



COUNCIL

Wednesday, 22 January 2020

CABINET MEMBERS' REPORT AND OUTSIDE BODIES REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT TO COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To receive the Cabinet Members' Report and the Outside Bodies Representatives' Report to Council, for information.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
Wards Affected:	All Wards in the District
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Steve Gallant Leader of the Council

CABINET MEMBERS' REPORTS TO COUNCIL

Cabinet Member:	Councillor Mary Rudd
Contact Details:	mary.rudd@easstsuffolk.gov.uk Tel: 07867 372976

Regulating Our Future

The FSA's programme of regulatory reform of the UK's food hygiene and food standards regimes is ongoing. The aim of the programme is to work towards the ambition of creating a flexible, agile regulatory system which helps local authorities focus limited and valuable resources on those businesses that need it most.

The FSA continue to roll out a new national digital food registration service. The service enables local authorities to capture consistent and high-quality registration data and makes it easier for food business operators to register and receive relevant information and guidance about starting up their new business.

There are currently 56 local authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland who are trialling the new system and East Suffolk Council will be joining the trial in February 2020. Since its launch in September 2018 there have been 2000 new digital registrations on the system. A number of approaches are being trialled from full integration between the new national database and local authority software systems to a design and data standards solution using local authority web forms and manual data transfer to the FSA.

The FSA are also continuing to explore how Primary Authority national inspection strategies can contribute to the regulation of compliant businesses or groups of businesses. In practice this means that if a National Inspection Scheme has been recognised by the FSA, the Primary Authority will take responsibility for assessing compliance across the business and give direction to other local authorities on where and how often proactive interventions should be undertaken at individual outlets.

There is recognition that the implementation of National Inspection Schemes will have an impact on the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme as it will reduce the frequency of onsite inspections at individual outlets. The FSA continue to explore options and recognise that the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme needs to remain robust and credible and feedback from consumers, businesses and local authorities suggest that any other sources of evidence used to award a rating needs to be equivalent to the evidence gathered at a physical inspection.

Cabinet Member:	Councillor James Mallinder – Cabinet Member for the Environment
Contact Details:	james.mallinder@eastsuffolk.gov.uk Tel: 07810 815879

The Environment

As newly appointed vice chair of the Joint advisory committee for the AONB I attend a number of meetings, including the Full committee and meetings with the joint chairs. The AONB will be an important aspect of East Suffolk, with their principles and values having significantly more importance at East Suffolk going forward. Many challenges rest with the AONB, the increased pressures on various national projects testing its significant and how the AONB can move forward to meet the challenges of not only the climate emergency but enhance social media and communicating their message along with becoming more inclusive and relevant to our residents .

Meetings were held with Suffolk Waste Partnership – with continued monitoring of recycling rates/ fly tipping issues and discussions of long term projects of how and what to collect going forward. Much depends on announcements from national government in the next 12 /18 months but many challenges known and not know will need to be addressed. Details of the government's Recycling and Waste Strategy document and its potential impact on ESC will be coming to Cabinet in the first quarter of 2020. Discussions are also under way about the future of the Garden Waste processing service – currently based at Parham – with options being brought to cabinet for consideration in coming months.

I attend the Greenprint Forum Steering meetings and continue to develop our active campaigns to engage with residents and all stakeholders. Focus has been arrangements for our conference in Feb looking at 20:20 vision on climate change.

Cabinet Member:	Councillor David Ritchie – Cabinet Member for Planning and Coastal Management
Contact Details:	david.ritchie@eastsuffolk.gov.uk Tel: 07920 503527

Planning Policy and Delivery

I am pleased to be able to report recent notable successes for two of our young and developing planners within the Planning Policy and Delivery Team. Ben Wright has been awarded a distinction by the University of the West of England following the completion of his 3 year distance learning MSc in Urban and Rural Planning and Anthony Taylor has been awarded a merit by the University of Westminster following completion of his 2 year day release MSc in Urban and Regional Planning. Both are already making a significant and excellent contribution to the work of the team.

With respect to the examination of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan we are expecting correspondence from the Inspector as to how he wishes to proceed, by mid January. So I may be able to report the content of his correspondence verbally to Council.

Development Control Staffing Update

Following Philip Perkin moving across to the Major Projects team in December 2019, there have been some resulting changes to the make up of both the north and south teams.

Joe Blackmore (formerly Senior officer) has been seconded to the Team Leader position north for a six month period. He is supported by Chris Green and Michaelle Coupe as senior officers. Michaelle

is seconded from the south team for a six month period to support the team with her significant experience.

The south team continues to be led by Katherine Scott. She is supported by Rachel Smith and Natalie Webb as senior officers. Natalie has been seconded for a six month period to backfill Michaelle Coupe. Natalie is relatively new to the organisation but has significant experience in planning gained from Mid Suffolk and the private sector.

We have three vacant positions at planning officer level which will be advertised imminently along with the assistant enforcement officer post formally filled by Peter Thompson. I am hopeful that we will attract good candidates to support our existing excellent team of officers.

