



SUDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Business Plan 2018 – 2022



Sudbury Town Council
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Updated February 2020



Forward by the Mayor of Sudbury, Robert Spivey

I am delighted to be introducing this updated Business Plan for Sudbury Town Council.

The Business Plan covers our aspirations for the period up to October 2022. However it is a working document which will be regularly reviewed and updated.

The Sudbury Town Council Business Plan aims to provide an understanding into the council's aims, policies and governance arrangements which will help to inform the public as to what might be expected from the Town Council during the forthcoming period.

We hope to give you confidence in our ability to support the town of Sudbury in an efficient, forward thinking and effective way. The Town Council appreciates that community engagement and involvement is key to our success. Consequently we welcome your comments and suggestions and will continue to work together on new and exciting projects for the benefit of all residents and visitors to our wonderful town.



Section 1. The Priorities of the Town Council.

A clean green and tidy town

Strong Financial Management

Healthy Residents

A vibrant economy for all visitors and residents

Support for vulnerable and young People

Section 2. Community Engagement

The Business Plan is a living document which will be updated periodically. It is available for public scrutiny and comment on the Town Council's website.

Section 3. Sudbury and Sudbury Town Council, General Description.

3.1.1. History and current situation.

The ancient town of Sudbury, which stands on the bank of the River Stour on the southern border of the county of Suffolk, has existed since Saxon times. The town was first mentioned in chronicles in 799 a.d. and was recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (late 9th Century) as Suthberie (or South Borough). Prior to the Norman Conquest the Town had a mint and enjoyed the status of a borough. The town's market was established in 1003. Sudbury is mentioned as a market town in the Domesday Book (1086). The first recorded Mayor of Sudbury was Robert Darry in 1331. Edward the Third settled Flemish weavers in the town during the 14th Century. This resulted in the establishment of a weaving and clothmaking industry which persists to the present day. There are today four working silk mills in the town. The town was the birthplace of the artist Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788) whose childhood home is now open as a gallery and museum.

The town currently has a population of at least 13,063, and if the adjacent parish of Great Cornard is included this rises to 21,971 (2011 census). The population of the town is expected to grow significantly in the future with plans for development in a number of areas, most notably in plans for housing and industrial development in the Chilton Woods area to the north.

Sudbury is twinned with Clermont L'Oise in France, Hoxter in Germany and Fredensborg in Denmark

3.1.2. Economic and Social Trends

Statistical information, that compares Sudbury to Suffolk and England as a whole, can be found on Suffolk Observatory

<https://www.suffolkobservatory.info/>

3.2. Sudbury and local government

Sudbury Town Council is the first and most local tier of Sudbury's four layers of Government.

The Council plays an important role in the town of Sudbury, undertaking services within the community, promoting the town and representing its interests more widely.

Babergh District Council is the second tier, and is responsible for other services, including planning, car parking, recycling and refuse collection.

Suffolk County Council is the third tier and its activities include responsibility for highways, education, health and social services.

The Town of Sudbury is the largest town in the South Suffolk Parliamentary Constituency.

Sudbury Town Council works in partnership with other layers of Government to further the interests of the town.

Partner Organisations

In addition to working with other tiers of local government the Council works with a large number of local organisations both from the public sector and the not for profit sector.

3.3. Council Structure

3.3.1. Overview

In the absence of urgent business, the Town Council holds full council meetings, chaired by the Mayor, on the second Tuesday of each month with the exception of August and December. All meetings are open to the public and a period of time is set aside during the full council meeting for members of the public to put questions to the Council.

Sudbury Town Council has 16 councillors representing seven wards, Elm and Hillside, Hawkins Road, St Leonards, Sudbury East, North, South and South West. Councillors are unpaid, receive no allowances, and are elected by the residents of Sudbury every four years. The last elections took place in May 2019 and are scheduled to take place in May 2023. The names of current councillors and the wards they represent can be found on the Town Council Website.

The current ward arrangement is illogical and highly unsatisfactory. It is the result of the Boundary Commission review of Babergh District Council wards in 2018. Councillors have made representations with regard to this and hope that changes will be made following the adoption of the Boundary Commission review into Suffolk County Council Boundaries which is ongoing.

3.3.2

Mayor and Deputy Mayor roles

The first Mayor of Sudbury was elected in 1331. Originally the Mayor was elected by and from local dignitaries and aldermen.

In modern times it has been a long standing tradition for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to be elected annually from the sixteen elected Town Councillors. Both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor generally hold office for one year with the Deputy Mayor becoming Mayor following his/her term of office as Deputy. This year of Deputising for the Mayor gives good grounding for the strenuous and demanding role of Town Mayor.

