application for extended insulation, which accesses several grants. In addition, he stated that it was value for money, as there was a cap on the grant of £3.5K per house, and even if the applicant was eligible to receive the grant, the assessment might show that it was not value for money to undertake the work.
- 52.9 During the debate Members agreed that the Insulation Scheme was coming forward at the right time just before winter and would make a difference to residents in the District and that by implementing this scheme the Council was able to provide further funding to the organisation that undertook the work.
- 52.10 Councillor Richard Winch summed up the issues and added that the Scheme would be reviewed early next year, and a decision would be made, if the Scheme needed any modification.
- 52.11 Councillor Andrew Mellen stated that it was good that £2M had been set aside from last year's budget and that the project could lead to accessing funding for other projects, which added significant value to the Insulation Scheme. Even if it was a broad scheme, it would help those residents, who for instance, had not considered having loft insulation before, to get the loft cleared and install insulation. The funding had been allocated via a budget amendment to the last administration's budget.

By a unanimous vote.

It was RESOLVED: -

That Members noted the report.

REASON FOR DECISION

To ensure that Members and senior leaders of the councils have oversight over an agreed party priority: to support homeowners and those in the private rented sector

to reduce energy costs.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: None

Any Declarations of Interests Declared: None

Any Dispensation Granted: None

53 MCA/23/27 POTENTIAL LOCAL LISTED BUILDING CONSENT ORDER FOR INSTALLING ENERGY EFFICIENCY MEASURES

- 53.1 The Chair invited the Cabinet Member for Housing and Property to induce the report.
- 53.2 Councillor Andrew Stringer introduced the report and proposed the recommendation, as detailed in the report.
- 53.3 Councillor Teresa Davies seconded the recommendation.
- 53.4 Councillor Richard Winch asked for a clarification of the consultation.
- 53.5 The Strategic and Professional Lead – Development Management and Heritage detailed how the consultation would be undertaken and that it was anticipated that strong opinions would be voiced by respondents. The purpose of the Consultation was to look at all the responses and seek expert advice to see if there was scope to continue the project. The Project was part of the strategy to mitigate against climate change,
- 53.6 Councillor Andrew Stringer stated that other authorities had identical buildings and would not need this individual approach to allow listed building to install energy efficient measures. There was an element of caution in the approach to the proposal, but a policy needed to be explored. Owners of listed buildings needed to be empowered to make their homes as energy-efficient as possible, and also to be advised what they were allowed to do in line with the order. It was about pushing the boundaries, knowing that the Council also had a responsibility to maintain listed buildings.
- 53.7 The Director for Planning and Building Control added that the Council would be able to geographically bound the order and this was encouraged by Historical England.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED: -

Cabinet approved to commence a seven-week period of consultation, commencing 10th November 2023 and ending 29th December 2023, on the proposed scope and conditions of a Local Listed Building Consent Order.

REASON FOR DECISION

A Local Listed Building Consent Order would make it easier for the owners of designated heritage assets to implement energy efficiency or other improvements to their buildings, in line with the Council's commitment to reach its net zero carbon commitments by 2030. Such improvements would also be beneficial to the buildings, in improving resilience to climate change.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

- 2.1 The first option is to continue relying on the traditional Listed Building Consent application process. Whilst this approach has been and remains the standard, feedback from councillors and the public suggests that it is perceived as inefficient and burdensome in terms of time and cost. Many works may of themselves be unobjectionable and therefore a streamlined approach would be advantageous in those circumstances.
- 2.2 The second option involves preparing for a seven-week consultation period to explore the feasibility and appropriateness of implementing a LLBCO. It is crucial to clarify that initiating this consultation does not automatically imply that such an Order will be enacted. Rather, the consultation aims to gather opinions on the LLBCO as a potential tool for achieving our carbon neutrality goals and assisting homeowners in making energy-efficient upgrades and other improvements to their properties. In that regard the benefits are various and would include energy efficiency and cost savings, as well as protecting these important historic buildings from the worst effects of climate change.
- 2.3 Given the district's rich heritage landscape, characterised by a diverse range of assets varying in age and significance, a prudent approach may involve piloting the LLBCO in a specific parish, village, or Conservation Area initially. This would allow for a more controlled evaluation of the Order's impact recognising that there may not be a 'one size fits all' solution.
- 2.4 The adoption of a LLBCO would signal the Council's ambition to meet its net zero carbon targets, particularly given the high proportion of listed buildings within the district. The Order would delineate explicit conditions aimed at minimising harm to affected heritage assets such that the works in question would be clearly and convincingly justified. Legal requirements mandate the annual review and monitoring of the LLBCO, providing an opportunity to assess effectiveness and make necessary adjustments. Should the Order result in unintended negative consequences for our historic buildings, options to amend or rescind it are available. Furthermore, this approach offers the advantage of co-designing the LLBCO details with external organisations and the community, thereby ensuring that the policy is shaped in a manner that addresses concerns related to the protection of listed buildings.

Any Declarations of Interests Declared: None

Any Dispensation Granted: None

54 MCA/23/28 HEALTHY BEHAVIOURS PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

54.1 The Chair invited the Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture and

Wellbeing to introduce the report.

- 54.2 Councillor Tim Weller introduced the report and proposed the recommendation, as detailed in the report,
- 54.3 Councillor Teresa Davies seconded the recommendation.
- 54.4 Councillor Richard Winch ask for clarification on how residents would get access to the services provided by Healthy Behaviours.
- 54.5 Councillor Weller advised Members that the Website was the Gateway to access the services on offer, however residents could also access via phone opportunities and get referred by health care professional.
- 54.6 Councillor Andrew Mellen queried how the wider publicity would be undertaken.
- 54.7 The Interim Director for Communities and Wellbeing responded that Public Health would lead the publicity via posters, and there had been discussion with the Portfolio holders on how these might look like and what other publications might be useful to encourage all members of the community to access the services.

By a unanimous vote.

It was RESOLVED: -

To note the report and the Healthy Behaviours Partnership Agreement

REASON FOR DECISION

So that Cabinet is updated on progress made with the partnership and development of a new Feel Good Suffolk Healthy Behaviours offer for Suffolk and understands the principles by which the partnership will operate and its key objectives to co-produce, deliver, and support the Healthy Behaviours offer for Suffolk, including:

- (a) Reducing smoking prevalence.
- (b) Reducing inactivity; and
- (c) Reducing the number of adults who are overweight or obese

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: None

Any Declarations of Interests Declared: None

Any Dispensation Granted: None

The business of the meeting was concluded at 10:30 am.

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Chair

Agenda Item 8

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: Cabinet	REPORT NUMBER: MCa/23/30
FROM: Councillor Rachel Eburne, Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources	DATE OF MEETING: 13/11/23
OFFICER: Melissa Evans, Director Corporate Resources	KEY DECISION REF NO. CAB428/CAB429

FINANCIAL MONITORING QUARTER 2 2023/24

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report summarises the financial activities of the Council for the second quarter of 2023/24, covering General Fund Revenue, the Housing Revenue Account and the Capital Programmes for both funds. There is a new requirement from the start of 2023/24 to monitor the Council's Prudential Indicators on a quarterly basis and this data is attached as Appendix C.

2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The recommended option is set out in the Recommendations. There are no other available options.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That, subject to any further budget variations that arise during the rest of the financial year, the projected surplus on the General Fund of £2.878m referred to in section 4.2 and Appendix A of the report be noted;
- 3.2 That, subject to any further budget variations that arise during the rest of the financial year, the projected overspend on the Housing Revenue Account of £1.488m and the underspend on the capital programme of £19.750m referred to in section 4.3 and Appendix B of the report be noted;
- 3.3 That, the Council's compliance with the Prudential Indicators during quarter two referred to in section 4.4 and Appendix C of the report be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION

To ensure that Members are kept informed of the financial position for both General Fund Revenue and Capital, Housing Revenue Account and Capital and the Prudential Indicators.

4. KEY INFORMATION

Background

- 4.1 The Cabinet receives financial monitoring reports on a quarterly basis. This report covers the financial activity for the second quarter of 2023/24 and the amendments to projections for the year where necessary. It is important to remember that the figures being presented are not actuals at Q2, they represent what the outturn will be at the year-end if current trends are maintained.
- 4.2 The General Fund forecast outturn is a surplus of £2.878m against a budget of £3.578m. This has arisen from a combination of factors including shortfalls in income. Additional unbudgeted income, in the form of investment dividends, is due to be received in 2023/24 however the amount of income and the date at which it will be received have not yet been confirmed. Similarly statutory increases to planning fees will take effect in year reducing the deficit, the effects of which will be reported in Q3. See Appendix A for further details of the variances to the Revenue Budget. The General Fund Capital outturn has been revised to an underspend in year of £19.750m, primarily influenced by Gateway 14 and Mid Suffolk Growth. Projects continue to be reviewed against current spend with the Project Managers. Further detailed analysis of the capital programme expenditure and funding will continue into Q3 and Q4.
- 4.3 The Housing Revenue Account forecast outturn has worsened from Q1 by £672k. A budgeted deficit of £0.816m is now forecast at £1,488m, the details of which are set out in appendix B. There is a significant variation anticipated on the HRA Capital Programme, only £20.210m of the £40.210m budget for new build and acquisitions is likely to be spent in 2023/24. The underspend of £20m will be re-phased to subsequent years.
- 4.4 There have been no breaches of the council's Prudential Indicators in the second quarter, and none are anticipated for the remainder of 2023/24. The new quarterly monitoring report for Prudential Indicators is attached as Appendix C.

5. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE PLAN

- 5.1 Ensuring that the Council makes best use of its resources is what underpins the ability to achieve the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan. Specific links are to financially sustainable Councils, managing our corporate and housing assets effectively, and property investment to generate income.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 These are detailed in the report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no specific legal implications.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 Key risks are set out below:

Key Risk Description	Likelihood 1-4	Impact 1-4	Key Mitigation Measures	Risk Register and Reference*
We may be unable to react in a timely and effective way to financial demands.	3	3	Continued monitoring and reporting of the Councils financial forecast via quarterly reports to Cabinet. Reserves available to call upon.	Strategic Risk Register SRR004BDC
Service delivery may not be accomplished If economic conditions and other external factors are worse than budgeted for.	3	3	Budget control framework in place with Budget Holders and Assistant Directors with the Business Partner model operating effectively to support this. Continued monitoring and reporting of the Councils financial forecast during the year via quarterly reports to Cabinet.	Finance, Commissioning and Procurement ORR005BDC

9. CONSULTATIONS

9.1 Consultations have taken place with Directors, Corporate Managers and other Budget Managers as appropriate.

10. EQUALITY ANALYSIS

10.1 An equality analysis has not been completed because there is no action to be taken on service delivery as a result of this report.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Directors, Corporate Managers and other Budget Managers continue to consider the environmental impact of their budgets and take the opportunity to reduce their carbon footprint as opportunities arise.

11.2 In subsequent years to support the Council's commitment to be Carbon Neutral by 2030, several initiatives have and are being undertaken from a combination

of the Council's own resources and those secured from external sources. Some of these are set out below.

- 11.3 A solar multi-function carport to generate electricity has been installed at Stowmarket Leisure Centre. The estimated CO₂ savings are equivalent to nearly 9 times the volume of the Royal Albert Hall and it is capable of generating enough power to supply 52 average homes in Stowmarket.
- 11.4 OZEV supported EV charging points are being moved to the implementation phase.
- 11.5 A property list of carbon emitting buildings is being established for future retrofit consideration.
- 11.6 A performance review of clean power installations on Council assets and operations and maintenance contracts is being commissioned.

12. APPENDICES

Title	Location
General Fund Financial Monitoring Quarter 1 2023/24	APPENDIX A
Housing Revenue Account Financial Monitoring Quarter 1 2023/24	APPENDIX B
Prudential Indicators Quarterly Monitoring	APPENDIX C

13. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

20 February 2023 General Fund Budget 2023/24 and Four-Year Outlook – MC/22/35

20 February 2023 Housing Revenue Account Budget 2023/24 – MC/22/36

20 February 2023 Joint Capital, Investment and Treasury Management Strategies 2023/24 – MC/22/39

General Fund Financial Monitoring Quarter 2 2023/24

Mid Suffolk District Council
December 2023



1. Background

1. Background

2. The General Fund Budget for 2023/24 was approved by Council in February 2023. After the easing of COVID pressures on the Council's budget there continue to be economic challenges of higher interest rates, inflation and the resulting cost of living crisis. With higher costs and reductions in expected income, the impact of these factors across the whole organisation is projected to result in overspends.

3. Inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) remains high into the 2023/24 financial year, and while it is assumed to have reached a peak, continuing pressures on the cost of fuel, materials and services has been reflected in the forecast variances for 2023/24. Uncertainty over the continuing war in Ukraine and the developing situation in the Middle East have the potential to prolong or worsen fuel inflation.

4. The Bank of England base rate is currently at 5.25% (Oct. 2023) having levelled out slightly, monitoring continues to identify any risk to the Council's position.

5. Forecast position for 2023/24

6. Budget monitoring is a key tool and indicator on the delivery of the Council's plans and priorities for the year. There will be operational reasons for variances as well as the current inflationary pressures.

7. Based upon financial performance and discussions with budget managers and the Senior Leadership Team, key variations on expenditure and income compared to budget have been identified.

8. Additional unbudgeted income, in the form of investment dividends, is due to be received in 2023/24 however the amount of income and the date at which it will be received have not yet been confirmed. Similarly statutory increases to planning fees will take effect in year reducing the deficit, the effects of which will be reported in Q3

9. The overall position of the Council's Revenue General Fund for 2023/24

is forecast at Q2 to be a surplus of £2.878m, £700k less than budgeted. Finance is currently reviewing all corporate expenditure and income budgets, such as financing charges and interest income, given the current macro-economic situation and as part of the 2024/25 budget setting exercise..

10. The key variances that make up this overspend are shown in the following sections of this report. The largest single variance is on planning income which is £689k below budget, it is proposed that this will be funded from earmarked reserves.

11. Employee costs are approximately 50% of the Council's expenditure and an increase of 4% was included in the budget. The pay award for the 2023/24 year has yet to be settled but is likely to be in excess of the budgeted 4%. Recruitment remains challenging and the Council continues to experience gaps between people leaving the organisation and these posts being filled. The budget includes a £0.644m vacancy management factor of 5% on salaries centrally held outside of the service areas. The pending national pay award and the results of the Pay & Rewards project being undertaken have added pressure to staffing costs. At Q2 overall Salary costs are projected to be 3% below budget after use of the contingency, with some costs in Public Realm being reallocated to Babergh following a review of staff and asset utilisation.