The Quality of Place Awards

The Quality of Place Awards are organised annually by the Design and Conservation Team to recognise and encourage an interest in the quality of the built and natural environment of our district and to promote an awareness of the need for high standards in all forms of design. They were held in Suffolk Coastal from 2010-2018. This year, following the formation of the new council, the awards were extended to cover the whole East Suffolk Council Area. I chaired the judging panel which included a local architect, landscape architect, the Director of the Suffolk Preservation Society and a member of the Beccles Society. Schemes were nominated in four categories; design, building conservation, landscape and community. The judges agreed on a shortlist after reviewing all the submissions and then undertook a full day of site visits to view all of the shortlisted sites in person. After much debate the winning schemes were chosen:

- Design (Joint Winner) – 71 Kirkley Run, Lowestoft
- Design (Joint Winner) – The Listening Station and The Watch Room, Reydon
- Design (Highly Commended) – Lords Terrace and Sole Bay Terrace, Southwold
- Design (Highly Commended) – Prospect Place, Framlingham
- Building Conservation – Sibton Abbey
- Landscape – Sutton Hoo
- Community – Kelsale Signpost Restoration

The winners were celebrated at an awards evening at East Suffolk House on 20th November 2019 which was well attended by the people involved in the projects alongside local architects, members of the public and East Suffolk Councillors. The Chairman of the Council presented the winners with bronze plaques and certificates. The awards were followed by a short presentation by Chris Lamb from Design South East talking about Suffolk Design. A presentation on the winning schemes will be delivered to both Planning Committees in January. Further details of the winning schemes can be found at: <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/design-and-conservation/quality-of-place-awards/2019-quality-of-place-award-winners/>

I would like to thank the Conservation and design team for putting on such a good event. In particular, Eloise Limmer who organised and looked after me and the other judges throughout the process.

Assistant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Maurice Cook, Assistant Cabinet Member for Resources
Contact Details:	maurice.cook@eastsoffolk.gov.uk Tel: 07825 421128

Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP)

The Anglia Revenues Partnership is the body which acts on behalf of the five District Councils of:
Breckland
East Cambridgeshire
East Suffolk
Fenland
West Suffolk

The ARP operates from the Annex of East Suffolk House in Melton, the Marina Centre in Lowestoft and the Breckland District Council offices in Thetford and administers and collects the revenues from Council Tax and Business Rates on behalf of all five Councils. The work of ARP also includes administering Housing Benefit and other benefits and enforcement work to ensure that all payments are received.

The ARP is overseen by a Joint Committee consisting of Executive Members from each of the five Councils with support from their officers together with senior managers from ARP itself. I represent East Suffolk on that Joint Committee.

The work of the ARP is subject to internal audit and the scrutiny of the Audit & Governance Committees of each Council. This audit procedure is coordinated by Mrs Siobhan Martin.

The Joint Committee meets quarterly to review progress in relation to budget and to deal with any other relevant matters.

At the meeting of the Joint Committee held in December 2019 there were three matters discussed worthy of report to Full Council:

- As a result of the merging of Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Councils into East Suffolk Council and the merger of the Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Councils to form West Suffolk Council, the Constitution of the Joint Committee needed to be amended to reflect these changes.

Formerly the Joint Committee consisted of seven Members with a Quorum of five.

The Constitution has now been amended and the Joint Committee now consists of five members with a quorum of four, save that, at the Chairman's discretion, for matters of great importance, all five Councils should be present. Each Member has appointed two deputies to ensure that all meetings can be quorate.

Each Council will be asked to approve the new arrangements and thereafter, each Council sign and seal a new Partnership Agreement.

- As can be imagined, the workload of the ARP is immense (it is the 3rd largest entity by case load, in the country after Birmingham and Leeds) and, at times, the resources to deal with the

volume can be stretched. To address this challenge and to update organisation and working practices a new Programme Manager, Tom Darling-Fernley has been appointed to develop coherent annual service delivery plans to be 'digital by default' and with the customer experience as a top priority.

It is anticipated that Tom's work will further improve the efficiency of the operations, potentially saving a number of full-time posts and leading to reduced costs for all five Councils.

- In an initiative to promote the work of the ARP and in particular to make the Members of each Council aware of the function and work of the Partnership, a Brochure has been approved for publication. Whilst 250 hard copies will be printed the publication will be mainly distributed by digital means. This will be distributed to Members as soon as available.

I propose to provide a brief update report to Full Council after each Joint Committee meeting of the ARP.

Outside Bodies Representatives Reports

Felixstowe Landguard Partnership	
Representative:	Councillor Stuart Bird
Contact Details:	stuart.bird@easstsuffolk.gov.uk Tel: 01394 275128

I attended the meeting on 20 September 2019.

NEW AGREEMENT

There is a new draft agreement for the parties to the Partnership. It is currently with English Heritage for sign-off, then it will be presented to other members for signing.

GOVERNANCE REVIEW

There is a review underway and consultants have been appointed to assist with this. The first workshop under the review took place on 27 September, I have asked to join future workshops. There is also a plan for the Partnership to put in a HLF bid for funding.