The Town Mayor of Sudbury is elected at the Annual Town Meeting in May every year and acts as the Chairman at Full Council meetings. It is an honour to be elected as Mayor to represent the Town at the numerous events that take place in Sudbury throughout the year. Invitations to attend events can be wide ranging from attending Sudbury civic events such as Remembrance Day, and civic ceremonies in other towns and parishes to helping to celebrate residents' 100th birthdays.

Any group or individual can make a request for the Mayor to attend an event but these must come via the Mayor's secretary, Mrs Teresa Elford – teresa.elford@sudburytowncouncil.co.uk. Protocol forms need to be completed and permission obtained from other Councils if the request comes from outside Sudbury.

3.3.3. Committees

In addition to the full council meetings, five committees have been formed to enable the council better to perform its services and functions. The Press and Public are entitled to attend meetings of Committees and Task Groups that may be set up by them, unless the business under discussion is private and confidential.

With the exception of the Planning Committee which meets throughout the year as necessary, Committees do not meet in August or December.

Sudbury Town Council appoints members to the following committees:

Policy and Resources

Finance

Planning and Development

Leisure, Environment and Highways

Human Resources.

Representation on these committees reflects the political composition of the council.

The Policy and Resources Committee meet as often as necessary, but generally no more than on a monthly basis, on the third Tuesday of the month.

Membership; 8 members

The committee is responsible for Policy Development and the review of existing policies.

The Finance Committee meet on the first Tuesday of each month, apart from August and December, at 6.30 p.m.

Membership: 8 members

The committee enjoys powers delegated from Full Council to take responsibility for the delivery of best value throughout the Council's finances. It provides guidance and assistance to the Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Office (RFO) in the preparation of the Council's annual budgets. It monitors the income and expenditure and development relative to the annual budget on a monthly basis, and also monitors the award of all contracts with a value of between £500 and £5000. (Contracts above £5000 must be approved by Full Council.) It considers applications for and distributes grant aid up to the annual budgeted level. The committee authorises all council payments to third parties up to £5000 and makes a recommendation to full council with regard to the appointment of an internal auditor in line with Government legislation.

The Leisure, Environment and Highways Committee meets on the last Tuesday of every month at 6.30 p.m. The committee does not meet in August or December unless there is urgent business to discuss. The committee has delegated spending powers within an agreed annual budget.

Membership: 8 members

The Committee seeks to obtain best value for the activities that it supervises. It is responsible for maintenance, management and control of the Market, public clocks, bus shelters, allotments, The War Memorial, The Croft, Mill Acre, public conveniences, the cemetery and closed churchyards, public lighting, litter and dog bins and public seats. It supervises the keeping and conservation of the Council's archives, regalia and pictures.

The Committee has responsibility for organising publicity, entertainment and information, sporting and social activities and Christmas lighting.

In partnership with other organisations the Committee aims to ensure the good order of all public spaces in the town. It encourages the repair, maintenance and improvement of all of the highways and makes recommendations regarding the repair, maintenance and improvement of all footpaths and bridle paths. It makes recommendations regarding car parking in Sudbury, improvements to the water meadows, waiting restrictions and traffic orders, renaming and renumbering of streets, street cleansing and the collection and disposal of refuse.

The Human Resources Committee meets when necessary. It has 5 members, It is responsible for the oversight and strategic direction all staff matters and for National Standards Boards documentation.

The Planning and Development Committee meets every other Monday at 6.30 p.m.

Membership: 8 Members

The Committee considers all planning applications received for Sudbury. It also monitors and reviews any new development proposals. The Town Council encourages early consultation and engagement with potential developers.

In view of the time constraints involved the Committee has delegated powers.

Committees have the power to set up Task Groups or Working forums to examine particular issues in more depth. These bodies report back to the Committee which formed them. These groups can include representatives from outside bodies and experts and meet as and when necessary.

3.3.4. Sudbury Town Council, Officer structure.

The Town Council is supported by a team of officers headed by the Town Clerk. He or she is supported by the Deputy Town Clerk and the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). In addition to staff engaged in business support, the Mayor's Secretary/Events Co-ordinator supports the activities of the Mayor, is also responsible for the co-ordination of other events in the town, and customer service advisors. The Town Council employs the Town Centre Manager, a Market/Facilities/Cemetery Manager, a Community Warden Supervisor and a number of general operatives involved with work around the town. The Town Council also employs customer service staff at the Tourist Information Centre.

Section 4. Governance

Town Council Governance.

Sudbury Town Council aims to be a professional, competent and caring organisation. It seeks to be open and accountable in all it does, to comply with the law, encourage community participation, promote equity and equality, and ensure the sound financial management of Town Council resources.