2. General Fund Revenue – Forecast

Service Area		Budget	Full Year Forecast	Variance to Budget	Variance as % of
		£'000	£'000	£'000	
Net Service Costs	Assets & Investments	449	362	(88)	-20%
	Communities & Wellbeing	666	758	91	14%
	Corporate Resources	2,104	2,287	183	9%
	Customers, Digital Transformation & Improvement	2,287	2,222	(65)	-3%
	Economic Growth & Climate Change	496	496	1	0%
	Operations	3,819	3,692	(127)	-3%
	Housing	542	398	(145)	-27%
	Law & Governance	1,030	1,221	191	19%
	Planning & Building Control	1,403	2,022	619	44%
	HR & Organisational Development	694	727	33	5%
Senior Leadership Team	736	733	(3)	0%	
Housing Benefits	HB Transfer Payments	9,239	9,239		0%
	HB Grants and Contributions	(9,366)	(9,366)		0%
Net expenditure on services as above		14,100	14,791	691	5%
Recharges	Charge to HRA/Capital	(1,761)	(1,751)	9	-1%
Capital Financing Costs	Interest Payable - CIFCO	416	416		0%
	Interest Payable - Other	1,090	1,090		0%
	Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	1,475	1,475		0%
Investment Income	Pooled Funds Net Income	(566)	(566)		0%
	Interest Receivable - CIFCO	(1,144)	(1,144)		0%
	Interest Receivable - CIFCO Further Investment	(1,043)	(1,043)		0%
	Interest Receivable - Gateway 14	(97)	(97)		0%
	Interest Receivable - Other	(31)	(31)		0%
Total Net Cost of Services		12,441	13,141	700	6%
Government Grants	New Homes Bonus	(1,427)	(1,427)		0%
	Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	(132)	(132)		0%
	Services Grant	(92)	(92)		0%
	Rural Services Delivery Grant	(508)	(508)		0%
	Funding Guarantee	(450)	(450)		0%
Business Rates	Baseline Business Rates	(2,316)	(2,316)		0%
	S31 Business Rates Grant	(3,416)	(3,416)		0%
	Business Rates - Renewable Energy	(767)	(767)		0%
	Growth / Pooling Benefit	(678)	(678)		0%
	B/R Prior Year Deficit/(Surplus)	790	790		0
Council Tax	Council Tax	(6,846)	(6,846)		0%
	Council Tax Prior Year Deficit/(Surplus)	(177)	(177)		0%
Total Funding		(16,019)	(16,019)	-	0%
Net Position Before Reserves		(3,578)	(2,878)	700	-20%
Reserves	Strategic Transformation Infrastructure Fund	2,830	2,130	(700)	
	General Fund Working Balance	248	248		
	Community Development Fund	500	500		
		0	0	0	0

3. General Fund Revenue – Major Variances cont.

Service Area	Full Year Budget £'000	Full Year Forecast £'000	Variance Total £'000	Comments for variances over £10k	% Variance
Assets & Investments	449	362	(88)		-20%
Strategic Property	375	297	(78)	Major variances include £27K overspend on utilities from Wingfield Barns contingency risk. Currently being negotiated with operator. £80K income over budget from Co-operative store in Needham Market. £21k income over budget from tenant at Needham Lake - Duck & teapot café.	-21%
The Councils' Companies	75	65	(10)		-13%
Communities & Wellbeing	666	758	91		14%
Communities	742	794	51	£51k less than budgeted being taken from reserves for vacant post that will not be filled until Q4.	7%
Leisure Contracts	(76)	(36)	40	Negotiations ongoing with Management Company resulting in a risk of £40k overspend to budget due to lease receipts being reprofiled.	47%
Corporate Resources	1,881	2,064	183		10%
Finance, Commissioning & Procurement	1,881	2,064	183	Overspend represents recognition of vacancies in service areas against centrally held budgeted vacancy management factor. Overspend on Agency staffing to cover various vacancies in the team due to difficulty with recruitment and under budgeted on insurance premiums due to inflationary increases. Some overspends on resources will be offset by capitalisation of costs through Finance Transformation and new Financial Management System implementation.	10%
Customers, Digital Transformation & Improvement	2,287	2,222	(65)		-3%
Communications	235	230	(5)		-2%
Customer Operations	692	666	(26)	Underspend due to vacancies in Q1 & Q2. High turnover in staff at beginning of the year.	-4%
ICT	977	952	(25)	Underspend due to SCC contract being less than budgeted for and vacant Digital Support Analyst post for majority of the year.	-3%
Strategic Policy, Performance & Improvements	384	374	(9)		-2%
Economic Growth & Climate Change	496	496	1		0%
Climate Change	96	96	0		0%
Economic Growth & Climate Change	399	400	1		0%
Housing	542	398	(145)		-27%
PV Panels	(114)	(116)	(3)		2%
Housing Solutions	656	514	(142)	Underspend on salaries due to vacancies including Housing Needs and Standards Manager which has not been filled.	-22%
HR & Organisational Development	694	727	33		5%
HR & OD	694	727	33	Overspend due to additional resource in team brought in that wasn't budgeted for; approx. £18.5k. £5k overspend on recruitment advertising costs due to an increase in vacancies and £7.5k increase in Legal Expenses.	5%

3. General Fund Revenue – Major Variances cont.

Service Area	Full Year Budget £'000	Full Year Forecast £'000	Variance Total £'000	Comments for variances over £10k	% Variance
Law & Governance	1,030	1,221	191		19%
Electoral Services & Land Charges	69	173	104	Overspend on May 23 Elections of £37k. Land Charge income is forecast to be £55k under budget. £16k to be paid back to Elections Claim Unit (ECU) for 2021 Election underspend.	150%
Governance & Civic Office	466	540	74	£35k overspend due to an increase payable to each Councillor agreed after 22/23 budget was set. £10k estimate forecast for a Political Assistant role. £6k overspend on Car Mileage Allowances. £13k overspend on training & Materials. £8k overspend forecast on postage	16%
Internal Audit, Risk & Data	93	97	3		4%
Shared Legal Service	401	411	10	£10k overspend due to implementation costs for new Case Management System (CMS)	2%
Operations	3,819	3,692	(127)		-3%
Car Parking	(198)	(234)	(37)	£37K reduction on business rates costs for the year.	-19%
Health & Safety, Business Continuity and Emergency Planning	214	195	(19)	Costs from consultancy support at Corporate Manager Level to update Health & Safety requirements organisationally is being offset from substantive staffing vacancies resulting in a £19K underspend.	-9%
Public Protection	729	634	(95)	£98K of Employee costs for backlog COVID works funded by additional income from prior years deferred Contain Outbreak Management Funding (COMF) contributions. Incentives being funded in year across Operations and Communities teams to reduce health inequalities in our district due to the fallout of the COVID pandemic. Therefore budgeted substantive posts that are vacant in the year has resulted in the underspend. There is an expectation to be at full establishment during Quarter 03 of the financial year.	-13%
Public Realm	1,564	1,623	59	£51K overspend on vehicle fuels from inflationary fuel increase, £37K overspend on equipment and tools due to backlog of works, £31K overspend on vehicle costs and maintenance, £16K overspend on horticultural expenses and wild seed sowing for biodiversity, £15K overspend on tree felling costs, £15K overspend on protective clothing. £92K underspend on employee costs following review and correct allocations of resources, budgets to be amended next year to reflect.	4%
Recycling, Waste & Fleet	1,474	1,474	0		0%
Service Improvement (Environment & Community Services)	35	0	(35)	Current employee resource seconded to Corporate Services.	-100%
Planning & Building Control	1,403	2,022	619		44%
Building Control	245	176	(70)	Increased levels of income relating to House Name and Numbering as a result of development in the District.	-28%
Development Management, Heritage & Enforcement	684	1,325	641	50% reduction in income partially offset by staff vacancies.	94%
Service Improvement (Sustainable Communities)	38	39	0		0%
Strategic Planning	435	483	48	Shortfall in income due to claim window timings partially offset by staff vacancies.	11%
Senior Leadership Team	736	733	(3)		0%
Senior Leadership Team	736	733	(3)		0%
Grand Total	14,003	14,694	691		5%

4. Earmarked Reserves

Reserve	Opening Balance as at 31/03/23	Budget Movement From Reserve	Budget Movement To Reserve	Budget Balance as at 31/03/24	Actual Movement From Reserve 2023/24	Actual Movement To Reserve 2023/24	Further Commitments / Forecast 2023/4	Closing Balance as at 31/03/24	Committed 2024/25	Committed 2025/26	Committed 2026/27	Balance as at 31st March 2027
Business Rates & Council Tax	5,201,905	-	-	5,201,905	-	-	1,119,985	4,081,920				4,081,920
Business Rates Retention Pilot (BRRP)	482,883	- 88,548	-	394,335	-	-	12,390	381,945	- 28,978	- 19,319		333,648
Carry Forwards	128,799	-	-	128,799	-	-	29,496	99,303				99,303
Climate Change and Biodiversity	887,980	- 38,547	-	849,433	-	-	195,026	654,407				654,407
Commercial Development Risk Management	5,364,025	-	-	5,364,025	-	-	5,364,025	-				-
Community Housing Fund	165,759	- 24,932	-	140,827	-	-	-	140,827	- 34,416			106,411
Commuted Maintenance Payments	474,929	- 84,606	-	390,323	-	-	45,757	436,080				436,080
COVID 19	980,220	- 138,596	-	841,624	-	-	69,121	772,503				772,503
Elections Equipment	35,000	-	-	35,000	-	-	-	35,000				35,000
Elections Fund	138,895	-	20,000	158,895	- 138,895	-	-	20,000				20,000
Government Grants	346,736	- 19,885	-	326,851	-	-	-	326,851				326,851
Thriving Communities Fund	5,456,089	- 591,701	3,674,839	6,539,227	- 250,000	-	4,653,678	10,942,905	- 258,192	- 250,000	- 250,000	10,184,713
Insulation Project Reserve	-	-	-	2,000,000	-	-	2,000,000	-				-
Homelessness	408,050	- 71,031	-	337,019	-	-	41,105	378,124				378,124
Joint Local Plan	100,000	-	-	100,000	-	-	-	100,000				100,000
Neighbourhood Planning Grants	96,562	- 26,523	2,484	72,523	-	-	256	72,267				72,267
Planning (Legal)	1,366,913	- 107,000	-	1,259,913	- 3,822	-	-	1,256,091				1,256,091
Planning Enforcement	45,000	-	-	45,000	-	-	-	45,000				45,000
Repair & Renewals	292,690	-	-	292,690	-	-	-	292,690				292,690
Rough Sleepers	25,665	-	-	25,665	-	-	-	25,665				25,665
Strategic Planning	210,715	-	-	210,715	-	-	29,058	181,657				181,657
Strategic Priorities Housing	1,578,000	- 158,713	-	1,419,287	-	-	154,271	1,265,016	- 313,000	- 250,000	- 200,000	502,016
Strategic Priorities Economy	984,759	-	-	984,759	-	-	541,253	443,506	- 316,976			126,530
Strategic Priorities - Wellbeing	870,178	-	-	870,178	- 360,000	-	166,171	344,007	- 42,806			301,201
Strategic Priorities - Communities	290,701	- 76,735	-	213,966	-	-	199,468	14,498	- 17,564			- 3,066
Strategic Priorities Corporate Services	200,000	-	-	200,000	-	-	-	200,000				200,000
Strategic Priorities Project Feasibility	250,000	-	-	250,000	-	-	-	250,000				250,000
Temporary Accommodation	327,195	- 52,460	87,850	362,585	-	-	-	362,585				362,585
Waste	406,516	- 220,368	-	186,148	-	-	-	186,148				186,148
Welfare Benefits Reform	6,573	-	-	6,573	-	-	-	6,573				6,573
Well-being	95,605	- 6,218	-	89,387	- 70,000	-	624	18,763				18,763
TOTAL	27,218,342	- 1,705,863	3,785,173	29,297,652	- 822,717	-	5,140,606	23,334,330	- 1,011,933	- 519,319	- 450,000	21,353,078

5. General Fund Capital

1. Background

2. Use of capital and one-off funds is critical and needs to be linked into our future delivery plans.
3. With complex capital schemes it is difficult to accurately assess the level of payments that will be made during the financial year. The Council continues to embark on new projects where it is difficult to accurately predict how payments will fall. Councillors should therefore focus on whether overall outcomes are being achieved because of the capital investment rather than variances against the plan for a particular year.

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4. Forecast position for 2023/24

5. The £19.8m variance on the budget of £31.4m is primarily influenced by two projects;
 - Gateway 14 (budget of £10.75m)
 - Mid Suffolk Growth (budget of £9.15m)
6. Details of the variances to budget are shown on the following slides.

5. General Fund Capital

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24	Revised Budget 23/24	Actual Spend	Contractual Commitments	Forecast at Q2	Budget Variance	Expected Carry Forward to 24/25	Explanation of Major Variances
GENERAL FUND	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000		
General Fund Housing							
Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant	899,882	279,552	170,620	697,965	(201,917)	(201,917)	We are planning to spend the Grant allocation received from County of £697,965. Policies are being reviewed to increase Minor Adaptation grants from £7.5k to £15k and Discretionary Funding Grants from £10k to £20k. Cabinet will need to approve these increases for 2024/25.
Renovation/Home Repair Grant	128,175	26,706	20,000	120,000	(8,175)	(8,175)	Corporate Manager advised to forecast on 22/23 outturn. Currently loans are offered to ensure properties meet required legal standards, discussions are being had with Landlords to get traction for a new scheme to improve the fabrics of a property, waiting for feedback. Also looking at shortening the terms of the loans made.
Empty Homes Grant	469,000	-	29,800	29,800	(439,200)	(439,200)	Unspent budget will be c/f to next financial year
Grants for Affordable Housing	340,000	-	-	340,000	-	-	Forecast to budget whilst further detail is obtained
Total General Fund Housing	1,837,057	306,258	220,420	1,187,765	(649,292)	(649,292)	
Operations							
Replacement Refuse Freighters - Joint Scheme	370,220	161,880	-	161,880	(208,340)	(208,340)	Total of ten vehicles have now been delivered and Purchase Order Complete. One vehicle out of ten was completed in 2023/24. Remaining budget currently not in plan to be utilised however if a replacement vehicle is commissioned then the remaining budget is sufficient.
Recycling Bins	100,000	117,472	-	168,000	68,000		Likely to require more bins to accommodate housing growth.
Electric Buses	560,000	-	-	-	(560,000)		The bulk of this funding (£600k) will be spent via a rural transport grants scheme. £170k of the funding is ringfenced for a joint/partnership bid with SCC to the ZEBRA2 funding scheme to provide the local match funding required for the procurement of two electric minibuses and EV charge points. Remaining £50k is contingency. These costs are therefore entirely revenue in nature.
New Joint Depot	1,200,000	-	-	1,200,000	-	-	The creation of a joint depot was approved by Council in February 2023, with forecasted expenditure of £1.2m in 23/24 and £2.4m in the two subsequent years
EV Charging Points	240,000	73,934	-	222,255	(17,745)	(17,745)	Variance due to costs for installed of Charge Point in Mid Suffolk being less than expected due changes in Phase 1b and Phase 2. OZEV (DfT) grant funding of £316k received which is 75% of the overall project costs. 25% coming from Climate Change Reserve. To date 75% of £316k has been received
Total Operations	2,470,220	353,286	-	1,752,135	(718,085)	(226,085)	

5. General Fund Capital

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24	Revised Budget 23/24	Actual Spend	Contractual Commitments	Forecast at Q2	Budget Variance	Expected Carry Forward to 24/25	Explanation of Major Variances
GENERAL FUND	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000		
Communities and Public Access							
Streetcare - Vehicles and Plant Renewals	90,000	64,535		90,000	-	-	Scheme is replacing old for new trailer (normally 8 years shelf life). Full budget to be utilised this financial year. Funded by borrowing.
Needham Lake Footpath - Planned Maintenance	83,000	-		-	(83,000)	(83,000)	Budget is for the refurb of toilets. Deferred to 24/25.
Parking Strategy Implementation	115,000	-		15,000	(100,000)	(100,000)	Carry forward expected for Car Park Strategy implementations including signage and meter equipment to bring improved enforcement.
Planned Maintenance / Enhancements - Car Parks	305,000	18,486		50,000	(255,000)	(255,000)	Car Park Strategy implementations including signage and meter equipment to bring improved enforcement. Carry forward expected in line with Car Parking Strategy. Awaiting for the EV projects to be completed to prevent duplication of works undertaken.
Total Community Services	593,000	83,021	-	155,000	(438,000)	(438,000)	
Sustainable Communities							
Play Equipment	250,000	-		50,000	(200,000)	(200,000)	Budget is remaining funds from previous years. Works undertaken are to be developed. Funding by borrowing.
S106 Open Spaces Grants	-	115,500		115,500	115,500		Forecast to budget whilst further detail is obtained
Community Development Grants	232,628	82,614	183,000	232,628	0	0	C/f from 22/23 continues to be drawn down by applicants. The second window closed on Friday 6 September, and we are currently going through the process of assessment prior to awards. The final window for applications is between 4 December 2023 and 31 January 2024. The grant is oversubscribed and on this basis, we expect to be fully allocated across the windows. The first application round we allocated £74,469. Whilst all funding will be allocated this financial year, applicants are given 6 months to spend from award. As such full spend will not be achieved within the same financial year and carry forward will be requested for those grants awarded.
Total Sustainable Communities	482,628	198,114	183,000	398,128	(84,500)	(200,000)	