CAR PARKING

The parking regime of the Landguard car park will be part of the wider ESC review of car parks prior to the implementation of CPE. There is an option to introduce charging at Landguard prior to and independently of that, but members agreed to wait until CPE implementation.

CHANNEL DREDGING

Harwich Haven Authority will be submitting an application to dredge and deepen the shipping channel, used by Harwich and Felixstowe ports, by 1.5m. This is in anticipation of use by larger vessels and it will involve removing 23 million cubic metres of material.

BUDGET

The Landguard Partnership currently has healthy reserves for future projects and funding.

THE NEXT MEETING IS TAKING PLACE ON 24 JANUARY 2020

Association for Suffolk Museums (AfSM)	
Representative	Councillor Tony Cooper
Contact Details	tony.cooper@eastsuffolk.gov.uk Tel: 07884 054882

FORTY-THIRD ANNUAL REPORT – 2018 /2019

1. BENCHMARKING

Suffolk Museums welcomed over 430,000 people through their doors last year. This is worth £10.1m to the local economy. There are 153 FTE people employed in Suffolk Museums, together with more than 1,550 volunteers giving over 174,000 hours of their time last year. Volunteer time is worth at least £1.25m to Suffolk Museums.

Visits included over 121,625 children. Child visits within Suffolk museums have seen a steady increase since 2015, attributable to museums developing their family friendly offer and the promotional efforts of the Summer in Suffolk Museums project.

Benchmarking enables museums to look at their performance and compare it to others of a similar kind. A total of 28 Accredited Suffolk museums contributed to the regional benchmarking scheme (80 per cent). Suffolk Museums compare favourably to other counties in the region.

2. SUFFOLK MUSEUMS PARTNERSHIP

The strength of the Suffolk Museums Partnership is in the continued commitment to it from all local authorities in the county and Arts Council England (ACE). This core support enables the Association for Suffolk Museums (AfSM) to draw in additional inward investment to Suffolk for museum projects from external sources.

Key achievements in Suffolk this year include:

➤ Positive outcomes for people who are users of secondary mental health services who have been attending Recovery College courses, delivered by the Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust in partnership with the Association for Suffolk Museums.

- Increased opportunities for children and young people to participate in museum activities through the Lowestoft Rising Cultural Education Partnership projects, The Grit and Lowestoft Folk received grants from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.
- Sustained numbers of children visiting museums in Suffolk, including those attending family events and activities promoted in the Summer in Suffolk Museums programme.
- New opportunities for people from a more diverse range of backgrounds to work in museums through Transforming People to Transform Museums, with the first cohort of nine trainees recruited across four museums in Suffolk
- New social and remote volunteering opportunities at the Museum of East Anglian Life as part of the Search for the Stars project. So far, 204 people have volunteered on the project, digitising 8,606 object records and identifying 75 star objects.
- The introduction of the Making Waves Together Seaside Heritage Project Officer, Patricia Day who is working with the Time and Tide Museum in Great Yarmouth, Lowestoft Museum and Lowestoft Maritime Museum to build cultural partnerships and engage new audiences.
- More resilient museums through the Charitable Incorporated Organisation conversion programme at Orford and Laxfield Museums. A governance review at Felixstowe Museum supported by a Sustainability Grant from the Association of Independent Museums, which has led towards the Landguard Partnership project that has recently been awarded a £43,200 National Lottery Heritage Fund Resilient Fund grant.

The separate full colour SMP Annual Report gives a more detailed description of these projects and an insight into the way Suffolk museums contribute to the economy, the health and wellbeing of wide range of people, and learning for all ages.

AfSM is grateful for all contributions from all partners, freelancers, and funders. The importance of their support in many developments in Suffolk cannot be understated and the Association remains very grateful for the funding and guidance they provide.

3. PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT & ADVICE

Jayne Austin, Suffolk County Council's Museum Development & Partnership Manager, continued in her role as Secretary for AfSM, offering specialist advice, training, and fundraising support to Suffolk Museums.

The SHARE Museums East training programme continues to be regularly used and valued by Suffolk Museums. This includes their annual conference, as well as other regional conferences and network meetings, several of which are hosted in and draw on the experience and expertise of people working in Suffolk Museums. An online training needs survey informs this programme.

Suffolk has sustained its number of museums that are within the Accredited scheme. There are 31 museums with Full Accreditation, 3 with Provisional Accreditation, and 2 Working Towards Accreditation.

AfSM acknowledges the continued work that Jayne, Jenna and the SHARE Museums East team carry out in support of Suffolk Museums.

4. AfSM NETWORK

AfSM Network meetings have been consistently well attended by museum representatives from across Suffolk.

The Network meetings have welcomed speakers from the Arts Council England, SHARE Museums East, Festival Bridge and The Hold project. AfSM training sessions have included MODES training, a GDPR Workshop, and a Charitable Structures session in preparation for a Trustee Muster which focused on converting museums to Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIO). Following these sessions, funding of £2,850 was secured from SHARE Museums East to support two Suffolk museums to convert to CIO Status.

