

# DRAFT

Appendix A

## **East Suffolk Business Plan (2015 – 2023)**

*'East Suffolk Means Business'*

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## Foreword

This is Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council's first joint Business Plan. The Councils have been working increasingly closely together since we first began sharing a Chief Executive in 2008. Both Councils published their first, bold and progressive, Business Plans in 2012.

Our recently published joint East Suffolk Report summarises the significant progress and improvements that both Councils have made in delivering those first Business Plans. In the past four years, despite substantial reductions in our grants from government, the Councils have been able to freeze the Council Tax by driving down costs and becoming more efficient, whilst maintaining essential frontline services. Indeed we have been able to go further by bringing innovative proposals forward to enhance the quality of life of our residents. Against this backdrop of continuous improvement, and incremental progress of our partnership working, we believe now is the right time to start to formally integrate our business planning.

This Joint Business Plan therefore seeks to build upon the solid foundations created by our original Business Plans. It is designed to ensure both Councils continue to become even more professional, business focussed and progressive 21<sup>st</sup> Century Councils. The Business Plan will ensure that we continue to maintain a good standard of services, while controlling their costs to our communities. It is however also designed to ensure that we go much, much further for all our communities. It is therefore a long term (12 years) Business Plan for East Suffolk, that also contains clear outcomes detailing what we will deliver together over the next 4 years.



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Our shared Vision remains to maintain and sustainably improve the Quality of Life for everybody growing up in, living in, working in and visiting East Suffolk. The context within which East Suffolk is operating however has continued to evolve, especially in light of the recent General Election. In adopting this Business Plan we believe that East Suffolk will be best placed to be able to respond to, and take advantage of, the various national opportunities and challenges over the next five years. These are anticipated to include:

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

The public sector in Suffolk, including Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council are already taking a 'whole system' approach, working together to negotiate with Government for greater powers over public sector spending in Suffolk, including healthcare, policing and others services. Most importantly for East Suffolk we are also looking towards increased powers for economic development and the improvement of education and skills for our residents. We also remain committed to working through the East Suffolk Partnership, which is ideally positioned to support the delivery of our vision for East Suffolk.

Another major local opportunity and challenge facing East Suffolk, and which is likely to dominate our efforts for the next decade or more are the economic and community issues provided by the energy sector; in particular from off-shore wind and the construction and operation of Sizewell C. Although these projects have had prolonged gestation periods much work has continued in the background to prepare East Suffolk to maximise the benefit from the build and subsequent operation, whilst ensuring that any negative impact both on our landscape and on our communities is minimised.

In particular Suffolk Coastal District Council has been working diligently across the board, with senior Government Ministers and officials, and with affected local communities and individuals to ensure that those benefits will be delivered and impacts either avoided or lessened. With a Conservative Government now in place we confidently expect the next stage of consultation by EDF to commence soon and we are ready for that challenge. We shall also press hard with Government for a guaranteed and deliverable long-term 'Nuclear Legacy' for our communities once the station is operational.

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Similarly in Lowestoft, Waveney District Council will continue its significant work to build upon the momentum, new commitment and specific funding provided by the Government to ensure delivery of a new road crossing over Lake Lothing. The Prime Minister and Chancellor have given their commitment to seek delivery of a scheme by 2020. New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership ('LEP') and Suffolk County Council have been asked by the Government to undertake a new feasibility study and produce a business case that provides robust evidence that a new crossing is deliverable and offers good value for money. Department for Transport officials will determine the merits of the business case ahead of the Chancellor's budget in 2016.

Work on the feasibility study and business case has already begun. This will include stakeholder engagement, detailed assessment of engineering feasibility and timescales, environmental assessment, traffic modelling and assessment of the wider economic opportunities that the crossing will bring. We will continue to work hard with Suffolk County Council, the LEP and key partners such as Peter Aldous MP, Highways England, Network Rail, local Chambers of Commerce and Associated British Ports to ensure delivery of the best possible solution for Lowestoft.