5. General Fund Capital

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24	Revised Budget 23/24	Actual Spend	Contractual Commitments	Forecast at Q2	Budget Variance	Expected Carry Forward to 24/25	Explanation of Major Variances
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000		
GENERAL FUND							
Leisure Contracts							
Stowmarket Leisure Centre - Repairs and Renewals	1,426,000	-		130,000	(1,296,000)	(1,296,000)	Awaiting costings on improvement works - anticipated delay in works to 2024/25 where agreed timetable of works can be produced.
Stradbroke Pool - Repairs and Renewals	546,000	183		16,000	(530,000)	(530,000)	
Total Leisure Contracts	1,972,000	183	-	146,000	(1,826,000)	(1,826,000)	
Assets and Investments							
Other Corporate Buildings	266,629	17,742		60,000	(206,629)	(206,629)	Costs include scoping work on touch down points and new depot. The carry forward budget of unspent capital is to make more semi-permanent enhancements to ageing depots should there be a substantial delay in sourcing a new depot such as drainage improvements, roof enhancements.
CIL Funded Infrastructure Grants	-	1,832,937		4,127,821	4,127,821		Difficult to forecast what expenditure will be as recipients have a 2 year window to claim funds.
Strategic Investment Fund	2,826,000	190,078		2,826,000	-	-	Forecast to budget whilst further detail is obtained
Regeneration Fund - Former Council Offices	513,213	1,822		200,000	(313,213)	(313,213)	Delays to project and uncertain output for financial year.
Gateway 14	10,750,000	-			(10,750,000)		The scheme is to be funded from the sale of development land and no borrowing required as yet and not expecting any further drawdown.
Mid Suffolk Growth	9,150,000	-			(9,150,000)	(9,150,000)	Budget earmarked as below: £2.5m for purchase of land for construction of open market housing has been refreshed. £1.75m bfwd and £3.5m for the construction of 25 open market units on land at Elmswell - scheme has been referred back to cabinet. £1.5m for the construction of open market units on land at De Saumarez Drive, Barham No movement undertaken on any of the proposals above.
CIFCO - further investment	-	-			-	-	
Wingfield Barns	34,000	-		34,000	-	-	Heritage asset. Currently occupied by tenant. Improvements to be carried out so that Tenant will continue occupation. Build works (exterior on property) to be completed by end of this financial year.
Business Hub Cross Street, Eye	330,000	145,119		442,024	112,024		Project complete, overspend due to additional works carried out for Low Carbon opportunities that weren't in the original budget. This overspend is being funded by the Climate Change Reserve.
Total Assets and Investments	23,869,842	2,187,697	-	7,689,845	(16,179,997)	(9,669,842)	

5. General Fund Capital

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24	Revised Budget 23/24	Actual Spend	Contractual Commitments	Forecast at Q2	Budget Variance	Expected Carry Forward to 24/25	Explanation of Major Variances
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000		
GENERAL FUND							
Corporate Resources							
Replacement Finance Management System	75,000	96,534	196,000	292,534	217,534		Forecast to budget whilst further detail is obtained
Total Corporate Resources	75,000	96,534	196,000	292,534	217,534	-	
Customers, Digital Transformation and Improvement							
ICT-Hardware/Software Refresh	150,000	-		48,125	(101,875)	(101,875)	API/Web Services – no costs to be incurred for 23/24. Digital Platform - £60k bill received, unlikely any further costs. 8*8 Replacement – pushed back a year, to carry forward full budget to 24/25. Intranet – to spend around 25% of budget in 23/24 and carry forward the rest to 24/25. Collaboration Hardware/Hybrid Working – to spend around 50% of budget in 23/24, no need to carry forward remaining budget as already a budget set for next year.
Public Protection - Verso Software Upgrade Project		-		30,000	30,000		£60K set-up costs split 50:50 for new licence software.
Total Customers, Digital Transformation and Improvement	150,000	-	-	78,125	(71,875)	(101,875)	
Total General Fund Capital Spend	31,449,747	3,225,095	599,420	11,699,533	(19,750,214)	(13,111,094)	

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Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Financial Monitoring Quarter 2 2023/24

Mid Suffolk District Council
December 2023



1. Background

Background

1. The financial position of the HRA for 2023/24 should be viewed in the context of the 30-year business plan. The budget set in February 2023 showed a forecast deficit position for 2023/24 of £816k.
2. A period of five years of annual rent reductions ended in March 2020 and councils were allowed to increase rents by the maximum of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) +1% for a period of five years from April 2020. Due to soaring inflation, this has been capped at 7% for 2023/24. This began to mitigate the impact of the 1% reduction on the 30-year plan. However, due to soaring inflation, rent increases have been capped to 7% for 2023/24, well below CPI.
3. Inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) has reduced during 2023 from the peak of 11.1% in October 2022. For the 12 months to July 2023 CPI increased 6.8%, down from 7.9% in June.
An estimated £1,925 pay increase for 2023/24 has been reflected in the forecast.
4. With the Council's housing stock at over 3,000 homes there will always be unplanned events that affect the level of income and expenditure in any one financial year. Members should therefore consider annual variances in the context of the medium-term outcomes that the Council wishes to achieve.

HRA Quarter 2 position 2023/24

1. Budget monitoring is a key tool and indicator on the delivery of the Council's plans and priorities for the year. There will, of course, always be reasons why there are variances such as the current inflationary pressures.

2. Based upon financial performance and information from April 2023 to September 2023 and discussions with budget managers and the Senior Leadership Team, key variations on expenditure and income compared to budget have been identified.
3. There is a projected net deficit of £1,488k for 2023/24, a variance of £672k compared to the budget deficit of £816k.
4. The key variances that make up this projected overspend are shown in the following section of this report. The projection is based on current trends and so may fluctuate as the year progresses.

Capital Programme

1. Use of capital and one-off funds is critical and needs to be linked into our future delivery plans.
2. With complex capital schemes it is difficult to accurately assess the level of payments that will be made during the financial year. The Council continues to embark on new projects, e.g. building new homes, where it is difficult to accurately predict how payments will fall. Members should therefore focus on whether overall outcomes are being achieved because of the capital investment rather than variances against the plan for a particular year.
3. The budget and actual spend for 2023/24 at Q2 for the HRA Capital Programme are shown in section 3. We have re-phased £20m of the £40.21m budget for new builds and acquisitions to subsequent financial years.

2. Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

	Budget	Outturn 2023/24	Variance (favourable) / adverse	% variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Dwelling Rents	(16,245)	(16,512)	(267)	2%
Service Charges	(708)	(764)	(55)	8%
Non Dwelling Income	(396)	(407)	(11)	3%
Other Income	(51)	(43)	7	-15%

Total Income	(17,400)	(17,726)	(326)	2%
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Housing Management	5,137	4,798	(339)	-7%
Building Services	4,897	6,032	1,135	23%
Repairs and Maintenance (all areas except Trades Team)	765	966	202	26%
Depreciation	4,617	4,617	-	0%
Interest payable	2,700	2,700	-	0%
Revenue Contribution to Capital	-	-	-	0%
Bad Debt Provision	100	100	-	0%
Total Expenditure	18,216	19,213	998	5%

Deficit / (Surplus) for Year	816	1,488	672	
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Dwelling rents: Increase in rental income due to 104 new properties (101 affordable and 3 social housing) since number of budgeted properties taken as at September 2022.

Service Charges: £28k reduction in voids and £27k increased utility charges incorrectly reflected in budget

Non Dwelling Income: £11k increase in Garage rents

Other Income: £11k Wayleaves and Easements, plus £2k other income offset by £16k reduction in Leaseholders rent

Housing Management:

- (£83k) reduction in utility costs due to prices dropping rather than increasing further.
- (£77k) correction to budget for HRA Other Temp Accommodation.
- (£75k) adjustment to plan for furnishing Sheltered Accommodation.
- (£49k) increase in charges.
- (£38k) changes to monitoring costs.
- (£28k) reduction in NNDR.
- £11k small increases

Building Services:

- £375k catch up on overdue repairs
- £363k increase Property Servicing on heating
- £330k increased employment costs for new Consultant Building Services Surveyors Corporate Manager and additional Agency Costs to give time to fill permanent positions
- £35k reduction in income for renewable heat incentive
- £31k contracted services for procurement services, sewage treatment etc
- £1k small increases

Repairs & Maintenance: Overspend on the use of Sub-Contractors to support the Trades Team in completing a backlog of void and responsive jobs.

3. HRA Capital

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24	Original Budget	Carry Forwards / Budget Adjustmen ts	Current Budget	Actual at end Q2	Full Year Forecast at Q2	Variance after Carry Forwards (underspen d) / overspend	Explanation of Significant Variances / Carry Forwards
HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Housing Maintenance							
Planned maintenance	2,276	1,475	3,750	1,190	3,750	(0)	It is hoped that the budget will be completely spent or committed in 2023/24. This is subject to change whilst work to procure new contracts is carried out.
Other Maintenance Work	1,880	-	1,880	576	1,880	-	It is hoped that the budget will be completely spent or committed in 2023/24. This is subject to change whilst work to procure new contracts is carried out.
ICT Projects	163	44	207	22	200	(7)	Van tracker and scheduler scheme approx. £2k and renewal / upgrading of mobile devices for the Trades Team £7k. £8k required for NoiseApp purchase, set up and first year costs to be spent in 2023/24. A further quarter of the Acuity costs to be paid approx. £3k. The remaining budget is expected to be spent on Building Services IT requirements.
Environmental (Neighbourhood) Improvements	40	80	120	-	100	(20)	Environmental improvement requirements to be identified. £100k of budget expected to be spent or fully committed in 2023/24
Disabled adaptations to council dwellings	400	59	459	322	459	0	Budget expected to be spent in 2023/24 clearing the backlog of Flush Floor Showers and Wet Rooms etc.
New build programme inc acquisitions	22,005	18,205	40,210	6,214	20,210	(20,000)	£7m is for Elmswell scheme - this is subject to Cabinet decision in August whether it proceeds. Harleston corner scheme is currently in design stage and unlikely to be on site until Q4. Still awaiting planning for this. Number of S106 schemes are in progress and onsite. Some delays due to contract reprogramming. Significant spend expected. Two further Land-led schemes at Walsham-le-Willows and Barham are currently programmed for 24/25 onwards subject to the HRA business plan. Paddock House is scheduled to start later this year. Currently forecasting £20m spend this FY and the remaining £20m has been rephased into future years .
Total HRA Capital Spend	26,763	19,863	46,626	8,323	26,599	(20,027)	

4. HRA Reserves

MSDC Reserves 2023/2024	Balance at 1 April 2023	Transfers to	Transfers from	Balance at 1 April 2024
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Working Balance	(1,209)			(1,209)
Strategic Reserves	(4,994)		1,488	(3,506)
Building Council Homes Programme (BHCP) Reserve	(20)			(20)
Leaseholder Reserve	(26)			(26)
TOTAL RESERVE BALANCES	(6,249)	-	1,488	(4,761)

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Prudential Indicators Q2 2023/24

The Councils measure and manage capital expenditure and borrowing with reference to the following indicators.

It is now a requirement of the CIPFA Prudential Code that these are reported on a quarterly basis.

Capital Expenditure: The Councils have undertaken and are planning capital expenditure as summarised below. These figures have been updated for the carry forwards approved by the Cabinets on 10 and 11 July.

Babergh District Council	2022/23 Actual £m	2023/24 Forecast Outturn £m	2024/25 Budget £m	2025/26 Budget £m
General Fund	5.73	9.81	18.87	4.21
Council Housing (HRA)	11.49	17.21	8.02	9.28
Total Capital Expenditure	17.22	27.02	26.89	13.49

The main areas of General Fund spending are £7.5m for assets and investments (which includes £3.2m Babergh Growth, £2.8m strategic investment fund and £0.2m A1071 roadside commercial workspace development), £1.7m for general fund housing (of which £0.8m is disabled facilities grants) and £0.5m economic development, (all of which relates to Belle Vue). The forecast for 2023/24 and budgets for 2024/25 and 2025/26 now include the £6m scheme for the new joint depot, which was omitted from the Q1 report.

The decrease from Q1 in the General Fund Q2 Forecast for 2023/24 is largely due to robust monitoring of the Capital Programme and ensuring that scheme budgets are in line with their delivery programmes. Some schemes such as £2.8m regeneration of HQ site, £1.9m A1071 Roadside Development, £1.5m Belle Vue and £1m for the Leisure Centre Renewals (Kingfisher & Hadleigh) are now being forecast for 2024/25 as they are still in their design and procurement stages or have been held due to increased borrowing costs and Cabinets approval.

HRA capital expenditure is recorded separately, and the forecast includes £7.7m for new builds and acquisitions, £4.6m for planned maintenance and £2m for other maintenance.

Mid Suffolk District Council	2022/23 Actual £m	2023/24 Forecast Outturn £m	2024/25 Budget £m	2025/26 Budget £m
General Fund	12.32	11.70	16.56	5.81
Council Housing (HRA)	21.96	26.63	46.13	8.93
Total Capital Expenditure	34.28	38.33	62.69	14.74

The main areas of General Fund spending are £7.7m for assets and investments, £1.2m for general fund housing (of which £0.7m is disabled facilities grants and £0.3m is affordable housing) and £0.6m for operations, £0.2m of which relates to EV charging points. The forecast for 2023/24 and budgets for 2024/25 and 2025/26 now include the £6m scheme for the new joint depot, which was omitted from the Q1 report.

The decrease from Q1 in the General Fund Q2 Forecast for 2023/24 is largely due to robust monitoring of the Capital Programme and ensuring that scheme budgets are in line with their delivery programmes. Some schemes such as £9.15m for Mid Suffolk Growth and £1.83m leisure centre renewals will be carried forward into 2024/25. The expectation that the £10.75m budgeted for Gateway 14 would be spent is no longer required.

HRA capital expenditure is recorded separately, and the forecast includes £20.2m for new builds and acquisitions, £3.8m for planned maintenance and £1.9m for other maintenance. Some of the new build schemes (£20m total) are now being forecast for 2024/25 as they are still in the early stages of development and unlikely to complete the expected phases in 2023/24.

Capital Financing Requirement: The Councils cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP repayments and capital receipts used to replace debt.

Babergh District Council	2022/23 Actual £m	2023/24 Forecast Outturn £m	2024/25 Budget £m	2025/26 Budget £m
General Fund	75.65	81.48	91.73	87.87
Council Housing (HRA)	94.42	102.52	103.25	107.47
Cumulative Capital Financing Requirement	170.06	184.00	194.98	195.33

Mid Suffolk District Council	2022/23 Actual £m	2023/24 Forecast Outturn £m	2024/25 Budget £m	2025/26 Budget £m
General Fund	85.20	93.51	115.38	115.38
Council Housing (HRA)	105.84	122.31	160.63	162.27
Cumulative Capital Financing Requirement	191.04	215.82	276.00	277.66

Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement: Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the short term. The Councils have complied and expect to continue to comply with this requirement in the

medium term as is shown below.

Babergh District Council	31.3.2023 Actual £m	31.3.2024 Forecast Outturn £m	31.3.2025 Budget £m	31.3.2026 Budget £m	Debt at 30th Sept £m
Outstanding Borrowing (Debt)	(124.84)	(142.36)	(147.51)	(148.91)	(115.56)
Capital Financing Requirement	170.06	184.00	194.98	195.33	
Headroom	45.22	41.64	47.47	46.43	

Mid Suffolk District Council	31.3.2023 Actual £m	31.3.2024 Forecast Outturn £m	31.3.2025 Budget £m	31.3.2026 Budget £m	Debt at 30th Sept £m
General Fund					
Outstanding Borrowing (Debt)	(122.73)	(149.89)	(180.60)	(184.83)	(112.67)
Capital Financing Requirement	191.04	215.82	276.00	277.66	
General Fund Headroom	68.31	65.93	95.41	92.83	

Debt and the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary: The Councils are legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the Authorised Limit for external debt) each year. In line with statutory guidance, a lower “operational boundary” is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

Babergh District Council	2023/24 Maximum debt at Q2 £m	2023/24 Debt at 30th Sept £m	2023/24 Authorised Limit £m	2023/24 Operational Boundary £m	Complied?
Outstanding Borrowing (Debt)	124.84	115.56	200.00	185.00	Yes

Mid Suffolk District Council	2023/24 Maximum debt at Q2 £m	2023/24 Debt at 30th Sept £m	2023/24 Authorised Limit £m	2023/24 Operational Boundary £m	Complied? £m
Outstanding Borrowing (Debt)	122.73	112.67	248.00	233.00	Yes

Since the operational boundary is a management tool for in-year monitoring it is not significant if the boundary is breached on occasions due to variations in cash flow, and this is not counted as a compliance failure.

Proportion of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream: Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP are charged to revenue.

The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e. the amount funded from Council Tax, business rates and general government

grants.

Babergh District Council	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Budget	2025/26 Budget
General Fund - Financing Costs (£m)	2.00	3.19	3.50	3.68
General Fund - Proportion of Net Revenue Stream (%)	18.29%	25.39%	22.13%	25.10%
HRA - Financing Costs (£m)	2.80	3.07	3.18	3.35
HRA - Proportion of Net Revenue Stream (%)	15.79%	16.16%	16.19%	16.57%

Mid Suffolk District Council	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Budget	2025/26 Budget
General Fund - Financing Costs (£m)	2.09	2.98	3.18	3.29
General Fund - Proportion of Net Revenue Stream (%)	14.26%	18.61%	16.34%	19.03%
HRA - Financing Costs (£m)	2.79	2.70	4.20	4.60
HRA - Proportion of Net Revenue Stream (%)	18.00%	15.96%	24.36%	25.91%

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MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: Cabinet	REPORT NUMBER: MCa/23/31
FROM: Cllr Richard Winch – Cabinet Member for Housing & Property	DATE OF MEETING: 5 th December 2023
OFFICER: Deborah Fenton – Director of Housing	DECISION REF NO. CAB417

UPDATE ON THE REGULATOR OF SOCIAL HOUSING REFERRAL AND OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE POSITION

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To share with members the update on our recent meeting with the Regulator for Social Housing. In addition, to give members an update and context on our compliance report.