The AfSM website has been simplified and re-designed, allowing AfSM members to upload their own events via a dedicated What's On calendar, alongside sharing news and information. The What's On calendar provides visitors and stakeholders with an overview of AfSM the varied and exciting events taking place in Suffolk museums whilst also encouraging members to digitally share content online.

The website also features a new Projects area which shows AfSM Partnership projects in detail. An updated About Us page now features an overview of the Suffolk Museums Partnership and information on how to join the Association for Suffolk Museums.

5. FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

The Lowestoft Rising Local Cultural Education Partnership and National Lottery Heritage Fund supported two projects involving Suffolk museums. The Grit involved 8 primary schools and Lowestoft Maritime Museum. It explored the story of the Lowestoft Beach Village through museum visits, workshops, GritFest, a touring production, and Key Stage 2 local history resource. Lowestoft Folk involves four schools, four care homes, Lowestoft Museum and Lowestoft Maritime Museum. It is an intergenerational project based in Lowestoft around the theme of local folk traditions.

Initial development work with the Suffolk Children's University (CU) took place in 2018. A school's membership programme in its first year of operation, the Suffolk Children's University has worked with 20 schools across the County. A partnership between the AfSM and Suffolk CU has been established to encourage museums across the county to become learning destinations for CU participants. Museums provide cultural learning destinations with a difference.

6. PROMOTION

Partnership working with Families Suffolk Magazine continued in 2018, with the development of a new What's On feature for Suffolk museums. Highlights included the summer feature and front page for Summer in Suffolk Museums, alongside family-friendly features from Bawdsey Radar Trust, The Red House and Lowestoft Maritime Museum.

This year included the third season for the Summer in Suffolk Museums (SiSM) project. It is a promotional initiative that aims to publicise and promote family-friendly activities and events over the school summer holidays at museums throughout Suffolk. A total of 30 museums took part. Participating museums offered over 100 family-friendly events and activities. Visitor feedback shows that they had a positive experience and were interested in visiting other museums. Benchmarking data (see above) shows an increase in visits from children and young people since this initiative was begun.

17 museums took part in the 2018 Suffolk Museum Object of the Year competition. The theme for the objects was 'Hidden History.' An object with a Hidden History could be anything from objects which are rarely displayed but that have a fascinating tale to tell, to objects connected to the history of underrepresented communities.

The 2018 entries represented hidden stories from military and maritime history, abandoned railway lines, Women's History and objects that when in use were hidden from view. 734 members of the public voted the Red House's draft manuscript of the poem 'Anthem for Doomed Youth' by Wilfred Owen as the overall winner.

Leiston, Saxmundham and District Citizens Advice (CA)	
Representative	Councillor Tony Cooper
Contact Details	tony.cooper@eastsuffolk.gov.uk Tel: 07884 054882

Introduction

During the year the Bureau has become involved in a number of projects related to the provision of advice but generally geared to specific needs. While our traditional advice access methods and delivery remain key, we are always looking for new ways to reach vulnerable clients. The first opportunity related to helping people with housing issues quickly followed by Citizens Advice being awarded the national contract to provide support for people claiming Universal Credit and their request for us to be involved in that project. Then came the opportunity to become involved in bidding as part of a significant local social prescribing project commissioned by the CCG. Although important to our objectives, all these projects took a toll on our management resources and then we had the additional shock announcement in the autumn that the County Council intended to cut all funding to Citizens Advice across Suffolk, removing a third of our essential core income. Realising the difficulties local councils have been facing for some time we have been expecting a funding reduction but did not expect such a draconian measure. The immediate effect of this announcement was to absorb even more resource firstly reviewing how we might continue to operate after such a significant loss of funds but also preparing a campaign to try to reverse the plan. In any event the council softened the blow slightly by spreading the cut across two years and at the eleventh hour the CCG stepped in and agreed to cover the first years cut which has given us a valuable "stay of execution". Our sincere thanks go to all those that got involved in the campaign against the cuts

which really did have a positive impact. One interesting result of the campaign has been to bring to the fore how treasured our service is and just how many people have been impacted in one way or another by the service over the years. It also highlighted what excellent value for money we provide by delivering much of our service through our volunteer workforce, although this does not seem to register with some of our funders.

The Leiston, Saxmundham and District CAB provide advice from its offices in Leiston. The Bureau also operates outreach services at Saxmundham, Woodbridge, Framlingham and Wickham Market. In addition, the Bureau operates a telephone service for Rendlesham on a dedicated telephone numbers. The Bureau aims to provide the advice people need for the problems they face, and equally, to improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives. All advice given is confidential, free, independent and impartial. The Bureau held its AGM on 10th July 2019 in the Saxmundham Market Hall. The information in this report is taken from the Bureau's Annual Report 2018/2019 which was presented at the AGM. Copies of the full report are available on request.

