

# East Suffolk **Means Business**



**East Suffolk Business Plan**





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# Foreword

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**W**elcome to this, the first joint Business Plan between Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils.

Partnership working has already played a key role in Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils' ability to drive down costs and provide more efficient frontline services, giving local tax payers better value for money.

Following the appointment of a shared Chief Executive in 2008, the Councils have been working increasingly closer together and published their first Business Plans in 2012, which were complementary but very separate.

The significant progress we have made in delivering the aims set out in these initial Business Plans is summarised in the recently published joint East Suffolk Report for both Councils.

During this period, despite being faced with substantial reductions to our grants

from Central Government, both Councils have been able to freeze Council Tax for five consecutive years, while continuing to deliver high-quality essential frontline services.

Now we have taken the next step in partnership by developing our first joint Business Plan to further drive forward our work across East Suffolk.

We view this as a positive step towards adopting a more business-like approach to developing financial self-sufficiency, encouraging growth across East Suffolk and enabling our communities to develop from within to maintain our unique quality of life.

While this document provides our Vision for the future, we will also continue to be flexible in our approach to meet the changing economic situation; and keep this Plan under regular review to ensure it meets the current and future needs of our communities.



**Councillor Ray Herring**  
*Leader of Suffolk Coastal District Council*



**Councillor Colin Law**  
*Leader of Waveney District Council*

# Introduction

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**S**uffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils are committed to building upon our successful shared services partnership working to enhance the quality of life for our residents.

Bringing our Business Plans together is an important part of creating continuous improvement, within our ground-breaking operational partnership.

This joint Plan builds upon the solid foundations created by our original Business Plans.

Both Councils are dedicated to achieving the highest standards as professional, business-focussed and progressive 21st Century Councils.

This Business Plan will ensure we maintain high quality frontline services, while controlling the costs to our communities.

It contains our long-term ambitions for East Suffolk, reflecting our determination to push the boundaries of what we can achieve.

However, it also recognises the challenges we currently face and specifies what we will deliver together over the next four years.

We work in a continually changing world and this Business Plan places East Suffolk in the best possible position to respond to, and take advantage of, the emerging opportunities and challenges, including:

- **Investment in growth and infrastructure projects**
- **Increasing housing demand and costs**
- **Growing employment opportunities and wages**
- **Devolution of greater powers and funding from Central Government**
- **Transfer of functions and responsibilities from Suffolk County Council**
- **Further alignment and integration across the public sector**
- **Improving education and skills**
- **Better use of technology**
- **Further welfare reform**

***This Business Plan will ensure we maintain high quality frontline services, while controlling the costs to our communities.***



# Vision

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***Maintain and sustainably improve the quality of life for everyone growing up in, living in, working in and visiting East Suffolk.***

**W**e want all our residents to fulfil their potential. We want our towns and communities to remain safe. We want our elderly and young to be protected and supported. We want our businesses and their workers to flourish and our economy to prosper. We want our residents to be healthy and to enjoy our coast and countryside; our history, art and culture.

Our area is central to the future economic growth of the country. Our ports are a major gateway for Britain to Europe and the world. Through wind, wave, gas and nuclear energy we are a significant energy supplier to the whole of Britain. We are home to key multi-nationals and small and medium sized businesses in manufacturing and industry, which are the bedrock of the UK economy. Similarly we have centres of excellence in technology, education and the arts.

An international reputation for culture and the arts is also part of what makes our 'Quality of Life' so special. Our area is special, with its blend of urban life, market towns and rural villages, unspoilt coastline and internationally recognised and protected countryside.

Tourism is an important part of our economy. Visitors are attracted by the character, culture, festivals, music, art, food, drink, clean beaches and spectacular coastline, river valleys, and the outstanding countryside and wildlife.

Capitalising on these strengths will also enable us to address some significant local challenges, such as the need for new homes that are affordable and local to our communities, the management of our long and eroding coastline, the economic and health inequalities caused by deprivation, the difficulties some of our isolated communities have in accessing local services and the emerging issues presented by an increasing aging population.

Our objective is to achieve the right balance for our area, so that we attract the inward investment to take advantage of our economic opportunities (particularly from sustainable energy) and address the social challenges of our diverse area, while at the same time protecting and enhancing all that is best and unique about our natural and built environment, whether it is our coastline, our countryside, or our traditional villages and market towns.