2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 None

3. RECOMMENDATIONS
3.1 That members note the report.
REASON FOR DECISION
To ensure that members and senior leaders of the councils have oversight of the journey with the Regulator back to a position where we are compliant.

4. KEY INFORMATION

- 4.1 Central Government and the English Regulator for Social Housing are in the process of introducing new regulatory requirements on all social landlords, including local authority landlords of more than 1000 properties.
- 4.2 Following the diagnostic exercise on Compliance, which was started in 2020, a referral was made to the Regulator of Social Housing in November 2022 regarding concerns about compliance. As you are aware, this resulted in a regulatory judgement. The CEO, Deputy CEO and Director of Housing meet monthly with the regulator.
- 4.3 Following the commencement of our diagnostic around the compliance and the subsequent referral to the Regulator, significant progress has been made, including the following:
- Recruited a specialist to support us in carrying out procurement
 - Ensuring we have more robust data across all compliance areas, helping us to manage our properties better.
 - Reduction in outstanding compliance actions
 - Appointed a contractor to support us in addressing damp issues
 - Recruited to phase one of our compliance structure
 - Recruited an additional resource to support us in addressing complaints
 - Begun the Asset Management consultation and restructure.
 - Agreed the DLO excellence plan. The consultation with staff will begin in December.

5. REGULATOR FOR SOCIAL HOUSING

5.1 The Regulator for Social Housing is pleased with our progress and continuing plans to deliver full compliance. Meetings are held each month and discussions include:

- Compliance
- Damp and Mould
- Transformation

5.2 Meetings will continue until the Regulator is confident of our return to compliance.

5.3 Our compliance will be reviewed by an external auditor to give us and the Regulator assurance. We are in the process of putting this in place.

6. COMPLIANCE UPDATE

6.1 The table below shows the updated compliance position as of 10th November.

6.2 It should be noted that the increase in some areas of compliance is due to not having the certification in place, the actual outstanding numbers will be available at Cabinet.

6.3 The increase in damp and mould is due to carrying out surveys and asking specific questions regarding damp and mould.

7. CONTRACTOR UPDATE

7.1 Members will be aware that our contract with Aaron Services (whole house contract) ended in August, the new contracts have now been mobilised and are progressing well.

8. LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

8.1 This report links with our ambition to ensure that *All our residents live in affordable and high-quality homes that enable them to build settled, safe and healthy lives.*

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Failure to improve and meet compliance could result in unlimited fines.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Performance measurement is required to ensure members comply with the Consumer Standards within the Regulatory standards. Should the regulations be breached, the RSH may take action, including a fine or removal of assets.

11. RISK MANAGEMENT

11.1 Key risks are set out below:

Key Risk Description	Likelihood 1-4	Impact 1-4	Key Mitigation Measures	Risk Register and Reference*
Information required by the regulator for	2	3	Ensure evidence is stored, updated and can be easily accessed	Housing Transformation 004

compliance cannot be obtained on request, is of poor quality or lacks integrity			through the completion of action plans.	
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*Name of risk register where risk is currently documented and being actively managed, and its reference number

12. CONSULTATIONS

12.1 Consultation has been carried out with SLT, members and the Regulator of Social Housing .

13. EQUALITY ANALYSIS

N/A

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None

15. APPENDICES

None

16. BACKGROUND DOCUMENT

		NO. OVERDUE @ 24.09.23		NO. OVERDU E @ 01.10.23		NO. OVERDU E @ 08.10.23		NO. OVERDU E @ 15.10.23		NO. OVERDU E @ 03.11.23		NO. OVERDU E @ 10.11.23	
COMPLIANCE AREA													
HEATING													
1	GAS SAFETY CHECK (DOMESTIC) - BABERGH	35	↔	35	↔	22	↓	49	↑	37	↓	41	↑
2	GAS SAFETY CHECK (DOMESTIC) - MID-SUFFOLK	11	↔	11	↔	8	↓	16	↑	19	↑	21	↑
3	GAS SAFETY CHECK (COMMUNAL) - BABERGH	0	√	0	√	0	√	7	↑	7	↔	1	↓
4	GAS SAFETY CHECK (COMMUNAL) - MID SUFFOLK	0	√	0	√	0	√	7	↑	4	↓	0	√
ELECTRICAL													
5	ELECTRICAL TESTING - DOMESTIC DWELLINGS -BABERGH	47	↔	47	↔	47	↔	658	↑	660	↑	648	↓
6	ELECTRICAL TESTING - DOMESTIC DWELLINGS - MID SUFFOLK	83	↔	83	↔	83	↔	529	↑	532	↑	535	↑
7	ELECTRICAL TESTING - COMMUNAL - BABERGH	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	22	↑	18	↓
8	ELECTRICAL TESTING - COMMUNAL - MID SUFFOLK	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	10	↑	7	↓
FIRE SAFETY													
9	FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS - BABERGH	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√
10	FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS - MID SUFFOLK	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√
11	FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT ACTIONS / WORKS BY PRIORITY - BABERGH												
	(Immediate action) AA	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√
	(Action within 8 weeks) A	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√
	(Action within 18 weeks) B	2	↔	2	↔	2	↔	0	√	0	√	0	√
	(Action within 52 weeks) C	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√
12	FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT ACTIONS / WORKS BY PRIORITY - MID SUFFOLK												
	(Immediate action) AA	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√
	(Action within 8 weeks) A	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√
	(Action within 18 weeks) B	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√
	(Action within 52 weeks) C	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√
SMOKE & CO DETECTOR INSTALLATION PROGRAMME													
15	DETECTOR PROGRAMME - BABERGH	53	↔	53	↔	53	↔	101	↑	101	↔	72	↓
16	DETECTOR PROGRAMME - MID SUFFOLK	66	↔	66	↔	66	↔	94	↑	94	↔	80	↓
WATER HYGIENE													
17	WATER HYGIENE SERVICING / TESTING - BABERGH	9	↔	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√
18	WATER HYGIENE SERVICING / TESTING - MID SUFFOLK												
19	WATER HYGIENE RISK ASSESSMENTS - BABERGH	37	↔	35	↓	30	↓	30	↔	20	↓	37	↑
20	WATER HYGIENE RISK ASSESSMENTS - MID SUFFOLK	50	↔	50	↔	45	↓	45	↔	25	↓	31	↑
ASBESTOS													
21	ABSESTOS REINSPECTIONS - BABERGH	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√
22	ABSESTOS REINSPECTIONS - MID SUFFOLK	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√
23	ACTIONS ARISING FROM REINSPECTIONS - BABERGH	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√
24	ACTIONS ARISING FROM REINSPECTIONS - MID SUFFOLK	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√
LIFTS													
25	LIFTS - SERVICING / TESTING - BABERGH	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√
26	LIFTS - SERVICING / TESTING - MID SUFFOLK	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√	0	√
DAMP AND MOULD ENQUIRIES													
27	DAMP AND MOULD ENQUIRIES - NO. OF COMPLETED SURVEYS - BABERGH	89	↓	89	↓	31	↓	8	↓	3	↓	14	↑
28	DAMP AND MOULD ENQUIRIES - NO. OF COMPLETED SURVEYS - MID SUFFOLK	181	↓	181	↓	163	↓	153	↓	148	↓	127	↓

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Performance Report

2023-24 Quarter Two

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Mid Suffolk District Council

Agenda Item

10



Customers



Communities



Wellbeing



Environment



Housing



Economy



Health of the Organisation



This performance report covers the period from July to September 2023 (Quarter 2).

This report sets out how the council is performing against its six key priorities from the current Corporate Plan. The main body of the report is aligned to the 21 outcomes from the current outcome framework, setting out notable achievements by teams across the organisation during the latest quarter. This report also looks towards work in progress for the next quarter, where planned activity for Q3 (October to December 2023) is set out at the end of the report.

We are also using 2023/24 as an exciting opportunity to start a new performance journey. Performance management is about using data to inform action that will improve outcomes for people. The term 'performance management' includes a range of processes, techniques, and methods to identify shared goals and various measurements of progress towards these.

In this report a selection of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been included to show a direction of travel (DoT). This provides an indication of the direction of performance compared with the previous quarter. Sometimes down is good (for example a decrease in complaints) and sometimes down requires action. Sometimes up is good (for example an increase in compliments) and sometimes up requires action.

The Performance Reports will look different for the next few quarters as we develop and evolve our performance over time.



Our Achievements

for Quarter Two

Customers

Outcome 1: All our customers are able to access high quality services and support

Customers are digitally included and can use technology to access services and advice

- We commenced digital skills sessions in Stradbroke library in August with 2 sessions held and 7 attendees.
- We were successful in the databank pilot (offering free mobile data) and are working with our temporary accommodation team to deliver the sim cards to tenants over the next few months.
- From our quarter two Tenant Satisfaction measure survey 173 tenants were surveyed and 73% of those tenants saying they have internet access.

Customers say the councils met their needs the first time they made contact

- We have implemented live chat with 341 chats completed since its launch in early August.
- We have launched a call back option on our general telephone line, which 206 customers have utilised in the last 2 months.

Customers

Outcome 2: Residents have a voice - enabled to democratically engage and empowered to do so

Residents feel well informed about council services, activities and plans that may affect them

- Cost of living communication campaigns have continued this quarter with a joint campaign with Citizen's advice to promote support available to our residents.
- Our cost of living phase 3 action plan was reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet over August and September and work will commence over quarter three to develop a longer-term approach.
- 4,848 tenants across both districts are subscribed to the digital tenants newsletter, My Home Bulletin which goes out monthly to subscribed tenants, the last edition was the Tenant Annual Report and had an open rate of 60%.

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Customers are engaged in testing and piloting new ideas

- We completed a web testing forum with ACE Anglia a Suffolk based learning disability charity who provide support to organisations on accessible design Accessible Design < Ace Anglia independent advocacy organisation based in Suffolk. This is to ensure that customers find the website as easy as possible to navigate.

Customers

Outcome 3: Residents are satisfied with Council services

Residents are satisfied that council services meet their needs

- 71% of the 554 customers who completed our automated satisfaction survey were either satisfied or highly satisfied with the service received on the telephone.
- From the quarter two Tenant Satisfaction Measure survey 69% of those who are online were satisfied with our on-line services.

Residents say the council listens and acts on feedback

- We have reduced the length of our Council main telephone option message by 20 seconds.
- We have been working with the housing ombudsman to gain feedback on our complaints policy to iterate our policy in line with best practice.
- Quarter two Tenant Satisfaction Measure survey results for 'Listen and Acts' is 51% satisfied

Wellbeing

Outcome 4: Inequalities are reduced for all groups

Residents age well with the best quality of life, with equal access to high-quality health and care services

- Work is continuing with Ipswich Borough Council and East Suffolk Council to develop a strength and balance programme with Ipswich and East Suffolk Alliance across our districts. Staff at Everyone Active completed an OTAGO (Strength and Balance course) and are due to start delivering sessions in their centres.

Every child has the best start in life

- The Family Fun Days in Stowmarket and Eye were a success. Providers offered a variety of activities to 100+ children each day including a climbing wall, archery and medallion making. There was a strong focus on obtaining more guardian feedback following the sessions, and the comments received have been positive.

Older people have a good quality of life

- With support from Mid Suffolk District Council, Sport and Wellbeing and Communities Together, all four of the Ageing-Well groups now run independently, including Debenham, Cotton, Fressingfield, and Eye.
- The Archie Project, an inter-generational dementia awareness learning programme between local care homes and schools to learn about living with and being affected by dementia, will continue for a second academic year.
- Orchestra's Live Musical Memories Project is in planning stages, and efforts are being made to reach out to dementia and older people's community groups across the district.

Wellbeing

Outcome 5: Residents have the best possible opportunities to improve their physical and mental health and well-being

Residents have improved mental health and well-being

- The Wellbeing Fund for Mid Suffolk was established and is part of the Suffolk Public Mental Health programme, which aims to 'support, enable and strengthen the protective factors for good mental wellbeing'. The three priorities of the Fund are: improving physical activity, financial control, or community and security.
- Work has continued in collaboration with The Mix and 4YP (For Young People) on the Youth Social Prescribing Project, and a youth link worker has now been embedded in Thurston College, Stowmarket High School and Stowupland High School. Meetings are in place with the Primary Schools to discuss the programme and support for the transition to high schools.

Residents have improved physical health and opportunities to participate in leisure and sport to improve their health and tackle obesity

- Work is being undertaken with Active Suffolk to deliver an Active Wellbeing programme for residents using the Mid Suffolk Investment Fund. The aim is to empower individuals to make sustainable changes to physical activity behaviours through integrating physical activity into everyday healthcare.
- The strength and balance programme and Healthy Behaviours has improved our relationships with Health partners.

Residents live longer and healthier lives

- Men's Shed Suffolk conference took place in September and discussed best practice.

Wellbeing

Outcome 6: Families lead active, healthy, safe and independent lives and manage their own health and wellbeing

Residents are supported to help us tackle our most pressing public health challenges

- Healthy Behaviours is scheduled to launch as a county-wide strategy to improve people's health and wellbeing in Suffolk in partnership with other districts. A Healthy Behaviours Project Manager and Feel Good Suffolk Advisor has been appointed.

Residents with care needs have personalised support, independence and choice, enabling a good quality of life

- 3,567 spaces to eligible children were made available in Mid Suffolk's Holiday Activities and Food (HAF), of which 2,766 spaces were attended, and positive feedback was received.
- 85.7% of guardians reported an improvement in the young person's confidence, 54.8% reported an increase in physical health, and 69% reported an increase in the young person's mental health. One piece of feedback stated *'the HAF this school holiday has been the best by far'*.

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Residents are safeguarded and protected from harm

- A new intranet page is being developed to help inform and give further information around Safeguarding for the organisation.
- The Prevent Week of Action took place on w/c 18th September with an aim to raise awareness and share information to allow a greater understanding of Prevent duty. Officers attended a Freshers Fair and engaged with students.

Residents and visitors are and feel safe in the districts

- The Home Office Safer Streets Fund round 5 bid has been submitted to the Police Crime Commissioner, which forms part of the government's action to tackle crime.
- Officers assisted the Community Engagement Hub and the police to lead a Street Survey Questionnaire in Mistletoe Court, Stowmarket which identified vulnerable young adults. The findings were reported back to the MACE panel.

Environment

Outcome 7: Biodiversity is enhanced and protected

Biodiversity on council owned land is enhanced

- Revision of Biodiversity Action Plan currently taking place
- Working with stakeholders such as Woodland Trust, Suffolk Wildlife Trust & Suffolk Tree Warden Network
- Communications around 'Call for Land' to be published during national tree planting week to identify land within the districts that can be used to increase biodiversity

Mid Suffolk increasing tree and hedgerow canopy cover contributes to biodiversity gain

- Successful bid for Local Authority Treescapes Fund (LATF) to create scattered orchards
- 36 trees in Stowmarket
- Planting to commence in late November 2023 using volunteer groups in partnership with Public Realm

Wild flower planting enhances the landscape in our districts

- Free trees, hedging and wildflower scheme open with many applications already received
- 15 applications for 93 trees and 900 whips
- Seeding of some areas to enhance benefits, 9 sites totalling 10,738 sqm

Biodiversity gain is optimised in new developments

- Work ongoing on Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document

Environment

Outcome 8: Babergh and Mid Suffolk have a low carbon footprint

Everyone in Mid Suffolk can access and use sustainable, net zero, transport options

- Secured Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding for three Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) schemes
- Design work ongoing for the Woolpit-Elmswell pedestrian/cycle link
- Contract paid & deposit paid for delivery of e-bike rental scheme at Needham Lake
- Plan for ringfenced funding for rural transport approved, a rural transport grant fund being developed

New development will achieve high levels of energy efficiency, minimise carbon emissions and support green infrastructure

- Plans for new Skills and Innovation Centre to be an exemplar sustainable building
- Tender underway to appoint consultant for feasibility work in respect of a local heat network as part of the Stowmarket Health, Education, Leisure Facilities (SHELF) project – 100% of the network funded by external grants
- Cross Street workspace unit nearing completion with high levels of environmental sustainability

Everyone in Mid Suffolk understands the need to reduce carbon emissions and energy use - making sustainable choices

- Work ongoing towards Local Climate Action Roadshows which will take place in October in Eye, Stowmarket and Bramford
- Through the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership, Community Energy South have been commissioned to work with local communities to support them to consider localised energy solutions.
- The Councils Net Zero grants continue to be promoted to local businesses

The Councils maximise low carbon energy generation for council owned buildings

- New Homes 'Design Guide & Technical Specification' that incorporates carbon saving solutions launched alongside the 30-year Housing Business Plan in progress and will seek to improve energy efficient standards.
- The 2022/23 Greenhouse Gas report is being developed which reviews the impact of new measures on the Councils assets

Environment

Outcome 9: Mid Suffolk is a healthier, safer and sustainable place

Our communities reduce, reuse and recycle by default

- Attended three community events during this period: Stowmarket Food and Drink Festival, Stowmarket Green Dome Project at Combs Ford School, Stowmarket Family Fun and ElmFest in Elmswell. Our stand promoted recycling, food waste reduction and home composting.
- Visited Stowmarket Library during a children's crafting morning to promote recycling and engage with around 20 local families.
- Delivered waste education sessions to over 50 pupils at two primary schools: Ringshall and Fressingfield.