Details are broken down as below;

Priority debts £	2018/2019	2017/2018	2016/2017	2015/2016	2014/15
<i>Rent arrears</i>	£19,981	£17,586	£24,946	£14,461	£11,045
<i>Mortgage arrears</i>	£194,824	£396,917	£42,843	£332,049	£598,815
<i>Council Tax</i>	£54,686	£20,218	£38,661	£17,798	£16,817
<i>Utilities</i>	£44,690	£32,706	£54,985	£31,655	£184,968
<i>TAX/NI</i>	£21,381	£66,779	£120,726	£7,119	£47,820
<i>Benefit overpayment</i>	£59,120	£46,053	£97,139	£19,397	£22,697
Total priority debts	£394,682	£580,259	£379,300	£422,478	£882,162
Non- Priority debts	£562,443	£532,577	£344,902	£635,161	£366,719
Grand Total £	£957,125	£1,112,836	£742,202	£1,057,639	£1,248,881

Debt figures for the Last five years are above. The average debt per client is;

2018/2019	2018/2017	2017/2016	2016/2015
£25,034	£19,523	£14,003	£21,584

The debt table shows fluctuations in the rise and decline of certain types of debts over the past five years but the solutions are largely unchanged and the most significant in resolution remains DROs (Debt Relief Orders). DROs have just passed the ten year date since inception. I can barely remember the solutions prior to this; lots of laborious letter writing and trying to find small amounts of money out of (for the most part) very low incomes to satisfy the creditors. The fee for bankruptcy at almost £700.00 was and is out of the question for most. For some clients informal debt management plans are still the preferred method of dealing with debt and Citizens Advice are here to offer advice and guidance with these. However the final decision is always the clients. It's always important to carefully research this and to identify not for profit organisations that should be transparent regarding their fees. DROs remain the best and cheapest option (£90.00 fee payable to the Insolvency Service which we are often able to obtain through very generous charity support). The road to submitting a DRO is not always simple and clients have to invest considerable effort in making sure all allowable debts are included. We are here to help which is why face to face debt advice supports clients the most.

HOME SWEET HOME?

In 2018 the Homelessness Reduction Act came into force and with it came the biggest changes to homelessness legislation in 40 years. This has meant a big change for the local council – East Suffolk Council in their duty to prevent and relieve homelessness, along with a new duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness, regardless of priority need.

East Suffolk Council has been proactive in providing this service for the local community and has asked the Local Citizens Advice to work in partnership with them. As a result, we now have a representative of the local office working within the Housing Options team at Melton assisting with benefit checks, debt advice and liaising with the various Housing Officers on behalf of our clients as needed.

We have also recently started a joint drop in session with Flagship Housing. A local officer is now here fortnightly to help with queries that Flagship tenants may have. This is also a good opportunity for us to update each other on any changes locally and to develop our good working relationship with Flagship. We hope this will improve the service to the clients that we represent when dealing with issues they have with their housing.

Another difference we have noticed is a change to the benefit system due to Universal Credit and a new rule regarding lodgers. When a client is claiming for Housing Benefit/JSA under the old rules, if having a lodger, any income above a small nominal sum from the let is deemed income and means that the benefit received will be reduced.

The rule for Universal Credit is that the income from a lodger does not reduce the amount of benefit paid, this means that for those under occupying letting a room to a lodger would be a way to avoid the 'bedroom tax' and have some extra income. Flagship have told us that in general they are happy for their tenants to have a lodger but we would suggest that any tenant deciding to do this should check with their Landlord first.

SOCIAL PRESCRIBING

It's estimated nationally that 20-40% of patients consult their GP for assistance with non-clinical issues. These can include a complex range of problems such as those relating to social isolation, mental or physical wellbeing difficulties and challenges involving housing and financial matters.

Locally, during this past year the advice we have provided across the district at various locations confirm that 37% of people accessing our assistance identified as either living with long term health conditions or as disabled. The table below outlines the ways in which Clients have described their difficulties when accessing advice from the bureau:

Type of Disability	% of people who have identified as disabled
Long Term Health condition	26
Mental Health difficulties	24
Physical Health difficulties	24
Multiple difficulties	10
Other disability or not identified	9
Learning difficulty	2
Cognitive difficulty	2
Visual impairment	2
Hearing impairment	1
Deaf	1

Across Suffolk various projects have sought to improve the range of support and advice available to people to help them resolve and / or manage these difficulties. Within the district we have contributed by providing regular drop in advice sessions within Framfield House (Woodbridge), Aldeburgh and Alderton surgeries.

Towards the end of 2018, Ipswich & East Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group confirmed funding would be available for organisations to deliver an increased range of social prescribing within GP surgeries in East Suffolk. I attended a consultation event in December 2018 and in the early part of 2019 met with colleagues in partner agencies to explore the potential to join up to deliver this new form of service. Working with Access Community Trust, Citizens Advice Felixstowe, Citizens Advice Sudbury and Suffolk Family Carers and more broadly with Disability Advice Service a number of partnership bids for funding were successfully tendered in March 2019.

This new venture will enable the bureau to work in partnership with providers of other services with the aim of increasing the range of advice and other assistance available to people with complex needs.

Figures for 2018/2019

The Bureau's operating statistics for the last seven years are set out below.