Given the immediate and long term significance of our Business Plan to East Suffolk we have clarified within the plan exactly how we intend to deliver our Vision and Outcomes. This will be through a three pronged strategy of Enabling Communities, Economic Growth, and Financial Self Sufficiency.

**Enabling Communities:** For us 'Enabling' is not a political philosophy or set of legislative rights. It is about embedding a particular culture and approach in all our work across both Councils to working with local people to deliver more within their communities. In its most literal sense 'Enabling' is about how we will '*make possible or easy*' the outcomes that you want to deliver in your communities. We will therefore support you to create sustainable and thriving East Suffolk communities that deliver even greater economic, social and environmental wellbeing for all our residents.

**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 strong local communities in East Suffolk. This is fundamental to the delivery of the local public services that residents of East Suffolk want and need. We will therefore continue to promote Economic Growth through our East Suffolk Growth Plan - building thriving communities through a strong, sustainable, and dynamic local economy offering our communities more stable, high quality and high value jobs, with increased opportunities for all, and providing affordable homes for local people.

**Financial Self Sufficiency:** We also know however that ongoing austerity will mean that we need to continue to maintain service levels whilst the resources provided from central government shrink further. It is for this reason that our ambition to become financially self sufficient has become a key part of our Strategy that we are adopting to deliver this Business Plan.

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## Our Vision

**"To maintain and sustainably improve the Quality of Life for everybody growing up in, living in, working in and visiting East Suffolk".**

We want all our citizens 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. We want all of these because you have told us you want them.

Our area is central to the future economic growth of the country. Through our ports we 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 unique, with its blend of urban life, market towns and rural villages, unspoilt coastline and internationally recognised and protected countryside.

What makes our area so special is also recognised by countless others which is why 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.

Our area therefore has huge opportunities that we must capitalise on. Doing so will also enable us to address some significant local challenges facing us, 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.

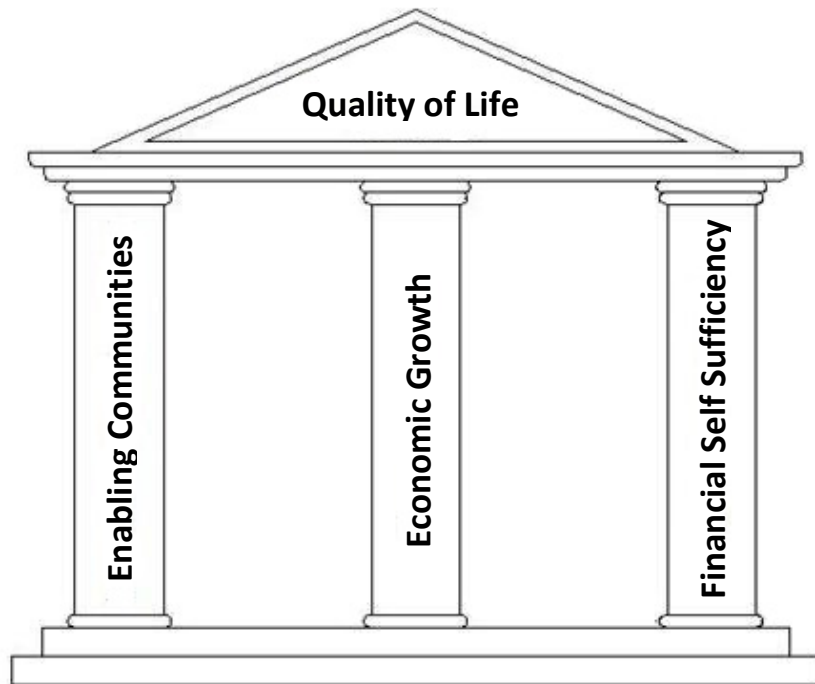
Our objective is to achieve the right balance for our area, so that we attract the inward investment to take advantage of our economic opportunities, particularly from sustainable energy, to address the social challenges of our diverse area, while at the same time protecting and enhancing all that is 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 while safeguarding the prospects of current and future generations and improving everyone's Quality of Life.