Successfully delivering our Vision will significantly improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of our area. It will safeguard the prospects of current and future generations and improve everyone's quality of life.

***We want our residents to be healthy and to enjoy our coast and countryside; our history, art and culture.***



# Delivering the Business Plan

In order to ensure the effective delivery of this joint Business Plan and our shared Vision for East Suffolk, we will adopt a three-pronged strategy.

To achieve the best possible quality of life for local people, this strategy will see the Councils: Enabling Communities; promoting Economic Growth; and becoming Financially Self Sufficient.

## Enabling Communities

Together we can improve services, build resilient communities and make life better for everyone.

We firmly believe that local government can, and should, work more closely with communities and the 'champions' within each community, who put their time and energy into making things better in their group or community. National research has identified four things that make communities more resilient, so that they are strong and quick to recover when things go wrong. These are:

- **Healthy and engaged people;**
- **People who feel included and proud of where they live;**
- **Communities looking after their land, food, water, energy, services, jobs and housing; and,**
- **Having strong links to other places and communities.**

We want to enable our communities to be more resilient. This means making it possible or easy for communities to do the things that they most want to do – rather than doing things 'to' or 'for' them.

We want communities to understand and use all the positive things (their assets) that already exist within their local area, rather than focusing on 'fixing' problems. This asset-based approach will help us to build even more vibrant and thriving communities together.

Two years ago, Suffolk Coastal District Council successfully introduced an Enabling Communities Strategy. The Strategy was supported by Community Enabling Budgets, which allowed each Councillor to fund projects that make a real difference to people's lives. This way of working

means that Councillors work alongside their residents to improve the things that they care about, in the places where they live and work.

***We will also work closely with our partners in health, education, police and the voluntary, community and business sectors.***

Now, Suffolk Coastal and Waveney are developing a joint Enabling Communities Strategy to underpin the delivery of our Business Plan. We are putting local communities firmly at the heart of all we do and recognising that Town and Parish Councils and Ward Councillors have a vital role to play in representing, championing and supporting our communities. All of our employees will work to clear 'Enabling Communities' values, including 'helping communities to help themselves'.

We will also work closely with our partners in health, education, the police and the voluntary, community and business sectors to deliver this Enabling Communities Strategy.

We will work through partnerships, such as the Suffolk Health & Wellbeing Board, and with our two Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), to promote healthy and active lifestyles, reduce mental ill-health, support people with physical and learning disabilities, reduce social isolation and encourage people to look out for, and after, themselves and others.

We will work with communities to protect and support local people, encourage them to look after their own physical and mental health and keep them safe in their own homes and the wider community.

We already have an excellent enabling track record, helping our communities to tackle the issues that matter most to them, whether this is developing affordable homes for local people, supporting people with dementia (and their



carers) or buying and running a community building as a hub for local young people.

With support, local people are best placed to find the most innovative and effective solutions to issues in their communities.

Local knowledge, energy and enthusiasm are essential in delivering better services in our communities. The Councils will trust and help individuals and communities to take even greater control and responsibility for themselves.



## Economic Growth

We support the Government's national priority for long-term economic growth and improved productivity. Similarly, we believe that a strong local economy is essential for vibrant local communities in East Suffolk. This is fundamental to the delivery of services that residents of East Suffolk want and need. We will continue to promote economic growth through our East Suffolk Growth Plan, building communities which enjoy more stable, high quality and high value jobs. We want to create increased opportunities for all, while providing more affordable homes for local people.

East Suffolk is a unique place with distinctive economic strengths. These include the Port of Felixstowe (the country's largest container port), the burgeoning onshore and offshore energy sector and BT's ICT global research and development centre.

Furthermore, it has a magnificent natural and built environment making it a significant and growing tourism destination, as well as being attractive to inward investment.

The proposed new Sizewell C nuclear power station provides a huge opportunity for growing the East Suffolk economy. At the peak of the construction, some 5,600 people will be employed at the site, with there being about 900 people employed there when the power station is up and running. The Councils will continue to work closely with EDF Energy and a wide range of partners to maximise the economic benefit of this development, while minimising and managing any negative impact.