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13
Clients presenting new problems	1,985	2,042	1,927	1,734	1,519	1,664	1,602
New Enquiries raised by clients	2,399	2,366	2,037	1,924	1,736	1,650	1,909
New issues raised by the enquiries	5,736	6,016	6,507	6,004	6,321	7,819	7,295
Contacts handled by the Bureau	6,750	9,697	14,870	12,934	12,481	10,776	10,466

New problems and new enquiries show a trend similar to last year though we continue to experience difficulties recording contacts within our work. This has led to an under reporting of the number of contacts we have received rather than a decrease in those contacts.

Category	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14
Benefits	1,468	1,708	1,685	1,591	1,564	2,068
Benefits (Universal Credit)	233	48	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Debt	1,015	1,099	1,231	1,255	1,685	1,836
Relationships	587	570	597	525	461	734
Employment	470	565	701	579	547	664
Housing	587	522	614	561	513	626
Consumer & Utilities	437	412	377	354	387	236
Health, Education, Travel	284	323	282	309	349	394
Finance & Tax	214	308	297	324	296	461
Legal	262	280	339	246	276	313
Other	124	210	216	168	175	213
Discrimination	20	46	54	28	30	51
Immigration	35	37	65	55	38	N/A
Total	5,736	6,016	6,507	6,004	6,321	7,819

Benefits continue to be the biggest area of enquiry for clients accessing advice. Many of these enquiries relate to difficulties with client's establishing their eligibility for particular benefits, especially those relating to illness or disability. There has also been a significant growth in the number of people seeking assistance with matters relating to Universal Credit following the roll out of full service in our district in October 2018. Numbers of enquiries relating to debts, relationships and housing have remained significant through this year with increasing levels of complexity within the contacts received.

FINANCIAL AND OTHER GAINS

The gains for 2018/19 are:

The breakdown for gains in 2018/19 is as follows:

Debt write off	Total £ amount
bankruptcy	470,387
Debt write off- other	3,620
DRO	351,520
IVA	25,630
Income gain	
Benefit / Tax Credit	8,720
Charitable payment	2,100
Financial gain	90
other	4,633
Reimbursements	
Cancellation –successful	148
Disputed fine – charge / action- successful	255
Refund / cancellation rights - successful	170
Refund / repair / replacement agreed	717
Unfair insurance challenged	900
Other	
Application made to energy trust fund	96
Complaint resolved	2,942
Creditor action stopped / suspended / prevented	2,515
Disputed fine / charge / action - unsuccessful	200
Other (non-financial)	250
Total	874,893

REVIEW OF AIMS & OBJECTIVES

We review our aims, objectives and activities each year. This review looks at what we achieved and the outcomes of our work in the previous twelve months. The review also looks at the success of each key activity and the benefits they have brought to those groups of people whom we are set up to help. It also helps us to ensure our aims, objectives and activities remained focused on our stated purposes. We have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and in planning our future activities.

CHANGING TIMES

During the past year the Bureau has moved through a period of change. A change in manager has coincided with the development of a number of new ventures including the launch of the Universal Support Help to Claim service, closer working together with the district council to prevent homelessness across the patch, stronger joint working with colleagues within housing associations and an opportunity to increase access to advice services within GP surgeries through social prescribing.

Citizens Advice nationally has long campaigned (and still does) for improvements in the Universal Credit benefit; from identifying difficulties with the process of making and managing an on-line digital claim and account, through to delays in receiving payments and the expectation for the recipients of this new benefit to manage a salary style form of payment amongst other aspects. This relationship led to the award of a national contract for Citizens Advice to deliver a Help to Claim service to support clients to make successful claims for Universal Credit. Locally we commenced the delivery of this service from April 2019 enabling assistance to be provided in the Leiston bureau and also initially from Woodbridge Job Centre. We have the advantage in our locality of linking aspects of this work with the excellent Universal Support work delivered by the district council and have the great benefit of connecting our work with partnerships already evolved through this work to the benefit of clients across our district.

This theme of partnership working has been one which has characterised some of the developments across the bureau during this past year and something which is likely to be a feature of future work as funding opportunities increasingly favour the aims of joined up approaches.

In recognition of the importance of providing face to face advice across a largely rural area our Outreach Development Worker reviewed our out-reach advice locations during the year. We took the decision to relocate our Saxmundham advice session to The Old Police Station and are pleased to be working in partnership with Disability Advice Service and Saxmundham Town Council to develop services through this new base. We have also been able to improve access to printing and other equipment across different sites and continued thanks goes to The Ogilvie Trust for their assistance with this.

Accompanying and supporting these developments a wide range of activities led by our volunteers, both advisers and trustees, have and continue to evolve across the bureau. These include (but are not limited to) increasing our capacity for administration and publicity through to developing peer to peer volunteer support structures. It goes without saying that these activities alongside the wider work of our paid staff are vital in supporting the day to day services we deliver.

Any Questions please do not hesitate to email mail for any details.

Aldeburgh Community and Sports Trust	
Representative	Councillor Tony Cooper
Contact Details	tony.cooper@eastsuffolk.gov.uk Tel: 07884 054882

A brief report is all that is required as the Community Centre is likely to be of limited interest to Council and there is no financial impact on ESC.