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## Our Strategy

In order to ensure the effective delivery of this joint Business Plan and our shared Vision for East Suffolk we intend to adopt a clear strategy underpinned by three pillars. Our strategy for how to deliver the Business Plan is based upon an Enabling Communities approach, promoting Economic Growth and becoming Financially Self Sufficient.



### **Enabling Communities**

We firmly believe in the importance of public services and the role of local government in helping to build a stronger society, more resilient communities and improving everyone's Quality of Life. We will take an asset based enabling approach with our communities in East Suffolk in order to help create even more sustainable and thriving places; delivering economic, social and environmental wellbeing.

We believe that sustainable and resilient communities are ones that are strong, resistant and quick to recover from setbacks. National research has identified four key characteristics of such resilient communities. These are:

- Healthy and engaged people
- An inclusive culture which creates a positive sense of place
- Looks after its land, food, water, energy, services, jobs and housing
- Strong links to other places and communities – because 'no place can go it alone'

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We also believe that there should be space between the state and the individual. This is the space already filled in East Suffolk by tradition, community, family, faith, voluntary activity, business and philanthropy. These can all have a more powerful and deep rooted cultural impact on our society than the public sector can ever achieve alone.

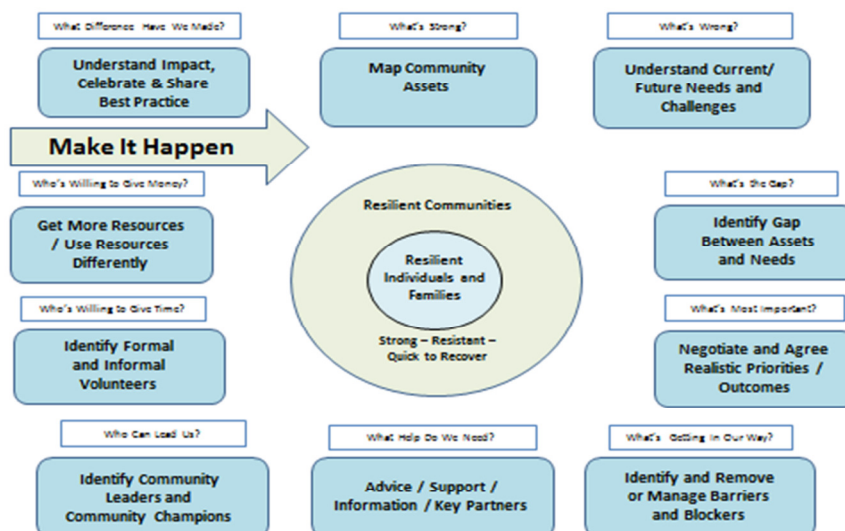
Two years ago Suffolk Coastal District Council successfully introduced an Enabling Communities Strategy. One strand of this work is Community Enabling Grants, funded by the New Homes Bonus. These grants have allowed Councillors to fund projects in their wards that our residents have asked us to support. These grants make a real difference to people's lives and enable Councillors to work alongside residents to deliver improvements to where they live, at a grass roots level.

Both Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council are now further evolving our Enabling Communities Strategy for East Suffolk to strategically underpin the delivery of our joint Business Plan. Our Enabling Communities Strategy is being enhanced and developed as we strive to put local communities at the heart of all we do; recognising that Town and Parish Councils, and Ward Councillors, are best placed both to represent and support our communities. This will be further supported by the adoption of clear 'Enabling Communities' Values for all our employees.

Town and Parish Councils have a vital role. We will therefore continue to work even more closely with them; and expect to see a continued expansion of our successful 'place based' approaches, such as Felixstowe Forward, Leiston Forward and Lowestoft Rising. We will also Improve the information provided to Ward Councillors, for the benefit of Town and Parish Councils, and residents groups.