The importance of East Suffolk to the county and regional economy cannot be overstated, as demonstrated by its key position within the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership economic growth plans. Despite these economic strengths and opportunities, East Suffolk continues to face substantial challenges:

- **Skills gap which suppresses incomes and deters local and inward investment;**
- **Poor transport and communication infrastructure;**
- **Lack of commercial land supply;**
- **Lack of all types of housing to meet the needs of businesses; and,**
- **Erosion and flood risk reducing the economic potential of key growth areas.**

These are all constraints to growth and contribute significantly to the comparative underperformance in economic productivity between Suffolk, the region and nationally.

In order to drive economic growth, our East Suffolk Growth Plan builds on the area's many strengths:

- **Felixstowe & A14 corridor – ports & logistics;**
- **Lowestoft – offshore energy/ ports & logistics;**
- **Sizewell – energy;**
- **Martlesham – ICT;**
- **Tourism;**
- **Creative industries; and,**
- **Food and drink industries.**

The Growth Plan shows how we will tackle any constraints, maximise business formation, increase job creation and ultimately drive up productivity.

Our Economic Growth Strategy will also reflect our role as the Local Planning Authorities in East Suffolk. In particular, our Local Plans are designed to support and strengthen our economic opportunities in line with the Vision in this Business Plan. With this in mind we are committed to reviewing and updating both of our Local Plans to ensure we can deliver the employment, housing and infrastructure requirements, completing the Felixstowe Area Action Plan and also the Site Specific Housing Allocations for Suffolk Coastal.

We will seek to create the right environment for sustainable economic growth to flourish, supporting everyone from micro and small businesses to our resident multinationals, by collaborating with a wide range of public and private sector partners. This also extends to our work with Government and local public sector partners such as UCS in the delivery of the Ipswich City Deal and through the wider Devolution offer for Suffolk.





## Financial Self Sufficiency

East Suffolk has a highly successful track record of achieving year on year savings through improved efficiency in the delivery of its services.

For example, the joint working between Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils has delivered direct financial savings of approximately £16 million since it began in 2010.

However, it is expected that Central Government funding of local authorities will continue to reduce for the foreseeable future.

We are committed to continuing to drive out further efficiencies. However, we must carefully consider whether to support further future Council Tax freezes. Similarly, we will continue to regularly review the use of market pricing for council services to further increase our revenue in the future.

Current projects which embrace our efficiency-driven approach include:

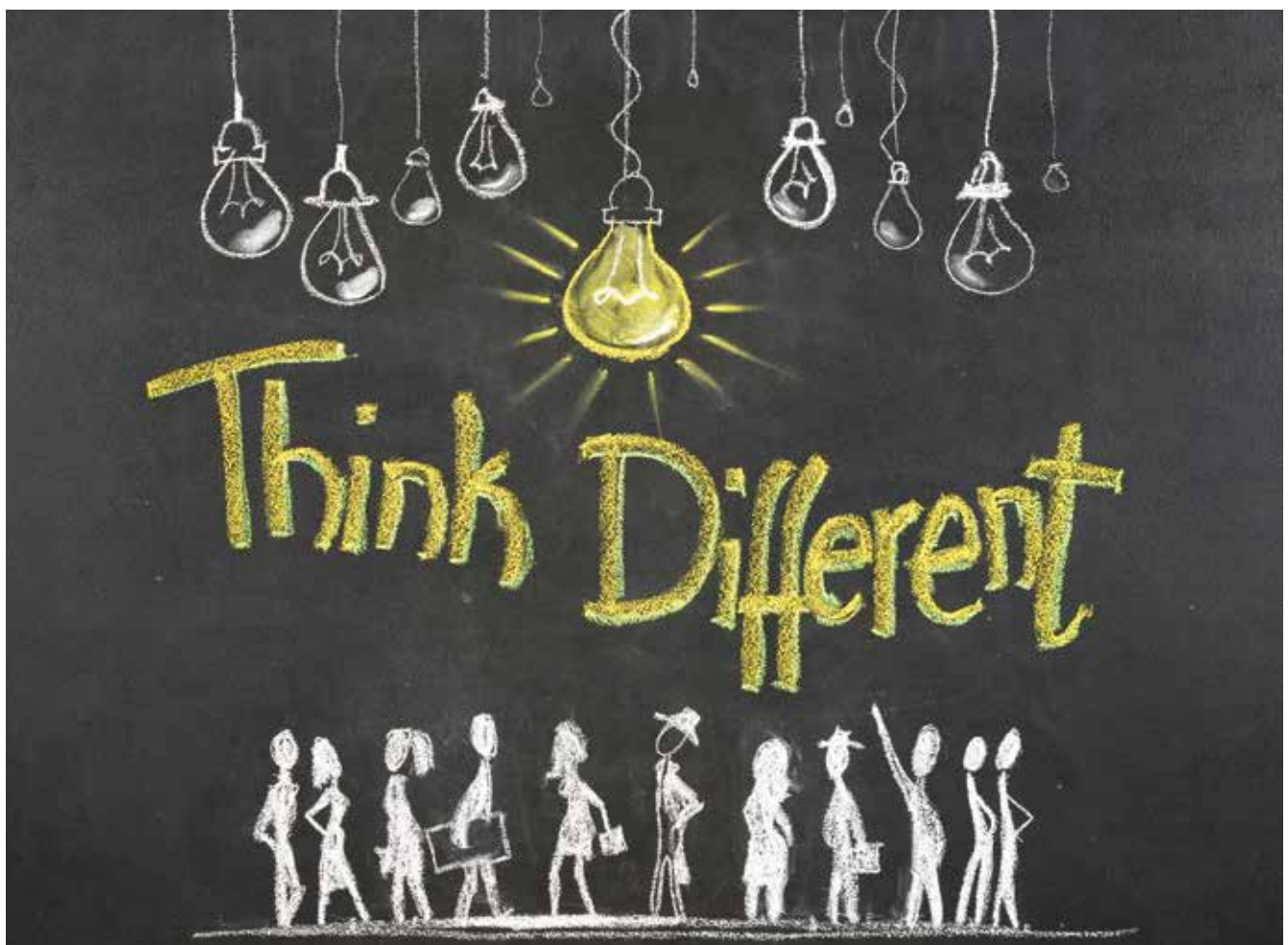
- **A review of the Customer Strategy to improve customer service and access, using a clear business and evidence base.**
- **Reducing demand for services through revised Customer Services and Digital Strategies.**
- **More 'Invest to Save' projects to improve efficiency.**
- **Increasing use of mobile devices to allow more flexible working to improve effectiveness and efficiency.**
- **Revising the Councils' Performance Framework in order to more robustly hold us to account for our performance in delivering the outcomes that matter.**

Simply continuing to improve efficiency and reducing costs will not be enough to enable the Councils to deliver all that we want for East Suffolk. We will adopt two further complementary approaches: reviewing how we deliver our services and becoming even more business-like and entrepreneurial in our approach.

This approach should enable East Suffolk to become financially self-sufficient:

*Simply continuing to improve efficiency and reducing costs will not be enough to enable the Councils to deliver all that we want for East Suffolk.*

Review	Remodel	Reinvent
Efficient processes	Digital by default	Shared services
Commissioning	Channel shift	Devolved powers
Contract management	Multi skilled staff	Public sector integration
Use of technology	Structure around customer needs	Alternative delivery vehicles
Lean thinking	Demand management	Public value
	Service re-design	Commercial skills
	Partnership working	Preventing demand
		Trading & income generating
		Asset management & investment
		Economic growth



# Critical success factors

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The Councils have identified 10 'critical success factors' that support the delivery of our shared Vision and will show that the Business Plan is working. They reflect the issues that you tell us matter to your quality of life.

## Economic Development & Tourism

A strong, sustainable, and dynamic local economy offering our communities more stable, high quality and high value jobs, with increased opportunities for all.

## Leisure

Increased access to quality leisure, cultural facilities and activities that support and promote healthier lifestyles.

## Planning

Well managed development of sustainable, thriving communities, with the quality facilities and services needed for a growing economy, whilst preserving the historic and natural environment.

## Housing

Improved access to appropriate housing to meet existing and future needs, including more affordable homes for local people.

## Benefits

Timely access to welfare benefits for those in need within our communities.

## Customers

Putting customers first in the planning and design of services; and making improvements to services following customer feedback. Ensuring services and information are easily accessible through different communication channels, with customers receiving a consistent, accurate and holistic service at the first point contact.