The Community Centre continues to look for opportunities to improve its profitability. The hospitality industry currently is a difficult trading market and as with the rest of the industry profits and margins are tight. A improvement programme looked at its operation and a number of initiatives were introduced to encourage trade. Additionally it continues to review its cost base and contracts. A number of new associations and activities are using the centre.

Any questions please email me and I will respond.

Leiston Town Athletic Association (LTAA)	
Representative	Councillor Jocelyn Bond
Contact Details	Jocelyn.Bond@eastssuffolk.gov.uk Tel: 07825 720522

2018/19 the members' committee have been working well and supporting the trustees in the management of the club and a lot of their energy has been directed towards increasing footfall and improving the fabric of the club house.

At the start of the year, with the support of Carlsberg (the club's brewery) a limited promotional campaign was begun, with a full-page advert in the local free press. The club also came to an arrangement with the publishers of the Leiston Observer to provide a monthly piece entitled 'News from Victory Road'. This piece continues to be published giving news about the social aspect of the club and reports on the sections, predominantly the bowls club. With the support of the Leiston Town Council a notice board for the club listing opening times, events and fixtures for Leiston FC was placed at the end of Victory Road.

The LTAA has had difficulties accessing the club website and so decided to take up the offer of a listing on a local website – yourcommunitynews. Since then a new website for Leiston has been launched – visit-Leiston – and the club will now be listed there. Social media is also being used now to publicise events.

There has also been a take up on the facilities by local organisations who hire the hall etc.

The club continues to look to increase its membership. Open meetings have been held giving members the opportunity to discuss their views about the club. As a direct result of this, soft seating was introduced into the extension making it a more family friendly environment. The Electric membership card system has proved very popular which enabled the introduction of a pricing structure that is favourable to members. This has resulted in an increase in membership although this is limited as many of their members had dual membership at the LTAA.

The Leiston Bowls Club (the LTAA bowls section) have had a reduction in membership and are hoping to get further members over the winter months ready for the new season.

The Football section have made major improvements to the ground and must now be one of the best in their league and many other divisions.

The club continues to provide entertainment at weekends with a variety of music acts, entertaining members and non-members alike. The majority of these events are free with the acts being paid from the increased takings. The fact that the events are 'free' has resulted in much better attendance than previously when tickets had to be purchased. Working with the Suffolk Smugglers (Scooter Club) the club has also staged a weekend long event and 2 live music gigs. This partnership looks to continue into the future.

The LTAA has a function room that is available for private events and bookings continue to be taken although not at the level we would like to see. However, this element of the club continues to be promoted and numbers are picking up.

It was hoped that the LTAA would gain benefit from the initial funding from EDF for an all-weather pitch for community use but it was agreed by others to place at the sports centre. Having now 11 teams under the Football section this would have been a great asset and allow for continued playing throughout the winter months when several games have to be called off due to water-logged 2nd pitch.

As you can see, trustee's stewards and volunteers are working hard to increase and improve the offer to the community. However, this all takes time and there is an element of two steps forward, one back. Every effort is being made to improve our financial standing but any large increase in business rates, as has been proposed, would negate all of those efforts and have the potential to make things even worse.

The Greenways Project	
Representatives	Councillor M Newton Councillor J Mallinder
Contact Details	mark.newton@eastsuffolk.gov.uk Tel - 07788 456641 james.mallinder@eastsuffolk.gov.uk Tel – 07810 815879

The Project

The project is a long-standing partnership between three local authorities (Ipswich Borough, Babergh District and east Suffolk Council) and the wider community. It looks after around 50 nature reserves and green spaces around the project area. About nine of these sites are located in east Suffolk and include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and County Wildlife Sites (CWS). The project also looks after a number of ponds, green spaces and woods in east Suffolk that do not have an official designation.

Project Funding

The project continues to suffer from the withdrawal of funds by Suffolk County Council in March 2018. Last financial year, despite considerable income generation work, Ipswich Borough Council had to meet a shortfall of around £15k in the project's budget. There are currently no unallocated reserves. Ring fenced reserves cover possible future staff redundancy (approx. £28k) and vehicle replacement (approx. £33k). The total cost of the project for the year is around £110,000, of which the three remaining partners contribute around £60,000, with IBC filling the gap left by Suffolk County Council this year. The project works very hard to meet the income target by working with Parish and Town Councils in the project area; seeking grants and other contributions; selling services and carrying out additional work for the existing partner local authorities. The need to generate income inevitably means that some work the project has traditionally done can no longer be achieved. Currently the project has been asked by the main contributor (Ipswich Borough Council) to speak with the relevant officers at East Suffolk Council and Babergh District Council to negotiate possible increases in the annual core contribution to the project to try to reduce the pressures created by increasing income generation targets. Some income is produced by seeking income generating work but continually chasing this work means the project has less time to carry out some of its traditional roles and activities, which in turn creates uncertainty for volunteer groups and users of some sites.

Contributions from Parish Councils and other local community organisations have become critical to our future, as are grants and other sources of income. If more funds cannot be found, the project may well have to reduce its activities or increasingly charge for its work.