Local businesses are safe and healthy for residents and visitors

- Mid Suffolk have 89% businesses with a food hygiene rating of 5.
- Public Protection has migrated nearly all of its data processing from a legacy system to new case management software. The project is well on course for completion by the end of the year.

Green and open spaces are safe and accessible, providing formal and informal activity and opportunities for all residents

- Green spaces are inspected daily whilst core duties are carried out, e.g. bin emptying and litter removal.
- Play areas are inspected weekly to ensure that they are safe and there are a number of play areas that have been identified for improvements.

Residents and visitors feel safe in our places and communities

- 3 trainee Environmental Health Officers started their Apprenticeships in Public Protection and Private Sector Housing (2 new recruits and an existing technical officer) to secure succession planning and additional staffing resource.
- Environmental Protection Officers participated in Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Awareness Week in July with public engagement events in Hadleigh and Sudbury to promote the Council's cross-service approach to tackling anti-social behaviour and help raise awareness of victims' rights and the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Case Review process.

Economy

Outcome 10: Mid Suffolk's places and economy are supported to be innovative, green and resilient

Mid Suffolk has employment sites to meet demand, maximise business growth and opportunities and provide good quality jobs

- Continued to support plans for redevelopment of key employment sites including Gateway 14 and Port One
- Negotiation with the Range to finalise employment and skills plan for local recruitment
- Needham Access for all improvements - on site surveys completed and draft options report completed.
- 11 Market Place, Stowmarket – works on roof commenced and are on track to be complete by the end of October. Mural complete and hoardings have been erected

Mid Suffolk's economy and places are supported to be a home for new ideas, creativity and innovation

- Innovate to Elevate programme with University of Essex delivery continuing with 2 projects now completed
- New Inward Investment Website launched to provide a “single front door” for all business enquiries and a range of information for businesses who are looking for support
- Work has commenced on review of Economic Evidence Base which will inform development of a new Economic Strategy for the Districts

Our town centres are supported through regeneration and culture to be resilient, vibrant and creative places

- Cross Street, Eye – contractor has made great progress on site. Tender for the operator was concluded and negotiations with the successful operator in progress.
- Stowmarket Wayfinding – work ongoing around exploring improved wayfinding/signage for visitors and residents.

Economy

Outcome 10: Mid Suffolk's places and economy are supported to be innovative, green and resilient

Our places are growing visitor destinations with a wealth of cultural opportunities

- Ongoing partner, stakeholder and cross-party member engagement in the development of an action plan for our recently adopted Culture, Heritage & Visitor Economy Strategy
- Love Exploring Social media campaign launched with 974 users and 17 routes throughout both districts.

Our districts benefits from strong and inclusive partnerships to deliver sustainable regeneration and economic growth

- Work continues with Freeport East to draw in £6m seed capital and "Pot B" retained business rates to support financing of the proposed Skills and Innovation Centre at Gateway 14.
- Innovation Board continues to meet to drive investment in innovation and economic growth in the District
- Engagement with a range of local, regional and national partners including Suffolk Culture Network, Suffolk Chamber, Growth Hub, Visit East of England, New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, Freeport East, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and Arts Council England to ensure appropriate support is available for our districts
- Ongoing delivery of projects and workstreams for Freeport East – active involvement in Skills, Inward Investment and Innovation workstreams as well as supporting business rates and finance discussions

Economy

Outcome 11: We will become a growing area for Innovation, Enterprise and Creativity in the East

Our places and businesses can flourish and grow, by accessing high speed broadband

- Presentation by CityFibre to Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils (BMSDC) Senior Leadership Team and the Innovation Board regarding Project Gigabit Suffolk
- Supporting the Suffolk County Council submission to the 5G Innovation Regions bid.
- Member and BMSDC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) attendance at the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce 5G summit to identify and overcome barriers to 5G deployment and subsequent activity to create 5G champions to promote 5G across Suffolk.
- Meeting with CityFibre to identify how fibre infrastructure could support town centre Wi-Fi.

Our places are home to a diverse network of spaces where residents can work and test new business ideas

- Full Business Case for Gateway 14 Skills & Innovation Centre being finalised before going to Cabinet in November
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) Delivery ongoing with Start up support, net zero consultancy and growth hub contracts launched
- Suffolk Business Grants Scheme launched – funded via UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF)
- Rural England Prosperity Funded grants programme (3 programmes of support) launched
- Stowmarket Artspace studio and gallery project ongoing with 3 visual artists provided with free studio space and over 600 members of the public accessing exhibition space.

Our places and spaces are well connected with green and sustainable travel infrastructure

- Secured funding via Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for 3 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) schemes
- Contract signed for delivery of e-bike rental pilot at Needham Lake
- Funding announced for Ely and Haughley rail junction improvements
- Plan for Mid Suffolk ringfenced funding for rural transport approved
- Delivered a programme of activity around 'Cycle to Work day' in August for our staff
- Phase 1 of On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) funding delivered
- Joint council's Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure Implementation Plan approved at cabinet.

Economy

Outcome 12: Mid Suffolk communities are supported to be the best skilled workforce across the East with high levels of aspiration

Residents are supported to have the skills, knowledge and access to training and opportunities to access local jobs in key growth sectors

- Working with Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and other education partners to scope specialist recruitment support programme for businesses funded by Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) year 2 and 3 funds.
- Working with Suffolk County Council (SCC) and other Local Authority partners to finalise tender pack for Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) skills and employability programmes for Youth, Adults and Apprenticeship programmes for year 3.
- Quarter two review of progress of Lapwing programme that was commissioned to support young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) – 15 supported so far this year
- Supported expression of interest (EOI) coordinated by Suffolk New College to apply for Freeport East funds to provide specialist adult education and training linked to business needs
- Delivery of Jobs Fair in Stowmarket in partnership with Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

Mid Suffolk's growth and traditional core sectors are supported to flourish, expand and innovate

- Food and Drink Sector analysis work progressing
- Information gathering and initial conversations held around development of a programme of food, drink & makers engagement events
- Promotion of available grants and support available to businesses to support growth and development

Economic growth is inclusive with every resident given equal opportunity to participate and succeed

- Access Able – surveys carried out at 20 businesses throughout both districts with streetscapes created in Stowmarket
- Stradbroke Changing Places – revised plan approved by funders
- Food Museum Changing Places - planning application submitted and financial agreement sent

Communities

Outcome 13: Communities have the capacity and are supported and empowered with the infrastructure and skills to maximise opportunities and thrive

Community assets are optimised to create thriving communities

- 8 projects were awarded £295,742.35 of Section 106 funding (Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990; contributions can be sought from developers towards the costs of providing community and social infrastructure). This included the installation of new solar panels and batteries at Eye & District Cricket Club, a re-developed Scout Hut in Needham Market and the refurbishment of Thurston Pavilion.
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Parish Briefings and Project Development Training sessions for Members and Parish Clerks were held in July and August 2023. The sessions were attended by 27 Mid Suffolk Members and 23 Mid Suffolk Parishes were represented.
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Exacom Database training sessions were held for members during September 2023.
- Ten infrastructure projects were approved by Mid Suffolk's Cabinet for District Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) expenditure in September 2023; a total of £500,173.22 was awarded for a range of infrastructure projects including walking and cycling projects, play equipment, a contribution to a new scout hut and improvements to village halls. These projects occurred in the parishes of Finningham, Needham Market, Walsham Le Willows, Somersham, Wyverstone, Great Ashfield, Norton, Creeting St Mary and Eye. The above footpath and cycling schemes for Finningham, Creeting St Mary, Eye and Walsham Le Willows represent the first footpath and cycling expenditure from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for Mid Suffolk totalling £57,070.32.
- 8 projects were awarded £110,659.50 through Community Development Grants. This included the extension to Norton Village Hall, the provision of new play facilities for Eye Opportunity Group and the renovation of the John Peel Centre's 11 Market Place building in Stowmarket.
- 46 applications were awarded £26,610.71 through Locality Awards in Mid Suffolk. This included the purchase of a new cooker at Cotton Village Hall, new lighting at Coddensham Community Shop and a new defibrillator at St Peter and St Mary's Pre School in Stowmarket.
- £929,124.54 of external funding was drawn into Mid Suffolk as match funding through Community Grants and Section 106 applications in quarter two. This includes funding from SUEZ Communities Trust and Awards for All.

Communities are equipped and supported to be resilient, deliver local services and volunteer

- In partnership with Community Action Suffolk, a stand advertising volunteer opportunities available across the districts was held in Endeavour House on 26th July.
- The Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council Valuable Volunteers campaign has recently launched, allowing staff to nominate a charity they volunteer for in the districts. Each charity nominated will receive a donation as a direct result of the volunteer giving their time.
- A two-day training session on Volunteer Management was delivered to volunteer coordinators of 9 Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) groups in Mid Suffolk. The workshops covered a variety of topics including 'volunteers and the law', how to attract volunteers, how to handle difficult situations involving volunteers, and more.

Communities are digitally connected with the right infrastructure and skills to minimise digital exclusion

- Digital skills sessions took place in Stradbroke library in August with 2 sessions held with 7 attendees.
- We were successful in the databank pilot (offering free mobile data) and are working with our temporary accommodation team to deliver the sim cards to housing tenants

Communities

Outcome 14: Our places and their communities are well connected and valued by residents and visitors

Residents have a sense ownership, belonging to, and pride in, their local communities

- 10 Pride in Your Place Applications were received, and £2,800 of funding has been awarded to projects ranging from bulb planting around the village in Gosbeck to cleaning village signs in Botesdale, Great Ashfield, Mickfield and Wetherden.

Our communities are vibrant and well connected

- Officers are working with Community Action Suffolk to develop a Social Economy Strategy for the next two years and are designing Suffolk as a social enterprise place.

Our communities lead discussions on what is important to them and inform decisions to improve their quality of life

- Winter Warm funded groups continued to be monitored.
- Work continues with People and Place Plan to support Parish Councils to capture the priorities in their community.

Residents actively participate in their local communities and work to improve them

- 26 delegates completed the Mental Health First Aid Training Course. 100% of respondents agreed they have noticed an impact of this training on how they can support their team and wellbeing at work.
- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Awareness Week took place in July with public engagement events in Eye and Stowmarket. These events promoted the work of Community Safety officers and helped raise awareness of victims' rights and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Case Review. 63% of survey respondents reported an increased knowledge around rights as a victim of crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) as a result of attending these events.

Residents have positive relationships across communities

- Eye Ukraine Community Groups Hosts and Guests session was held, offering peer-to-peer support and helped to see where the gaps are. Ukrainian children were supported to access Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) through sending out promotion.

Communities

Outcome 15: Local places are inclusive, safe, and accessible for walking, cycling and public transport

Local places are inclusive, safe, and accessible for walking, cycling and public transport

- Officers undertook a training course by Norfolk and Suffolk Victim Care on 25th September to outline the support that exists to signpost victims of crime, Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), hate crime and/or fraud.
- Work continues to support the new Serious Violence Duty, a strategy which aims to reduce serious violence. Officers attended a strategy development workshop to help inform the new strategy.
- Work continues on delivery of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) to ensure existing sustainable travel routes are safe and accessible

Residents access and enjoy a range of activities in their local community spaces

- The UK's leading cycle race, The Tour of Britain (TOB), successfully returned to Suffolk on 7th September. Residents, schools and local businesses lined the streets to watch the event pass through towns and villages. Work is ongoing with schools in the district to encourage them to sign up to the TOB school's challenge.

Communities are green and environmentally attractive

- Our teams ensure that there is sufficient green space within local communities providing a variety of functions, such as informal green space for walking, play area and more formal parks.

Housing

Outcome 16: Residents are settled, safe and healthy in affordable and high-quality homes that meet their needs

Residents have access to quality affordable homes that meet their needs

- 25 new homes delivered by the Affordable Housing Delivery Team, with 23 for rent and 3 for shared ownership
- 10 Shared Ownership homes have been sold and completed on and residents moved in
- Early stages of community engagement and initial design on a new housing scheme
- Demolition and Archaeology works complete at the Paddock House site and tender being prepared for main contractor

Vulnerable and homeless residents have somewhere safe and appropriate to live and homelessness is prevented

- 62 households were successful prevented from being homeless
- 20 households have been able to remain in their existing homes
- 22 households were found new homes elsewhere
- This is a 24% increase on quarter one successful preventions.

Residents understand and can access the most appropriate options to get housing

- 86 application have been made, this an increase of 20 application since quarter one
- 65 Prevention duties have been accepted , meaning residents are approaching at an earlier stage.
- 21 relief duties were accepted, and this is where temporary accommodation can be offered if there is a priority need.
- Central Suffolk Lettings has increased its portfolio of properties by 10%

Residents are able to live as healthy, safely, independently as possible in local communities

- 21 Minor Adaptation Grants Completed (this will be stairlifts, ramps , level access shower)
- 6 Category 2 hazards identified (These might include issues like inadequate lighting, or minor electrical faults)
- 18 Empty Homes have been brought back into use

Residents live in high quality and safe homes

- Tenant Satisfaction Measures results for providing a Safe Home is 75% satisfied and for providing a Well-Maintained Home is 63% satisfied

Housing

Outcome 17: Residents have a say in the future of housing

Residents are included and actively participate in how their areas are evolving and changing

- We have conducted 2 Community Action Days in Palgrave and Needham Market to improve neighbourhoods and gain feedback from residents about future improvements for Greater Places spending with a total of 10 households engaging with us.
- Tenant Satisfaction for quarter two for contribution for neighbourhood is 63% satisfied

Council tenants and leaseholders are involved in the management and improvement of their housing services

- We have increased our tenant board membership by 4 new tenants and have held 3 tenant board meetings
- Consultation event held in Gainsborough Road, Stowmarket to discuss communal area improvements led by residents and engaged with 15 residents.

Tenants and leaseholders receive high quality services from our councils

- Overall Satisfaction for tenants in the Tenant Satisfaction Measure survey is 62% satisfied

Outcome 18: Homes are sustainable, with reducing carbon emissions, that are future proofed to meet resident needs

The refresh of the Carbon Reduction Management Plan is still underway, which sets out the improvements needed to deliver climate resilience and adaptation including in our housing stock. The first cross party Task and Finish group has now met to move this forward.