In addition however we will also engage more closely with our other partners in health, education, police and the voluntary, community and business sectors. In particular we will work through the Suffolk Health & Wellbeing Board, local schools and GPs to further promote healthy lifestyles amongst our younger and older people.

Most importantly, however, we will work more closely with you as we recognise that, with support, local people are best placed and qualified to find innovative and more effective local outcomes. The diagram below demonstrates the approach that we will adopt to supporting and enabling our communities:



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We know that using the wealth of knowledge and energy held by individuals, communities, local councils, public sector staff and the voluntary, charitable and private sectors can be the real driving force in delivering more effective and efficient services for our communities.

The Council will therefore trust and help more individuals and communities to take even greater control and responsibility for themselves. We already have an excellent enabling track record, empowering local communities to do things their way. We will go further however, building upon the local energy that already exists, and supporting individuals to increase the skills and knowledge that they need to take up these opportunities. Similarly we will increase the transparency of information and data made available to enable communities to more directly influence decision-making about how public money is spent in their areas, and in order to hold the Councils to account.

Importantly however we also believe in fair access to public services; so where individuals are currently too vulnerable to help themselves, then we will continue to protect and support them, keeping them free from the risk of harm.

## **Economic Growth**

East Suffolk is a unique place with distinctive economic strengths. It contains a number of regional and national economic drivers such as the Port of Felixstowe (the country's largest container port), 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 investors.

The importance of East Suffolk to the county and regional economy cannot be overestimated. This is amply demonstrated by the inclusion of our growth sectors within the countywide and New Anglia Local Economic Partnership economic growth plans.

Alongside these economic strengths and opportunities East Suffolk continues to have some substantial challenges which need to be overcome for the area to fulfil its economic growth potential:

- Skills gap which suppresses incomes and deters indigenous and inward investment
- Transport and communication infrastructure constraints
- Lack of commercial land supply
- Flood risk reducing the economic potential of key growth areas in East Suffolk

In order to drive economic growth in East Suffolk we produced (in 2014) and will continue to deliver the East Suffolk Growth Plan. This plan builds on the area's many sectoral and locational strengths:



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- Felixstowe & A14 corridor – ports & logistics
- Lowestoft – offshore energy/ ports & logistics
- Sizewell – energy
- Martlesham – ICT
- Tourism – a growth sector across the whole of East Suffolk

In order to maximise business formation and job creation the Growth Plan sets out how we will support these growth locations and sectors and also how we will tackle the growth constraints.

Through our work with a wide range of public and private sector partners we will continue to take a highly collaborative approach to creating the right environment for sustainable economic growth to flourish. This ranges from the work we do with micro and small businesses through the East Suffolk Business Association Network, to supporting the growth and expansion of our resident multinationals. 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 a wider Devolution offer for Suffolk.

Our economic growth strategy will also be underpinned by 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 above Vision of this Business Plan. With this in mind we will in the short to medium term be reviewing and updating both of our Local Plans in East Suffolk, completing the Felixstowe Area Action Plan and also the Site Specific Housing Allocations for Suffolk Coastal.

## **Financial Self Sufficiency**

Central government funding of local authorities is anticipated to continue to reduce for the foreseeable future. We will therefore have to carefully consider whether to support further future Council Tax freezes on their merits. Similarly we will continue to regularly review the use of market pricing for council services to further increase future revenues.

East Suffolk does however have a highly successful track record of delivering year on year efficiencies and savings in the delivery of its services. For example the joint working between Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils has in itself delivered direct financial savings of approximately £16 million since it first began in 2010. We will continue to adopt this approach of improving services whilst driving out inefficiency and waste in order to minimise any potential increase in Council Tax.

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A number of current projects are supporting this strategy, which include:

- A review of the Customer Strategy to improve customer service and access, using a clear business and evidence base.
- Reducing demand for more costly public sector services through revised Customer Services and Digital Strategies.
- More 'Invest to Save' projects to improve efficiency.
- Revising the Councils' Performance Framework.