## Communities

A diverse mix of resilient and supportive communities that value their rural and coastal heritage; which feel engaged, valued and empowered; and where people's needs are met and where they can make a difference to their community.

## Community Health

Enabling people to take responsibility for their own mental and physical health and well-being, helping them to live active and healthy lives, while remaining safe within their homes and communities.

## Green Environment

Protecting, enhancing and making sustainable use of our environment, including managing the effects of our changing coastline.

## Resources

Delivering a more businesslike approach, directing resources to support the delivery of key services, while providing the best possible quality and performance.

*A diverse mix of resilient and supportive communities that value their rural and coastal heritage; which feel engaged, valued and empowered.*

# What success looks like

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This Business Plan sets out our long-term Vision for East Suffolk to 2023.

In addition to our broader performance management of this Plan, we must regularly revisit the plan to ensure that it remains relevant and fit for purpose.

Council elections happen on a four-year cycle, with the next ones due in 2019. It makes sense to link the review process with this cycle, with a detailed review of the plan being undertaken in 2019/20.

It is critical to also establish a clear set of shorter-term ambitions, which will serve as milestones in the delivery of this Business Plan. These reflect the variety of outcomes needed in East Suffolk and will allow us to measure our progress against the Business Plan to show what success looks like in 2019.

*Increased access to quality leisure, cultural facilities and activities that support and promote healthier lifestyles.*



# Planned actions for the whole of East Suffolk

- Create more apprenticeships.
- Provide more effective business support to facilitate the growth of Small & Medium-sized Enterprises.
- Support local business associations and partner organisations to create vibrant market towns which are attractive to residents, businesses and visitors.
- Empower local town and parish councils by continuing to transfer amenity and community assets to them with their agreement.
- Increase the opportunities and number of affordable homes (freehold, self-build, shared and rental) for our local young people and those in their senior years, through a revised exceptions sites policy and substantially improved support package for our local communities.
- Develop even closer working relationships with other Suffolk councils on strategic planning and in reviewing the Councils Local Plans.
- Support communities to develop innovative approaches, including 'enabling developments' to help fund major estuary and coast protection works.
- Continue to reduce the number of long term empty properties.
- Ensure all those entitled to welfare support and benefits receive them promptly.
- Financially support Suffolk County Council to identify and develop suitable short stay stopping sites in Suffolk for Gypsies & Travellers.
- Expand the diversity of social housing providers operating in East Suffolk.
- Deliver the adopted Housing and Health Charter in East Suffolk
- Increase physical activity, participation in sport & recreation across all age groups, and implement additional local health initiatives.
- Develop and launch 'Eat out Eat Well', a healthy food award scheme to encourage food businesses in Suffolk to offer healthy food choices.
- Deliver greater financial self sufficiency for leisure services.
- Build on the 2014 & 2015 Women's Cycling tour to encourage greater leisure, activity and health opportunities for East Suffolk, including cycle friendly district policies and initiatives.
- Increase visitor numbers to East Suffolk outside of the main tourist seasons.
- Continue to support the Suffolk Coast Destination Management Organisation to develop and sustain local tourism.
- Deliver and support further high profile cultural and sporting events as a catalyst for greater tourism opportunities.
- Continue to promote and encourage recycling across East Suffolk through a financially sustainable service.
- Provide an innovative, more customer friendly, transactional and intuitive Council website.
- Expand use of Social Media to enable development, improvement and growth of stakeholder and customer relationships.
- Integrate coastal management expertise with other local authorities to ensure most effective local delivery.
- Develop, with academic institutions, the Local Enterprise Partnership, and other centres of excellence across Suffolk & Norfolk, an integrated and progressive approach to coastal management.
- Maintain a long term and adaptive approach to managing the coast – adopting innovative approaches in areas vulnerable to erosion and climate change.
- Launch a Suffolk wide commercial Building Control Service.
- Create a shared Legal Service within Suffolk.
- Explore the options for further integration between the partner authorities for more streamlined and resilient district services, and evaluate the potential for greater East Suffolk autonomy.
- Encourage Suffolk County Council to devolve enforcement of On-street Car Parking to the District Councils.
- Encourage and support more communities to develop local Community Emergency Plans.
- Continue to work, with partners, to ensure East Suffolk remains a safe place for our communities.
- Support and protect, through partnership working, families and individuals identified as being vulnerable, by encouraging them to seek help earlier and helping them to help themselves.
- Support the development of a single footpaths service across Suffolk.
- Develop more Dementia Friendly Communities across East Suffolk.
- Fund and support community-led initiatives to improve health and wellbeing, including Men's Sheds, Carer support projects and Mental Health First Aid.