Health of the Organisation

Outcome 19: Develop and implement a comprehensive 'People' Strategy that ensures we are a great organisation to work for, that our people are supported to learn and grow, energised and enabled to deliver our ambitions

Pay and Reward Project

- Concluded Organisational moderation
- Commenced pay modelling and benefits provision

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- Contracted Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Programme supplier and commenced training provision with 155 people trained to end of quarter two and 360 people booked in for training in quarter three
- Continued work on the Anti-Racism charter (signed with UNISON) action plan
- Recruited Equality, Diversity and Inclusion champions across the organisation and trained those individuals as champions and agreed Champion meetings for up and coming 12 months

Leadership and Management Development

- Contracted Leadership and Management Development Provider and agreed content for November commencement of Aspiring Managers Programme and Emerging Leaders Programme

Engagement and Wellbeing

- Recruited Menopause champions across the organisation to support our wellbeing and inclusion strategy

Internships

- 5 interns completed their placements over the summer

Health of the Organisation

Outcome 20: Provide robust effective management of the Councils finances, including our capital projects and contracts. We will use our resources in a sustainable way and prioritise based upon our Corporate Plan

- Monitoring reports for quarter one presented to Cabinet covering both revenue and capital for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account
- Led on cross-Suffolk joint procurement for Healthy Behaviours
- Reported to Joint Audit and Standards Committee (JASC) on the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) credentials of the Council's investments.
- Treasury Management Outturn for 2022/23 reported to Council
- Integrated systems testing and user acceptance testing and training completed on the new finance system

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Our Direction of Travel

Quarterly Performance Indicators		Outcomes Framework						Trend	Direction of Travel
		2022/23				2023/24			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2		
Outcome 1 Customer Access	Recorded chatbot sessions	8781	3100	2026	2679	2472	2964		down 4.4% on previous year down 66.7% on previous year
	Automated telephone sessions	2950	1769	912	973	394	589		down 11% on previous year reduced 55% from previous year
	Calls per day	630	556	542	619	556	495		reducing
	Average wait time in seconds	303	341	224	179	151	153		improving
	Abandon rate	26	28	18	14	13	12		
	Failure rate on waste collections (Mid Suffolk)	0.11%	0.12%	0.10%	0.11%	0.10%	0.10%		
Outcome 2 Engaged Residents	Average daily web visits	1750	1356	942	1550	1651	1224		declining
	Facebook reach (Mid Suffolk)	98,267	116,825	186,224	142,995	63,232	102,954		down 11.9% on previous year
	X (formerly Twitter) impressions (Mid Suffolk)	47,000	48,000	71,600	68,500	275,100	55,900		up 16.5% on previous year
	Tenant Survey (quarterly) on feeling informed about decision-making				58%	63%	65%		increasing
Outcome 3 Resident Satisfaction	Compliments	50	46	53	40	52	43		declining
	(Stage 1) Complaints	210	194	193	261	242	238		declining
	Tenant Survey (quarterly) on whether the Council (as landlord) treats tenants fairly and with respect				63%	65%	67%		New for 23/24 increasing
	Tenant Survey (quarterly) on whether the Council (as landlord) listens and acts on feedback				44%	45%	51%		New for 23/24 increasing
Resident Wellbeing	Access to sport and leisure facilities in Mid Suffolk (Everyone Active)		480,852 visits in 22/23			158,411	116,410		New for 23/24 data only
	Total visits to the CAP (Stowmarket)	170	145	160	260	221	168		data only

Quarterly Performance Indicators		Outcomes Framework						Trend	Direction of Travel
		2022/23				2023/24			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2		
Outcome 7 Biodiversity	Trees planted as part of green canopy (Mid Suffolk)				127			Annual	data only
	Hedgerows planted through the planting scheme (Mid Suffolk)				4,665			Annual	data only
	Number of tree preservation orders (TPOs) determined (Mid Suffolk)	13	11	14	10	7	15		data only
	Square metres of wildflower seeds distributed (Mid Suffolk)				7,070			Annual	data only
	Meadow Management Areas sqm (Mid Suffolk)				85,517			Annual	data only
	Biodiversity metric 3.0 measuring biodiversity change from development (Mid Suffolk)							New for 23/24	
Outcome 8 Climate Change	Number of EV charge points installed by Mid Suffolk (cumulative)			New	11	26	33	New for 23/24	data only
	Percentage of BMSDC owned houses that meet the EPPC standard or above (all to achieve by 2030)						57.4%	New for 23/24	data only
	Number of BMSDC owned houses that meet the EPPC standard or above (all to achieve by 2030)						4,147	New for 23/24	data only
Outcome 9 Healthy, Safe and Sustainable	Total garden waste subscribers (Mid Suffolk)	18,479	18,478	18,368	18,544	19,126	19,427		up 5.1% on previous year
	No. of business waste customers (Mid Suffolk)	728	738	735	737	744	759		data only
	Contaminated recycling (Mid Suffolk)	10.50	10.70	9.60	9.90	8.90	12.09		increasing
	Food safety hygiene ratings (Mid Suffolk)						88.59%	New for 23/24	
	Incidents of flytipping (Mid Suffolk)	90	84	71	88	94	73		down 13.1% on previous year

Quarterly Performance Indicators		Outcomes Framework						Trend	Direction of Travel
		2022/23				2023/24			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2		
Outcome 10 Support for Places and Economy	Town Centre Vacancy Rates 3 - Eye (MSDC)	4.80%	5.00%	9.50%	5.00%	11.40%	13.60%		data only
	Town Centre Vacancy Rates 4 - Needham Market (MSDC)	14.00%	13.50%	9.50%	9.00%	11.00%	13.50%		data only
	Town Centre Vacancy Rates 5 - Stowmarket (MSDC)	6.00%	6.10%	4.90%	7.00%	9.80%	7.40%		data only
Outcome 13 Community Capacity	Capital grant spent or allocated (Mid Suffolk cumulative)	£207,872	£91,446	£115,518	£111,828	£74,469	£74,469		data only
	Minor grant spent or allocated (Mid Suffolk cumulative)	£14,750	£1,000	£15,750	£0	£8,049	£11,594		data only
	S106 funds spent or allocated (Mid Suffolk)	£234,500	£8,128	£1,345	£54,620	£203,671	£312,541		data only
Outcome 15 Inclusive, safe and accessible	ASB cases reviewed by the ASB partnership (Mid Suffolk)	7	39	6	4	25	30		data only
	New ASB cases received separate to those discussed with the ASB partnership panels (Mid Suffolk)			27	28	65	77		data only
	No of ASB cases open more than 6 months (Mid Suffolk) at end of Q			1.0%	3.0%	4	2		data only
Outcomes 16 / 18 Affordable, High Quality and Sustainable Homes	Affordable homes built or acquired for HRA (Mid Suffolk)	4	27	37	31	19	26		data only
	Households placed into temporary accommodation (Mid Suffolk)	31	34	47	52	56	48		data only
	Cases where homelessness has been prevented or relieved (Mid Suffolk)	37	57	60	56	73	80		data only
	Gas safety compliance (Mid Suffolk) - backlog number			17	27	12	11		data only
	Electrical safety compliance (Mid Suffolk) - backlog number			258	206	88	83		data only
	Average number of days for VOID relets (Mid Suffolk)	46	44	56	72	65	75		target 60 days
	Number of properties relet (Mid Suffolk)	54	51	56	68	59	46		data only
Outcome 17 Engaged Residents and Tenants	Number of residents (and staff) engaged in community action days					22	97	New for 23/24	increasing
	Number of tenants involved in codesign of services					122	204	New for 23/24	increasing
	Improvement in Overall Tenant Satisfaction Survey results (Combined for both Councils)				59%	68%	64%	New for 23/24	slight decline

Quarterly Performance Indicators		Outcomes Framework						Trend	Direction of Travel
		2022/23				2023/24			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2		
Health of the Organisation	Average number of days sickness per FTE (Cumulative)	1.64	3.44	5.67	8.05	1.96	4.14		
	Average number of days sickness per FTE (Actual for Quarter)	1.64	1.80	2.23	2.38	1.96	2.18		increasing
	% of major applications processed 'in time' (13 wks., 16 wks. or within agreed Extension of Time/ Planning Performance Agreement) (Mid Suffolk)	100.00%	82.40%	92.90%	92.30%	93.30%	90.90%		60% target
	% of non major applications processed 'in time' (8 wks, or within agreed Extension of Time/ Planning Performance Agreement) (Mid Suffolk)	95.00%	95.60%	96.70%	98.60%	95.10%	94.30%		70% target
	Average time taken to process new claims and changes to claims (Mid Suffolk)	6.89	8.48	2.96	5.26	4.56	4.81		target 10 days
	Average time taken to process new claims (Mid Suffolk)	21.92	27.81	12.29	18.44	15.25	14.79		target 24 days
	Average time taken to process changes to claims (Mid Suffolk)	6.14	7.01	2.39	4.46	3.87	3.80		target 7 days
	The level of Local Authority Error overpayments as a % of all housing benefit paid (Mid Suffolk)	0.48	0.42	0.56	0.41	0.41	0.40		target 0.48
	HBOP Amount recovered in year to date as a % of HBOP Amount created in year to date (Mid Suffolk)	110.78%	125.56%	117.26%	109.99%	111.82%	111.54%		target 80%
	Council Tax % of total raised collected in year (Mid Suffolk cumulative)	29.09%	56.27%	83.69%	98.21%	29.09%	56.00%		
	Business Rates % of total raised collected in year (Mid Suffolk cumulative)	36.80%	68.75%	86.95%	98.33%	29.24%	56.03%		
	% of rent due collected (12 month rolling) (excluding current arrears brought forward) - MSDC					99.54%	99.57%		data only
	Current tenant arrears as a % of the rent debit - MSDC					2.7%	2.46%		data only
	% of occupied garages - MSDC					73%	72%		data only
Garage Current Tenant Arrears - MSDC					£11,905.38	£12579.24		data only	



Our Plans for Quarter Three

Customers

- Our new Council websites will be launched in quarter three.
 - Our new complaints and freedom of information system will be developed and launched over the coming quarter.
 - We will be looking to provide additional training and support to all service areas who handle complaints to ensure they are confident using the new system and also have been provided with refreshed best practice.
 - We will be extending our call back service to all lines by the end of quarter three.
 - We have implemented an automated missed collection service.
 - Tenant Satisfaction Measure survey for quarter three will be carried out on 150 tenants per district. We will report the results in the quarter three performance report.
- Our engagement will commence on the refreshed strategic priorities as part of the new corporate plan work.
- Our complaint policy will be refreshed following our work with the housing ombudsman.
- Our cost of living campaigns will continue, raising awareness of the support available to help households heat their homes, and working with local publications to reach those who aren't online.
- Our Databank Pilot with The Good Things Foundation will launch in quarter three, which will support households in temporary accommodation to get online and reduce digital exclusion.
 - We will be holding an event for Talk Money Week to promote the support available to residents to improve different aspects of financial wellbeing, partners to include Citizens Advice, Barclays, Trading Standards, Digital Skills and Financial Inclusion Officers.
 - We will be looking to launch our Anglian Water referral pilot which looks to improve uptake of social water tariffs for low income households.

Wellbeing

- Safeguarding Policy agreed by Cabinet.
- A Dementia Friends session for staff is scheduled to take place in October.
- Preparations for Silver Sunday are well underway to celebrate a national older people's awareness day.
- Healthy Behaviours is scheduled to launch as a county-wide strategy to improve people's health and wellbeing in Suffolk in partnership with other districts.
- Hartismere Care Home and Finborough Court Care Home are hosting events on 13th and 17th October to celebrate Silver Sunday, a national older people's awareness day.

Environment

- We will attend Community Energy Event in Eye and Bramford in October, promoting recycling, food waste reduction and home composting.
- During October half term we will attend Stowmarket Town Council's Go Green Go Wild event and have a range of family-friendly activities around reusing, food waste and home composting. Our stands will highlight pumpkin waste at Halloween.
- In October we will support the Suffolk Waste Partnership at a border district event: Bungay Food and Drink Festival, to raise awareness of Food Savvy, our food waste reduction campaign.
- In November we will participate in Stowmarket's Christmas Tree festival and attend the Christmas Fayre event, promoting recycling and food waste reduction.

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We continue to support schools by offering waste education sessions to pupils and waste management guidance to staff/leadership and pupil eco groups. Upcoming visits include Chives Montessori School, Claydon High School and Wood Ley Primary School, and a parent engagement event at Wilby Primary School.

- We will support two school tours at the Energy From Waste facility.
- Hosted three Community Climate Action Roadshows in Eye, Bramford and Stowmarket
- Launch, promote and monitor e-bike pilot rental scheme in Needham Market
- Prepare a grant scheme for rural transport in Mid Suffolk for launch in early 2024
- Completion of Phase 1 of On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) at Lliffe Way
- Support and offer guidance to local communities seeking to develop local energy schemes

Economy

- Ongoing delivery of Suffolk-wide business support scheme funded via UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF)
- Ongoing delivery and review of Innovate to Elevate programme including case study development
- Completion of refresh of Economic Evidence Base
- Completion of mid-year reporting to government on UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund
- Continuation of receiving and reviewing of grant applications under Basic Income Support for Sustainability (BISS), Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) and Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF)
- Planning and development of a programme of food, drink & makers events
- Final Sign off of Food and Drink Sector Report
- Completion of work to roof at 11 Market Place, Stowmarket.
- Completion of works at Stradbroke Pool – Changing Places.
- Works to commence on site at Food Museum – Changing Places.
- Needham Market – Access for All, Partnership meetings, presentation of options and stakeholder engagement.
- Love Exploring promotional window stickers with Quick Response (QR) code downloads distributed to businesses along the walking routes
- Launch of Access Able scheme at The Hold on November 16th promoting Suffolk as an accessible destination.
- Begin work with visitor attractions and the Good Journey Scheme – promoting car free travel to visitor attractions to include discounted rates for visitors.
- Continuation of ‘Artspace’ (Stowmarket) exhibition and studios until early December.
- Ongoing work regarding improvements to Needham Market including new signage at Needham Lake, Cattle Tunnel
- Moving forward with partner workshops and tender preparation relating to the Stowmarket Creative Placemaking & Wayfinding Project.
- Cross Street – Final agreement will be in place with operator and working towards launch date.
- Gateway 14 – Working with Gateway 14 Board and Jaynic towards planning application
- Gateway 14 – Practical completion of first building at Gateway 14 November 2023.

Communities

- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Bid Round 12 opens on the 1st October and closes on the 31st October 2023 for acceptance of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Bid applications.
- The fifteenth round of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) parish payments will be made in October 2023 for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) income collected from April 2023 to September 2023.
- The sixth review of the CIL Expenditure Framework is to be held in November/December 2023.
- Production of the Infrastructure Funding Statement which details the amounts of Community Infrastructure Levy collected and the infrastructure projects that have been funded through the Levy. The report also details S106 (Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990; contributions can be sought from developers towards the costs of providing community and social infrastructure) monies collected and spent on infrastructure and community projects.
- The second application window for Capital Grants will close on 1st October and applications will be reviewed and scored.
- Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council will be supporting the National Hate Crime Awareness Week which commences 16th October.
- Anti-Slavery Awareness Day is scheduled for 18th October.
- Town and Parish Liaison meeting is being held on 19th October at the Sports and Leisure Centre in Debenham to cover topics such as Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council's new Corporate Plan, Joint Local Plan, 'Healthy Behaviours', increasing demographic engagement across the district and grant funding.
- Grant Officers will be preparing a video of tips to support applications for grant funding.
- The third round of capital grant funding opens on 4 December.
- A "Let's Talk Volunteering" event for volunteer coordinators is scheduled to take place in Eye during October.