This approach alone however will not enable the Councils to deliver all that they wish to for East Suffolk. Increasingly therefore our strategic approach to the delivery of value for money is based upon two further complementary approaches. These are to continually optimise and review the delivery models that the Councils utilise to deliver our services, and to become even more business like and entrepreneurial. It is our strategic intention that the combination of these three approaches will enable East Suffolk, over time, to become financially self sufficient:

1. Continue to reduce costs
  - Commissioning
  - Contract management
  - Partnership
  - Use of technology
2. New service delivery models
  - Redesigning services
  - More shared services
3. Entrepreneurial councils
  - Asset management
  - Income generation
  - Investment
  - Economic growth

The principles underpinning our financial strategy are also supported by a discussion paper 'From surviving to thriving' that was recently published by the national Improvement & Efficiency Social Enterprise (iESE). Extracts from that White Paper are reproduced below. The Councils have for many years been operating at the iESE 'Level 3' but will now be further embedding this approach across all service areas to in order to become truly financially self sufficient.

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## Assessing the level of transformation within local authorities at present

A fundamental rethink of how we deliver services for residents

To sustain or even enhance services in the current (and future) financial environment means stepping away from traditional and perceived models and delivering real innovation, re-design and a total focus on exactly what public service customers – tax-paying residents – want.

IESE knows that councils are often on a journey from improvement to transformation to innovation, and can be in different places in different service areas at any one time. This reflects the complex nature of local services, with different communities and political priorities across the country.

However our work with local authorities across the country has identified that whatever stage they are at, the options and opportunities for most councils are similar:

### Level 1: Departmental-level change

Focusing on internal efficiencies and improvements within existing structures. Continuously looking to streamline work and reduce waste in processes.

### Level 2: Transactional-level change

Greater cross-functional working and multi-skilling, and improving ways of working to move away from 'professional silos' and toward integrated services for the public.

### Level 3: Demand-level change

Where customer demand is understood, analysed and met through new services and business models, and where the demand itself is re-shaped and managed while engaging service users to ascertain priorities.



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## The emerging options for local services and the “3R” model

Through our work with local authorities, IESE has identified clear trends in the approach being taken to tackling the fiscal challenge – this will vary in different areas depending on the local demand for services and the deprivation levels, as councils in the most deprived areas are more dependent on grant formula funding – thus decreases in funding impact deprived areas the most.

However, there is enough information and case studies to begin identifying themes of successful reform and service redesign – allowing us to map approximately where individual authorities may be in terms of both what they are achieving, but more importantly what scope may remain and what their future options could be post-spending review.

Broadly, authorities are at one of the following stages:

### Level 1: Review

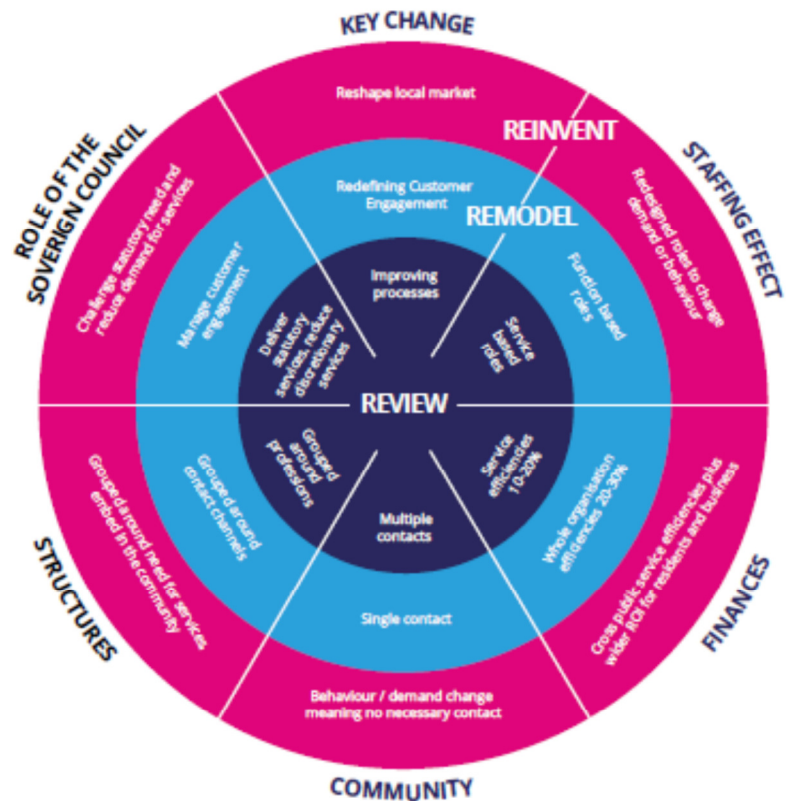
Many councils are still able to make savings from reviewing their existing services & structures – continuously improving internal processes, delivering immediate but constrained savings, ultimately reducing expenditure minimally within each service area. Some councils have already exhausted this process and are now at levels 2 and 3.

### Level 2: Remodel

Remodelling services around a detailed understanding of needs, multi-skilling staff at the point of customer interaction, and sharing some back office services, delivering sustainable whole authority savings of up to 30%. This is where many councils currently are – and focusses on the “customer first” approach, using the most effective contact methods, such as placing more services online and maximizing customer channels to reduce spend.

### Level 3: Reinvent

Those councils at the reinvent stage are building a sustainable portfolio of services. Reinventing councils show an acute understanding not only of the demand for services, but also the causes of demand and the potential for upstream services that ensure both take away the causes of demand but also bring commercial opportunity for the council and local businesses. They are not seeking to make their services more efficient, nor to remodel existing services – they are challenging assumptions about what customers need and how they want to access it, commissioning and shaping the marketplace, reducing demand for services and redesigning their organisation to meet decreased need more efficiently.



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## Our Critical Success Factors

The Councils have identified ten key interdependent and overlapping critical success factors that support the delivery of our shared Vision and reflect the issues that you tell us matter to your quality of life.

### **Economic Development & Tourism<sup>1</sup>**

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

### **Leisure<sup>2</sup>**

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

### **Planning<sup>3</sup>**

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<sup>4</sup>**

Tackling poor housing conditions and the improved provision of, and access to, appropriate housing to meet existing and future needs; including more affordable homes for local people.

### **Benefits<sup>5</sup>**

Promoted and timely access to welfare benefits.

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<sup>1</sup> Working with critical regional economic partnerships, in particular the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, with regard to promoting economic development, regeneration and tourism.

<sup>2</sup> Council funded services include leisure facilities, sport, theatre and arts.

<sup>3</sup> Council functions include delivery and enforcement of the Local Plan, development management, conservation and design standards, building control, transport infrastructure and rights of way.

<sup>4</sup> Council functions include housing advice, homelessness, housing management, facilitating the provision of new affordable homes, private sector housing, travellers, and supporting older people.

<sup>5</sup> Council functions, in partnership with Anglia Revenues Partnership, include Housing and Council Tax Benefit, and corporate fraud.

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## **Customers**

Customers put first in the planning and delivery of services.

## **Communities<sup>6</sup>**

A diverse mix of strong, proud, caring and supportive communities that value their rural and coastal heritage, are aspirational for themselves and for the future. Communities that feel engaged, valued and empowered. Communities where people's needs are met and where they can, and do, as individuals make a difference to their community.

## **Community Health<sup>7</sup>**

Protecting and promoting the health and well-being of all our communities to ensure they remain safe from harm.

## **Green Environment<sup>8</sup>**

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

## **Resources<sup>9</sup>**

Delivering a more business like approach, directing resources to support the delivery of key services whilst optimising both quality and performance.