The invaluable contribution of volunteers

Volunteers have continued to be a valuable resource to the project's work, but many people also benefit from the experiences and opportunities the project offers – helping young people to learn skills and gain confidence; preventing older people getting lonely and staying at home; providing formal and informal training related to our work; helping people remain physically active; improving mental health and wellbeing for both volunteers and the wider users of the sites that the project provides and maintains. For all the 25 years the project has existed, volunteers and local community organisations getting involved has been key to the project's success. Volunteers carry out the widest possible range of tasks and roles from practical nature reserve management to running family events and activities. The project and its partners benefit considerably from this huge effort – just over 1500 person days this year, equivalent to eight full-time members of staff or almost £100,000 (based on Lottery match funding values). It is hoped that volunteers benefit from working on the project – learning new skills; gaining confidence; discovering new places to visit; enjoying company; experiencing wildlife and much more. The project Team and Joint Advisory Committee would like to take this opportunity to greatly thank everyone who helps the project as a volunteer – your contribution is invaluable.

Events and Public Activities

The project has run and been involved with a range of events through the year, including the ever-popular Spring Wood Day, which attracts several hundred visitors to the Wood and Kiln Meadow in Belstead Brook Park. The event is informal and old-fashioned with folk music and dancing, wildlife walks and stalls, woodcraft and other activities for children and families, campfire baked potatoes and tea and cake!

Many of our other events are more modest in scale and are based around encouraging children and families to make 'Wildlife Homes' to take home and put in the garden. Working with Ipswich Wildlife Group, the project has helped to add thousands of bug homes, bird boxes and hedgehog houses to the gardens of Ipswich and further afield. This year, this included attending the Suffolk Show as guests of Suffolk Wildlife Trust, where over 300 bug boxes were made with the help of visiting children over the two days.

Looking after our nature reserves and green spaces

By far the largest part of our work is the practical day to day management of the 50 or so nature reserves and other sites that the project is involved with. The vast majority of the staff and volunteer time is used on these activities, carrying out a very wide range of habitat management and visitor infrastructure tasks, including: coppicing woodlands, planting hedges, mowing wildflower meadows, clearing scrub from heathland, de-silting ponds and wetlands, building bridges and boardwalks, installing signs and information boards, mowing and surfacing paths, picking litter and much more!

Rushmere St Andrew:

The project has continued to look after the Sandlings and Mill Stream Local Nature reserves in Rushmere St Andrew – working closely with Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council. This relationship is extremely important as the Parish is able to access funds for improvement works in the reserves, and Greenways can then deliver the work to help us reach our large income generation target. Routine work has included maintenance of paths, seats, signage and regular litter picking of the Jubilee Walk Route, along with annual meadow management, coppicing of scrub to maintain ideal bird nesting habitat, and scrub removal to keep the meadow and wetland areas open.

The Mill Stream LNR is a small reserve (just over 10 acres) located in Rushmere St Andrew, just west of the Speedway Stadium. The Sandlings Open Space is a substantial area of mainly recreational space just southwest of Rushmere Heath and the Rushmere Golf Club. Two of the ponds at the Mill Stream reserve were de-silted with a large excavator, at the end of last winter, to maintain some areas of open water and maximise the value for as wide a range of species as possible. Volunteers helped to prepare for the work by clearing scrub and removing low branches to get the machine into the site. The inevitable initial muddy mess has already now disappeared as vegetation has recolonised the banks.

Martlesham:

The project has also been carrying out considerable site management work in Martlesham, both on the Common (near Tesco beside the A12) and of the Heath (Western Corridor Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)), on behalf of the Parish Council and Martlesham Heath Householders respectively. These are two vitally important remnants of the once widespread Sandlings Heath that stretched from Ipswich to Kessingland. Heathland needs a substantial amount of routine maintenance to ensure the habitat remains open and light, favouring the often rare and vulnerable species that have adapted to this habitat over thousands of years. Volunteers helped to surface two stretches of footpath across Martlesham Heath (49 acres) on behalf of the Martlesham Heath Householders Ltd., greatly improving a well-used short cut used as a route to schools and other facilities. The paths are now level and even and available in all weather conditions. The route is much shorter than the alternative of using street pavements, and obviously brings people into contact with their local SSSI heathland – a great chance to experience wildlife too!

Kesgrave and Grundisburgh:

The project has also continued to work with Kesgrave Town Council and Grundisburgh Parish Council to manage their wildflower areas with our volunteers and specialist mowing equipment.

Purdis Heath:

Purdis Heath SSSI is also a major site for the project, with additional work being funded by a grant secured by Butterfly Conservation. The site however, has been sold, allegedly to a local individual, who sadly bid against Suffolk Wildlife Trust who were very keen to manage it as a nature reserve in perpetuity. So at present it's not known if the project will be involved in its management in the future, which is rather sad as project volunteers played a vital role in its care for nearly 25 years.

Wildlife News

Finally, the project produces its "Wildlife News" magazine which all Councillors should have found in their pigeon holes.

Cllr Mark Newton

Cllr James Mallinder

RECOMMENDATION

That the report be received.

APPENDICES

Appendix A	Invite to the Green Print Forum on 3 February 2020
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BACKGROUND PAPERS – None