# Specific actions planned for Suffolk Coastal

- Increase investment to £1m in local Community Enabling projects from New Homes Bonus.
- Deliver an increasing number of affordable homes, particularly on exception sites, to support and sustain local communities.
- Develop criteria for identifying non-designated Heritage Assets whose heritage value merits consideration in planning decisions.
- Devolve any additional New Homes Bonus funding for affordable homes on exception sites directly to the relevant local Town or Parish Councils and invite Suffolk County Council to do the same.
- Reinvest New Homes Bonus receipts for the benefit of our local communities.
- Enhance and re-develop modern Leisure Centre and Sports Hub facilities in the District.
- Hold the Better Broadband Suffolk Partnership to account to deliver their commitment of 100% roll-out of superfast Broadband in Suffolk by 2020; and provide further financial support from the Council to ensure that connection is affordable, particularly in more remote and rural areas.
- Invest £50,000 alongside Suffolk County Council in the development of a business case for, and delivery of, the A12 four villages bypass.
- Advocate on behalf of communities & local stakeholders to maximise the local economic, community and environmental benefits & opportunities from the Sizewell C development.
- Expand and enhance the visitor experience at Landguard, Felixstowe and support a Heritage Lottery Fund bid.
- Increase the number of beach huts provided in the District by at least 10%.
- Support the redevelopment of Felixstowe Pierhead.
- Develop a Suffolk Coastal Youth Council and related youth opportunities.
- Regenerate & revitalise the Felixstowe Boating lake area to include a dedicated 'Events' area.
- Complete the construction and occupy the Council's modern and more efficient Civic Headquarters.
- Deliver an improved customer service hub and 'one stop shop' at Woodbridge Library, in partnership with Suffolk Libraries.
- Further improve the efficiency, effectiveness & marketing of the Council- owned Port Health Service software.
- Complete a pilot project to inform HMRC's One Government at the Border programme for the control of the movement of goods.



# Specific actions planned for Waveney

- Accelerate delivery of a 3rd River Crossing and a separate Pedestrian & Cycle bridge linking to the Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood across Lake Lothing.
- Deliver the first 5 year proposals contained within the Lowestoft Transport & Infrastructure Prospectus which will address the infrastructure constraints that are acting as a brake on economic and housing growth.
- Deliver a Pedestrian & Cycle Bridge over the railway line at Normanston Park.
- Improve access to Broadway Farm industrial estate, Halesworth.
- Increase the number of new Council Houses.
- Complete the Lowestoft Flood Protection measures, including a tidal gate.
- Transfer Southwold Harbour to new local Trust.
- Improve the infrastructure, access & extend the Enterprise Zone (subject to Department for Communities & Local Government approval).
- Restore the historical features and landscape to improve accessibility & leisure facilities at Ness Point and the East of England Park (subject to a successful Heritage Lottery Fund bid).
- Conduct a Community Governance Review in relation to the unparished areas of Lowestoft.
- Establish a non-political Leader's Community Enabling fund of £25k per annum and consider developing Community Enabling Grants for each Councillor.
- Complete the refurbishment of the Marina, Lowestoft as a 'one-stop' customer service centre with Suffolk County Council.
- Deliver a community sports & leisure hub on Oakes Farm, south of Carlton Colville.
- Support the delivery of the Halesworth Campus providing new leisure & care facilities.
- Encourage re-development of the former Blundeston Prison site for uses that meet local community and Council aspirations.
- Support delivery of a new playing field facility in Kessingland, through an enabling housing development (in accordance with the draft Neighbourhood Plan).
- Support the development of a new Community Centre, Old Grammar Lane, Bungay.
- Deliver, in conjunction with Beccles Town Council, Sentinel & the Broads Authority a redevelopment scheme for Beccles Quay.