Housing

- Engaging with tenants who are telling us they are dissatisfied with our complaint handling to understand why – results of this will be fed into the Housing Complaints Task Force to identify improvement actions.
- Housing Improvement Day to take place on 1st November 2023 to look at how we can across the main themes of the tenant satisfaction measures survey.
- 13 new homes to be completed
- Appoint a main contractor for the Paddock House development which will deliver 16 new affordable homes
- Identifying areas to benefit from the Greater Places, Better Spaces Fund, particularly projects which are sustainable or eco-friendly in nature.
- Developing action plan to help increase tenant satisfaction and carrying out next Tenant Satisfaction Survey
- Continue resident engagement and design work at new housing site
- Following resident engagement the early design for the potential new housing scheme will reflect the Councils new Design Guide and specification for new homes, that homes are truly sustainable and affordable
- Legal completion of 15 Shared Ownership sales with residents moving into their new homes
- Legal completion of Shared Ownership sales with residents moving into their new homes
- Embedding the Early Intervention Team working in partnership with internal and external stakeholders to support households before they are risk using an early intervention model.
- Creating a in person service through surgeries and pop-up sessions across the districts and this will include co-location with third sector and others.
- Delivering Cosy Homes Scheme to improve the energy efficiency in the private rented sector through insulations grants
- Health Check of Gateway to Home Choice

Health of the Organisation

- Part 1 of the Joint Local Plan was adopted by Mid Suffolk District Council on 20th November 2023
- Produce comprehensive and fully updated procurement pipeline
- 2024/25 budget work for both the General Fund and the Housing Revenue account
- Quarter two financial monitoring to Cabinet
- Update the Contract Standing Orders
- Complete Treasury Management half year report
- Data migration work, Excelerator training and regression testing on the new finance system

Pay and Reward Project

- Complete pay modelling and finalise proposals to ensure 'go live' with the Pay and Reward review delivery in November
- Complete the procurement of the benefits included in our proposal to ensure these are available for all employees for the new financial year
- Complete payroll to ensure the respective back-pay is completed in December 2023 payroll
- Pay and Reward Review to be completed in quarter three

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- Continue the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion programme training planned for quarter three
- Commence work on the inclusion of Equality and Diversity into all policies and processes

Leadership and Management Development

- Commence roll-out of Aspiring Managers Programme in late October
- Commence roll out of Emerging Leaders Programme early November

Policy and Process

- Continue the work on our policy and process review



Page 81 Our Performance Journey

2023-24 Performance Report Journey



- Report layout developed into three sections – 1) Our Achievements, 2) Our Direction of Travel and 3) Our Plans
- Tier 3 headings included
- A selection of KPI's presented for each Outcome with associated trend line
- Outcomes focused updates provided

Q1 (April – June)

- Information provided in plain English
- A selection of SMART KPI's presented with associated targets and RAG statuses
- Reduce the number of slides where appropriate
- Include some KPI's for statutory targets

Q2 (July – September)

- Additional selection of KPI's presented with associated targets and RAG statuses
- Additional KPI's for statutory targets – are we fit for purpose
- Pentana configuration complete
- Pentana onboarding to commence (phased approach)

Q3 (October – December)

- Additional selection of KPI's presented with associated targets and RAG statuses
- Pentana onboarding complete
- Sample Pentana performance report

Q4 (January – March)

Agenda Item 11

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: MSDC Cabinet	REPORT NUMBER: MCa/23/33
FROM: Cllr Teresa Davis - Cabinet Member for Thriving Towns and Rural Communities	DATE OF MEETING: 5 th December 2023
OFFICER: Fiona Duhamel, Director of Economic Growth and Climate Change	KEY DECISION REF NO. CAB464

MSDC RINGFENCED FUNDING FOR RURAL TRANSPORT PROVISION – ADDENDUM RE: FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Cabinet is asked to agree a change to the previously approved revenue and capital split of this reserve funded project to revenue only. There is no impact to the overall General Fund budget as the approved amount has not changed and is funded from earmarked reserves.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves £560k of the total £820k earmarked reserve funding previously approved in the 2023/24 budget, be spent on revenue rather than capital.

REASON FOR DECISION

Formally documenting the approval for this change in capital/revenue budget split provides a clear audit trail.

3. KEY INFORMATION

- 3.1 In February 2022, a budget amendment put forward by the Green and Liberal Democrat group was agreed ““For scheduled rural community transport utilising zero carbon electric buses, set aside a budget of up to £560,000 capital and £130,000 revenue per year for a two-year period – equating to total £560,000 capital and £260,000 revenue funded from the Growth and Efficiency Fund.”
- 3.2 In October, the Cabinet agreed that this ringfenced funding would now be spent as follows:
- £600,000 to be awarded for new provision via a rural transport grants scheme
 - £170,000 ringfenced to provide the local contribution needed to support a joint bid with SCC to the ZEBRA2 funding opportunity (to try and procure zero-emission buses)
 - £50,000 held back as contingency
- 3.3 Subsequent to the October Cabinet meeting, it has been agreed that the full £820k earmarked in the reserve would be classified as all (100%) revenue spend, and therefore the budget needs to amend to reflect this.
- 3.4 This is being brought back to Cabinet for formal approval of this change to the revenue and capital split.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The General Fund financial implications of the overall spend/project remain the same as the previous Cabinet report on this topic.

4.2 This 'addendum' to the previous report/agreement is simply to confirm that the budget now needs to be recorded as a 100% revenue spend rather than a revenue/capital split as it was originally recorded.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

As per previous report.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

As per previous report.

7. CONSULTATIONS

As per previous report.

8. EQUALITY ANALYSIS

As per previous report.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

As per previous report.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

10.1 Please find, hyperlinked, the following:

- [The previous cabinet report and minutes from that cabinet meeting \(item 41\)](#)

Agenda Item 12

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: Mid Suffolk Cabinet	REPORT NUMBER: MCa/23/34
FROM: Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resilience – Cllr Andrew Mellen	DATE OF MEETING: 05/12/2023
OFFICER: Fiona Duhamel	KEY DECISION REF NO. CAB423

This report is open for public inspection. However, Appendices referred to within the report are not open for public inspection as they contain exempt information by virtue of which the Council are likely to exclude the public during the discussion of the agenda item to which the report relates.

The description of the exempt information under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) is as follows: -

1. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

The author(s) confirm(s) that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information

SKILLS & INNOVATION CENTRE ON GATEWAY 14

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report to Cabinet progress made since the initial Outline Business Case (OBC) gateway stage approvals, completed in March 2023. The Council has continued to assess the viability and co-ordinate the design of a Skills and Innovation Centre within the designated innovation cluster of the Gateway 14 employment site in Stowmarket. The Council would, subject to agreement, take ownership of the land and building upon its completion by Gateway 14 Ltd/Jaynic.
- 1.2 To seek Cabinet's endorsement of the Full Business Case (FBC) which incorporates a pre-Technical Design stage architect's layout, evidence base, financial viability appraisal (including projected revenue income and expenditure), funding strategy, social value impact assessment and outline of operational options. This work has been co-ordinated by the Council's Economic Growth and Climate Change service with key content and assessments being provided by external professionals and sector consultants. Engagement has been undertaken throughout the process including with Gateway 14 Ltd, Freeport East and the education, skills and innovation partnership network.
- 1.3 To seek Cabinet's approval to proceed with the full delivery of the project, subject to the recommendations within this report which propose an appropriate officer delegation for the completion of essential assessments, agreements and due diligence.

1.4 To seek Cabinet's approval of its preferred funding model, and for Cabinet to make an onward recommendation to Council for addition of this project to the capital programme.

2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

2.1 **DO-NOTHING. Not Recommended.** A 'do-nothing' approach will fail to explore an opportunity to deliver an innovative solution towards bridging long-term skills gaps (including green and digital skills) in the local and sub-regional area. It will also fail to contribute towards strategic priority outcomes across a range of corporate and local growth plans and policies. It will not deliver against Gateway 14 aims for the wider site or Freeport East ambitions for growing world-class innovation clusters.

2.2 **WORK WITH PARTNERS AND SPECIALISTS TO SCOPE AND DESIGN A VIABLE DEVELOPMENT. Approved at Outline Business Case (OBC) stage.**

2.3 **TO APPROVE FULL BUSINESS CASE (FBC) AND PROGRESS WITH DETAILED TECHNICAL DESIGN, PLANNING, LEGAL AGREEMENTS FOR TRANSFER, DUE DILIGENCE, PREFERRED FUNDING MODEL AND FULL PROJECT DELIVERY. Recommended.** To now take forward the project for full delivery. This project is scoped as a multiple-partner collaboration delivering shared benefits and outcomes. Significant work packages have now been completed in support of this option and its Full Business Case (FBC). The FBC contains sufficient information for Cabinet to make an informed decision on whether to proceed fully or not - subject to satisfactory completion of remaining assessments and due diligence. Appraisals will remain ongoing as part of a live business case and will respond to updated information (such as inflation costs, interest rate changes, operational costs and other forecasting/risk management) which would be reported through the governance structures outlined in the FBC. Commitment made now will help to secure the essential seed fund capital and Pot B retained business rates contributions via Freeport.

2.4 **PROCEED ONLY UP TO PLANNING OUTCOME STAGE GATEWAY BEFORE MAKING A LATER FINAL DECISION TO INVEST / PROCEED TO ASSET CREATION. Not Recommended.** This option would create risk from both the forward funding of technical design and planning costs and by the Council deferring its commitment to proceeding with the project, which could negatively impact access to the essential seed fund capital and Pot B business rates.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

CABINET

- 3.1 That Cabinet endorse the Full Business Case (FBC) attached as Appendix A (confidential).
- 3.2 That Cabinet approve the full delivery of the project as outlined in the FBC for an approximate 35,690 sq ft. Skills and Innovation Centre on Gateway 14 at Stowmarket up to a maximum total cost envelope of £18.75m.
- 3.3 That Cabinet, if minded to approve recommendation 3.2, approve the recommended funding strategy detailed in Appendix D (confidential) as the Cabinet's preferred method of delivering the project, SUBJECT TO the satisfactory completion of all related legal, financial, cost and valuation advice and contractual agreements, full access to Freeport seed fund capital payment and full access to the required level of Pot B retained business rates generated on the Gateway 14 site as part of

Freeport agreements (as forecast in the recommended funding strategy attached as Appendix D - confidential).

- 3.4 That Cabinet delegate its authority for completion of all necessary matters and agreements pursuant to the approval of recommendation 3.3 to the Council's Director for Economic Growth and Climate Change and Section 151 Officer/Director for Corporate Resources in consultation with the Leader of the Council. This requires that all 'subject to' elements within 3.3 are met.
- 3.5 That Cabinet authorise the forward funding of next stage technical design, planning and related preparatory works, up to a total value of £150k, from the Gateway 14 capital budget.

ONWARD RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

- 3.6 That Council approve the addition of this project to the Capital Programme as outlined in the recommended funding strategy including the virement of the Gateway 14 Capital budget of £10.75m and the use of earmarked reserves or Pot B retained business rates to finance this.

REASON FOR DECISION

To maximise the opportunities available to the Council to lead the development of a new unique facility which offers skills development, business support, entrepreneurship and innovation at Gateway 14 in Stowmarket. This local leadership opportunity arises from the Council's economic growth and strategic asset management functions, Gateway 14 site investment, Freeport East designation and the Council's active skills, education and innovation sector partnerships.

This proposal seeks to meet the immediate and future skills needs of employers and workers in the local and wider sub-regional area and to address persistent skills gaps which will support transition towards a higher wage economy. It will provide bespoke services to address gaps in provision and add value to the regional economy with a particular focus on, but not limited to, growth of green skills, digital skills, environmental innovation and support for supply chains in the green economy.

The proposal meets many Council, local partnership and government outcomes but also creates the conditions to stimulate some new and exciting partnerships which enhance opportunities for local communities and provides a regionally significant centre in Stowmarket and within the Freeport area.

4. KEY INFORMATION

- 4.1 This project is for the delivery and operation of a new-build circa 35,000 square feet (approximate, equivalent to 3,251m²) Skills and Innovation Centre on the Gateway 14 / Freeport East site. The centre would be set within the designated innovation cluster area of the site masterplan, comprising approximately 85,000 square feet (7,897m²) in total.
- 4.2 On 06 March 2023 the Council (via Cabinet Paper MCa/22/56) approved the Outline Business Case gateway stage and authorised the next phase of work to commence towards a Full Business Case, which is now ready to report back to Cabinet.

- 4.3 The Full Business Case document is attached at Appendix A (confidential) – together with its two supporting Annexes (confidential) attached as Appendices B and C to this report - and is the primary reference point for this report and its recommendations. This makes clear that key considerations for the Council are based upon the ‘added value’ of a skills development (including green skills and digital skills) and education component co-located with businesses and innovation. To this extent it is a non-traditional innovation or enterprise centre format and is a ‘disruptive’ and transformational concept to help address long-term skills gaps, local employer skills shortages and improve lower levels of productivity and attainment.
- 4.4 The building will have enhanced sustainability features as an exemplar development which will have strong recognition and association to both Gateway 14 and Freeport East. It is designed to achieve BREEAM Excellent certification with its specification being carefully considered through its physical form, spaces and flow. This will maximise the operational uses which in turn build the collaborations, shared learning environment and innovation which will make the centre a success.
- 4.5 Outline Planning Permission (Ref: DC/21/00407) is held for the whole Gateway 14 site which includes a centrally located innovation cluster area. Gateway 14 Ltd would submit a reserved matters application for the Skills and Innovation Centre. In summary, the process would be:
- Gateway 14 Ltd provide the fixed price delivery of the Skills and Innovation Centre to agreed layout, design and specification (led by the Council). The development risk regarding costs is incurred by Gateway 14 Ltd.
 - Gateway 14 could potentially negotiate a contract with a chosen construction contractor but will almost certainly go to open tender. Any procurement compliance requirements relating to regulations or accessing the Freeport seed capital grant would be observed.
 - The Council would independently source an operator, or operators, for the centre utilising its usual public procurement processes. The earlier this is done the better as it will support the marketing, fit out and transitioning of the spaces on a practical level.
- 4.6 Officers are taking external legal and commercial advice as to the appropriate structure for the transaction with Gateway 14 Ltd, in order to protect the Council’s commercial interests but also to create the optimum structure from the point of view of public procurement. This will involve the Council either purchasing the site and then paying for the delivery of the building, or purchasing the end product. In any event the Council will receive a full suite of collateral warranties from the construction team giving it assurance as to the quality of the build.
- 4.7 The Skills and Innovation Centre concept is a unique proposition for the region and the UK. There are numerous centres of ‘Innovation’ or ‘Enterprise’ as well as ‘centres, academies or institutes’ for skilled training currently in operation around the country and elsewhere. However, few aim to bring together aspects of business support and skills development (including green/digital skills for future industries) in quite the same way as is envisioned at G14. Provision (some potentially longer-term) includes:
- Careers information, advice and guidance for adults. Customised recruitment and training. Business support.
 - A technology enabled learning environment to support key sectors and themes

- An ‘innovation’ hub and open workspace options for new tech businesses
- Bespoke training content with a focus on modular/micro-learning
- A local labour market observatory - which will establish the labour market intelligence function to inform skills development to address skill shortages (e.g. hard to fill vacancies) and skill gaps among the existing workforce.
- A range of flexible spaces and meeting rooms including for business meetings, training and events (and including hybrid capability)
- A café for networking/collaboration and use by all businesses on G14
- An exemplar environmentally sustainable building

4.8 Planning for a unique Skills and Innovation Centre at G14 has been progressing since spring 2022. Closely aligned to the ambitions of Freeport East around skills, innovation and net zero, the project concept and ‘ask’ for seed capital was submitted to government as part of the Freeport Outline and Full Business Case. Consequently £6m of Seed Capital has been secured (subject to final FBC sign-off in early 2024) towards the project from government. The centre will deliver against Freeport East / DLUHC and HM Treasury objectives and requirements. It will create a focal point and stimulus for wider innovation cluster development and inward investment on the site, in alignment with the wider Gateway 14 aims and site master plan.

4.9 Work completed includes a ‘Skills Audit’ to review and better understand demand and supply, the development of key activities and operations in the space and the development of physical plans for the site at G14. An optimal layout configuration through an iterative, well-researched and consulted upon process has now been completed.

4.10 Gateway 14’s appointed architect, Frank Shaw Associates, has produced the design layout drawings. These have sought to best balance the development of the education and business ecosystem and function with practical considerations around the building’s best use of space, its sustainability and cost. The Council has had a market level of input into that design work including via its own network. The latest refinements are based upon the partnership panel feedback including Universities, West Suffolk College and Innovation Labs – which also fed into the Respublica consultant report on the scheme concept.

4.11 The Council appointed industry expertise via Hethel Innovation Ltd to support the design process and viability considerations within the Full Business Case. Hethel have a wealth of experience, market insight and operate their own successful facilities in Norfolk. Education partner endorsements on the scheme and their potential learning and skills offer are attached within Appendix B (confidential).

5. LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

5.1 The Council’s administration priorities include for a ‘Greener, Skilled Economy’ - against which this project clearly delivers. The Joint Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Corporate Plan (2019-27) sets out the organisational vision of ‘*great communities with bright & healthy futures that everyone is proud to call home*’ supported by the Council’s mission to ‘*provide strong, proud, and inspirational leadership; striving for excellence, and together building great communities for everyone to live, work, visit and invest in*’. The Skills and Innovation Centre concept accords with the organisational vision and mission.

5.2 There are a range of cross-cutting strategic priorities, both corporate and wider, which align with this project, including (in no particular order of weighting):

- Freeport East – as a key strand of the skills and innovation submission to government and support meeting the net zero ambitions of the Freeport area
- Joint Economic Recovery Plan / economic evidence base refresh – Skills, Innovation and Business Support themes
- G14 Board Business Plan, ambitions and KPIs for site including those around environmental sustainability and innovation
- Climate Action Plan / net zero carbon transition by 2030
- Strategic Asset Management Plan 2020-2025 (SAMP)
- Place Regeneration and Stowmarket Vision delivery
- Joint Local Plan and Local Industrial Strategy – including A14 Growth Corridor
- Business Rates Base Growth for District and Mid-Term Financial Strategy

5.3 The scheme is not being developed for solely commercial purposes but to meet wider social and economic value. If the right format can be established and found to be viable, it is an enabling investment and platform for improving life chances and outcomes for local people. It can help businesses and enterprises to survive, be resilient and grow and for connections and networks to grow organically - raising the profile of the G14 and Freeport sites and district as a home and destination for higher skills, innovation and success.