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<sup>6</sup> Working in partnership with and consulting communities, public sector partners, the third sector, and younger & older people, in relation to social inclusion, community development & community grants.

<sup>7</sup> Council functions include licensing, food safety, port health, health promotion, emergency planning, health & safety and community safety.

<sup>8</sup> Council functions include environmental protection, pollution control, waste management, countryside management, transport infrastructure, rights of way and integrated coastal management.

<sup>9</sup> The Council has key responsibilities for setting and collecting Council Tax and Business Rates, budget, asset, audit, risk and performance management of its services in support of its communities.

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## Our Outcomes by 2019

This Business Plan sets out our current long term Vision for East Suffolk to 2023. The Plan builds upon the shared Vision that the Councils established in 2012. In addition to our broader performance management of this Plan, as mentioned below, it will be critical to revisit the plan as a whole periodically in order to ensure that it remains relevant and fit for purpose. The Councils elect all their Councillors on a four year cycle. The next elections will therefore take place in 2019. It is anticipated that a detailed review of the plan as a whole will therefore be undertaken in 2019/20.

In addition we believe it is critical to establish a clear set of shorter term outcomes that will serve as milestones in the delivery of our Vision, and enable us to assess the delivery of our Critical Success Factors. These outcomes have been tailored to reflect the variety of outcomes needed in East Suffolk, and will be achieved by 2019:

Suffolk Coastal Outcomes	East Suffolk Outcomes	Waveney Outcomes
TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create more apprenticeships.</li> <li>• Transfer further amenity and community assets to local town and parish councils.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Continue to develop 'enabling developments' policy to help fund major estuary and coast protection works.</li> <li>• Continued low and reducing number of long term empty properties.</li> <li>• Ensure all those entitled to welfare support and benefits receive them promptly.</li> <li>• Expand the diversity of social housing providers operating in East Suffolk.</li> <li>• Deliver the adopted Housing and Health Charter in East Suffolk</li> <li>• Increase physical activity, general participation in sport &amp; recreation, and implement additional local health initiatives.</li> <li>• Reduce capital and revenue liability on facilities and targeting zero subsidy for leisure service provision.</li> <li>• Build on the 2014 and 2015 Women's Cycling tour to encourage greater leisure, activity and health, and tourism opportunities for East Suffolk, including</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver the short and medium Term proposals contained within the Lowestoft Transport &amp; Infrastructure Plan.</li> <li>• Increase the number of new Council Houses.</li> <li>• Complete the Lowestoft Flood Protection measures, including a tidal gate.</li> <li>• Transfer Southwold Harbour to new local Trust.</li> <li>• Extend current Enterprise Zone (subject to DCLG approval).</li> <li>• Restore the historical features and landscape to improve accessibility &amp; leisure facilities at Ness Point and the East of England Park (subject to a successful HLF bid)</li> <li>• Conduct a Community Governance Review in relation to the unparished areas of Lowestoft.</li> <li>• Establish a Leader's Community Enabling fund of £25k per annum and consider developing Community Enabling Grants for each Councillor.</li> </ul>

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	<p>cycle friendly district policies and initiatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase visitor numbers to East Suffolk outside of the main tourist seasons.</li><li>• Deliver further events such as the Womens Cycling Tour as a catalyst for greater tourism opportunities.</li><li>• Maintain our commitment to recycling across East Suffolk.</li><li>• Provide an innovative, more customer friendly, transactional and intuitive Council website.</li><li>• Develop, with local academic institutions and the LEP, a Suffolk &amp; Norfolk Coastal Management Institute to deliver integrated coastal management.</li><li>• Launch a Suffolk wide commercial Building Control Service.</li><li>• Create a shared Legal Service in Suffolk.</li><li>• 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.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complete the refurbishment of the Marina, Lowestoft as a 'one-stop' customer service centre with Suffolk County Council.</li></ul>
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