5.4 The growth of skills, particularly green skills, and innovation at G14 cannot be delivered alone by the Skills and Innovation Centre. The centre must be part of a sustained and co-ordinated plan to attract the correct occupier mix for the wider park to create an innovation cluster which is fed by and feeds into the centre. Success of similar clusters has included an agreed policy on tenant/occupier mix, joined up marketing campaign and scale-up growth opportunities across a wider site for high growth businesses locating initially in the centre/hub.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Appendices A and B (confidential) to this report contain detailed financial information, including the assumptions used and key risks. This project is financially more complex as a scheme given it is a unique proposition blending skills development and education/training with business workspace. It also incorporates flexible lettable spaces for business events and meetings (including co-locating business activities which may be 'hybrid' - physical and digital together). 'Virtual' tenancies are also planned, to help build the collaborations and support productivity (for example greater opportunity for rurally based or isolated micros and SMEs).

6.2 Development appraisals have been carried out by specialist consultants using benchmarking data from other regional innovation centres and sensitivity analysis to test the financial outlook. 'Whole life' (assumed as 30 years) operational, management and maintenance costings, not just up-front capital costs, have been considered and projected. All financial information and forecasting will be kept regularly updated in response to inflationary costs, economic evidence base, business rate forecast modelling and other data and intelligence.

6.3 Business events, training and meeting space rental income is an important income stream but it also carries some risk. However, the intelligence and market research gathered for the FBC indicates strong business demand, geographical benefit and operator interest in these facilities being made available at G14 - especially if a high quality offer is provided. Education and skills training will not of its own generate significant income for the centre, but as outlined in the wider business case will support considerable non-financial and social outcomes.

- 6.4 In early years of operation the centre will be establishing itself and there will be significant risks to consider and manage in this regard. The wider social value impacts from delivering a Skills and Innovation Centre along the A14 corridor at Stowmarket have been analysed using HM Treasury Green Book compliant methodology and assumptions. Those outputs are summarised in Appendix B (confidential). This will be an important consideration in deciding whether to proceed.
- 6.5 Over 30 years of projected cashflow the centre is forecast to cover its operating costs in most years and does not need any Council subsidy in running the facility apart from its first year of operation.
- 6.6 The capital budget requirement is set out in detail in Appendix D (confidential) and will require Full Council approval to be included in the overall Capital Programme along with approval to use reserves to partially forward fund the project. The capital costs comprise base build, fit-out, planning and technical design. It should be noted that allowances have been made within the fit-out element for both professional services fees and build cost inflation forecasts. It is expected that the base build costs estimate will not alter significantly provided the transfer agreement and diligence work is completed within the next few months. Jaynic have direct and recent experience in developing and operating innovation centres, given their involvement in the Epicentre Innovation Centre at Haverhill which is of a similar scale to the proposed Skills and Innovation Centre at Gateway 14.
- 6.7 The Council's reserves will need to be replenished, along with interest costs, from the Pot B Business Rates income, as these rates become payable by occupiers locating on the site. In the worst case the reserves would be replenished over 14 years. However, an acceleration in build out rate could lead to higher repayments in the early years and the reserve being replenished faster than projected. Use of Pot B Business Rates Income for the scheme is subject to approval by the Freeport Board.
- 6.8 The allocation of business rates generated from the wider G14 development was outlined to Cabinet via Report MCa/21/49 (04 April 2022)
- 6.9 The principles of this funding proposal are based upon:
- The fact that the scheme is not financially viable and cannot progress without the upfront seed fund capital and the use of the Council's reserves as well as the use of Pot B Business Rates income over the medium term.
 - The overall value for money of the project is significantly improved by using reserve funding upfront as it removes the need for external borrowing and the consequential financing costs. This is particularly appropriate in the current economic climate when interest rates are at a historically high level.
 - The Centre must be operationally financially sustainable without requiring long-term Council subsidy and putting pressure on the Councils revenue budget.
- 6.10 As a Gateway 14 Ltd owned site and development, it is important to recognise the company's lead role in setting the direction regarding development cost planning and financial considerations and their onward implications for the wider site – not confined to this building. Gateway 14 Ltd will want to see a building that thrives, is well managed and has a positive longer-term impact on the wider development.
- 6.11 For the Council, there are also obligations to the Department for Levelling-Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC), HM Treasury and Freeport East to be able to

benefit from the incentives Freeport East will bring including accessing seed capital funds and retained business rates, alongside direct benefits for occupiers on the wider site.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Councils have the powers to acquire land and property for the purposes of -
- (a) any of their functions under LGA 1972 or any other enactment, or
 - (b) the benefit, improvement or development of their area.
- 7.2 All land at the Gateway 14 site is owned by Gateway 14 Ltd a private limited company, of which 100% of the shares are owned by Mid Suffolk District Council. Gateway 14 Ltd has appointed Jaynic as its development manager for delivering the site. At this stage we do not envisage that a market-rate transaction creates any subsidy control issues but this will be carefully monitored and reviewed with legal input as progress is made, including the procurement route and transaction agreement diligence.
- 7.3 The Council is taking external legal advice regarding the procurement implications of the proposed transaction. The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 remain in force in the UK until the Procurement Act 2023 comes into force, anticipated in autumn 2024.
- 7.4 As is noted elsewhere in this report, the proposed project is not in itself financially viable, and can only be brought forward on this site due to the essential seed fund capital and Pot B retained business rates contributions via Freeport. That funding in itself requires to be defrayed by 31 March 2025. The proposed site currently benefits from planning permission which can enable delivery of the scheme (and thus expenditure of the funding) within that timescale. The Council is not aware of any other sites that have the funding, and planning status, to enable this important and strategic project to be brought forward within the required timescales. As such the Council considers that 'exclusive rights' are available in the current context, and is obtaining legal advice to support this view. The Council will also consider publication of a Voluntary Ex Ante Transparency Notice (VEAT Notice).
- 7.5 An alternative means to bring the project forward is by the Council entering into a land agreement with Gateway 14 Ltd, under which it agrees to purchase a completed building should Gateway 14 Ltd deliver it. Whilst still a robust option, the optimal legal structure is the full development agreement with reliance upon 'exclusive rights'.
- 7.6 The operator procurement will be undertaken by the Council under its usual procedures and be subject to further Cabinet reporting in early 2024. There are multiple benefits in securing the operator, or operators, for the centre early as described in the FBC.
- 7.7 There is a need to review all structures to ensure that future operation of the Skills and Innovation Centre is managed in accordance with a set of agreed outcomes and principles. The Council's appointed consultant Respublica carried out and completed (January 2023) initial analysis work culminating in a report outlining the main options, structures and considerations. Further work is required with stakeholders to conclude this area of work and towards securing an operator and confirming the 'day one' education offer at the centre. This will be reported in detail to Cabinet in early 2024. Given the building is likely to have a range of partners sharing space, careful consideration is required regarding longer-term management and legal and operational structures.

- 7.8 There are linked wider Freeport East agreements and governance, and business rates policy considerations for the site, as well as Gateway 14 Ltd matters, subject to separate consideration as required. The recommended funding strategy attached as Appendix D (confidential) outlines the necessity for accessing retained Pot B business rates, in addition to seed fund capital, to make the development viable and manage risk exposure. Until that is confirmed and signed-off by Freeport a residual risk remains, and therefore the Council's proposed forward-funding strategy including to reduce borrowing and related costs is considered prudent.
- 7.9 The Council's Strategic Asset Management Plan (2020-25) requires an independent valuation when connected parties are involved, which is considered as good governance anyway in this situation and provides assurance on value for money. This valuation has been sourced but will not be returned in time for this Cabinet reporting gateway, hence it forms part of the recommendation at 3.3.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 The initial key risks are set out below, originating from the Corporate Strategic and Operational risk registers. For this gateway reporting stage, risks are mainly confined to the high level strategic, plus the 'missed opportunity' risks should the authority not

endorse the project's continuation to delivery. See also Section 2 above on options considered.

Key Risk Description	Likelihood 1-4	Impact 1-4	Mitigation	Risk Register and Reference
Income and Capital projections and economic outcomes projected for Gateway 14 Ltd may not be delivered	3	4	Develop optimal scheme. Robust development appraisals and funding strategy including whole life cashflow forecasting and sensitivity analysis. Expert input at all stages. Market-rate transaction (independently valued) and agreement. Governance gateway steps including G14 Board.	SRR002 - MSDC STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER
The Councils may not be carbon neutral by 2030	4	4	This scheme has a marginal influence on the overarching district strategic risk. However, delivery of a highly sustainable building (minimum BREEAM Excellent) would support wider climate resilience strategies	SRR009 - MSDC STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER
Additional cost pressures for MSDC may result in a significant overspend that needs to be funded from reserves	4	3	Approve recommended funding strategy which relies on no borrowing. Robust development appraisals including whole life cashflow forecasting and sensitivity analysis. Expert input at all stages. Governance gateway steps including S151/CFO review	SRR013 - MSDC STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER
We may not understand the needs and aspirations of our businesses	2	4	Utilise professional network, economic growth function and commission evidence, engagement and intelligence to inform strategies for this project. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation	05 – SIGNIFICANT OPERATIONAL RISK REGISTER
Lack of business growth and investment in the districts	2	4	Utilise professional network, economic growth functions and commission gap evidence and intelligence to inform strategies for this project	06 – SIGNIFICANT OPERATIONAL RISK REGISTER

Lack of workspace delivered in districts due to market failure	3	4	Consider direct intervention business case to address evidenced employment skills gaps in the local and sub-regional area. Leverage partner expertise and external funding opportunities	07 – SIGNIFICANT OPERATIONAL RISK REGISTER
Decline in our key towns impact upon economic prosperity of the districts	3	4	Consider direct intervention business case to address evidenced employment skills gaps in the local and sub-regional area via delivery of a unique skills and innovation centre, which kickstarts the wider innovation cluster	08 – SIGNIFICANT OPERATIONAL RISK REGISTER
We may be unable to meet income projections for the Councils	3	4	Robust development appraisals and funding strategy including whole life cashflow forecasting and sensitivity analysis/optimism bias. Expert input at all stages. Governance gateway steps including S151/CFO review	10 – SIGNIFICANT OPERATIONAL RISK REGISTER
Successful procurement challenge on the basis that the Council has unlawfully made a direct award of a Public Works Contract to Gateway 14 Ltd	1	4	Counsel's Opinion regarding robustness of arrangements in procurement law terms. Publication of a Voluntary Ex Ante Transparency Notice on the Government's Find A Tender Service portal, which puts the market on notice of the proposals and offers protection provided it is valid	Project Risk Register

- 8.2 This is a project without a direct precedent, to the best of our knowledge, anywhere else in the country. Without enabling support from seed fund capital grant via the Freeport site benefits and agreement on accessing Pot B retained business rates the project is **not viable and cannot progress**. For the Council, key significant risks are (a) costs of borrowing and inflation; (b) use of reserves to reduce that borrowing exposure that are then not available for other priority purposes; (c) risks of slippage within the delivery programme and scheduling; and (d) the ongoing revenue income and expenditure not meeting baseline projections to support a self-sustaining centre - which does not rely on long term Council subsidy. Non-financial risks include not attracting the right type or mix of tenants to meet the vision for the centre as a centre for digital/green skills, or addressing wider persistent skills gaps.
- 8.3 The risk summary from the high-level project risk register has been included in the Full Business Case attached at Appendix A (confidential) and the full risk register is kept regularly updated. This will be managed operationally and through key programme milestone management, gateways and programme board exception reporting. Risk identification and management will evolve alongside the project

phasing and into detailed construction programme overseen by Jaynic and Gateway 14 Ltd Board.

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 Extensive engagement and consultation has been carried out with a range of partners and specialists and this is detailed in the FBC. Respublica consultants have undertaken a wide range of research and engagement in the formulation of the operational and functional work to date. Further market research has been undertaken regarding business meetings and events viability. Innovation Board and Chamber of Commerce have been engaged as part of the concept development work.
- 9.2 Gateway 14 Ltd have an active area of their website providing updates and key information to public in terms of what's planned, FAQs and updates (www.g14haveyoursay.co.uk). The community engagement period ran in September and October 2020. Feedback helped to shape the revised masterplan for Gateway 14, which formed the basis of the hybrid planning application submitted in January 2021, which was subsequently approved in August 2021. A Statement of Community Consultation was submitted with the planning application detailing all the feedback received during the consultation period, and how it was considered.
- 9.3 These engagement activities enabled G14 to capture, measure and determine the existing level of awareness and support for the scheme including innovation cluster and centre as part of the master plan for site.
- 9.4 The Council has undertaken regular stakeholder engagement with key delivery partners, local councillors and town council, Suffolk County Council, local businesses and innovators as the concept has evolved. Further formal consultation will follow as part of planning process.
- 9.5 Internal cross-service discussions continue involving SLT, S151 and finance colleagues, legal, strategic assets, climate change, sustainable travel, planning and building control. Case studies and site visits to regional innovation centres have also informed the business case and viability work.

10. EQUALITY ANALYSIS

- 10.1 If any of the protected grounds may be affected as a result of the recommendations in this report a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will need to be carried out. Initial screening has concluded that a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required at this point.
- 10.2 The Centre is being designed to comply with Building Regulations Approved Document M. The requirements of Part M will be achieved when reasonable provision is made to ensure that buildings are accessible and usable and that individuals, regardless of their age, gender or disability are able to, *'...gain access to buildings and to gain access within buildings and use their facilities, both as visitors and as people who live and work in them.'*
- 10.3 All members of the professional team and the eventual main construction contractor are required to provide satisfactory equality and diversity policies as a prerequisite for selection.

10.4 There are no indications that this project would have an adverse impact on the protected characteristics of any individuals. EQIA screening has been undertaken and the Mid Suffolk Disability Forum (MSDF) has been engaged early and support the ambitions for a fully inclusive, high specification and well thought out building. The MSDF act as a reference group to assist the Council in listening, learning and consulting with disabled people.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The building is being designed to be as sustainable as possible, befitting the ambitions of the Council, partners, the tenants and users and the local community. The Council want the emphasis of the Skills and Innovation Centre to be on developing the Green economy and Green skills. This includes skills in the low carbon and environmental goods and services sectors, but also more general skills to help all organisations use natural resources efficiently and sustainably and to be resilient to climate change.

11.2 Environmental issues are being considered as part of the planning and delivery process however there are no direct environmental implications in respect of the recommendations at section 3 of this report.

11.3 Gateway 14 Ltd has a clear business goal to maximise sustainable construction opportunities and explore low carbon heat and energy/water sources on the site. Ambitions for the building are for exemplar level construction, embodiment of carbon and considerate construction in support of the Council's emerging Climate Resilience Plan and Gateway 14 sustainability strategy. BREAAAM 'Excellent' is the minimum standard for the innovation cluster (Plot 3000 units) on the Gateway 14 site. BREAAAM 'Excellent' would broadly represent performance equivalent to the top 10% of UK new non-domestic buildings. This development will deliver significant energy and carbon savings in comparison to a traditional building design. BREAAAM Excellent rated buildings on average reduce carbon emissions by 33%.

11.4 Development of the site would have associated environment impacts requiring assessment and mitigation. However, Gateway 14 is already a live construction site with planning consents and detailed construction phase planning including mitigating impacts on wider local infrastructure, businesses and communities. This will minimise negative effects of building the centre.

11.5 Supporting the UK's trajectory towards net zero and ensuring creation of the economic and employment opportunities that arise from a green transition are core parts of the Freeport East proposition.

11.6 The design work has proposed roof mounted solar PV and with an opportunity to explore a combined green/PV roof, air source heat pumps, battery storage etc. to provide self-consumption energy opportunities and cost savings for occupiers. Electric vehicle and bicycle charging points and biodiversity planting and features are options to further embed green infrastructure and mitigate carbon impacts.

11.7 The Centre brings clear aspiration to support the green economy and skills through targeted engagement, promotion and training in linked industries e.g. heat pump manufacture and innovation.

12. APPENDICES

Title	Location
A. Full Business Case – CONFIDENTIAL	Attached
B. Annex 1 (Project Information) to Full Business Case – CONFIDENTIAL	Attached
C. Annex 2 (Data & Evidence Pack) to Full Business Case – CONFIDENTIAL	Attached
D. Recommended Funding Strategy – CONFIDENTIAL	Attached

13. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None other than Appendices above

Agenda Item 14

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