Committed to the principles of good governance the Town Council aims to:

- Be well informed about the needs and opinions of the town's residents and businesses by consulting them on major issues.
- Make decisions and set priorities with reference to evidence where it is available.
- Improve services to the public by encouraging members and staff to develop their skills, by undertaking appropriate training
- Ensure councillors are given the opportunities to keep abreast of new opportunities, developments and policies
- Be a good and fair employer by providing fulfilling work opportunities and conditions for staff
- Continually promote public participation at all Town Council Meetings
- Aspire to achieve Gold standard in the Local Council Award Scheme
- Deal with enquiries, complaints and fault reports from members of the public speedily and efficiently

- Be an effective custodian of the council's property and documents.
- Review Council policies and procedures to ensure that the council is run in a legal and business-like manner.

Actions:

Improve Training opportunities for Members and Staff

Identify training needs

Encourage councillors and staff to participate in the training opportunities that are made available.

Consider sharing training sessions with nearby parish and town councils to increase numbers and save money.

Improve community engagement

Update and improve the website and make arrangements for it to be updated and managed on a regular basis.

Reconsider arrangements for the Annual Town Meeting in order to encourage more public participation.

Develop a public relations and communications strategy.

Improve internal organisation and decision making of the Council

Support decision making and priority setting with published statistics and facts.

Ensure that all areas of council activity are accountable to a relevant committee of the council.

Review and check documentation of all council policies and schedule for regular review.

Run a staff satisfaction survey.

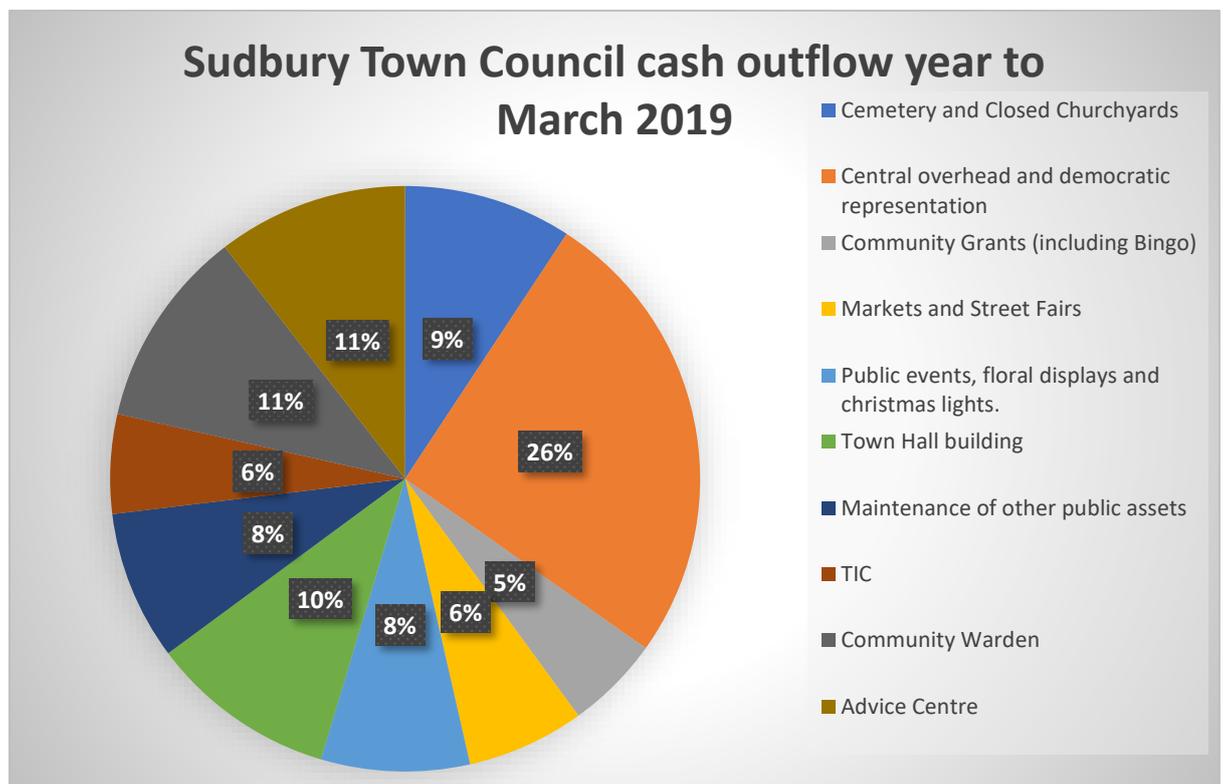
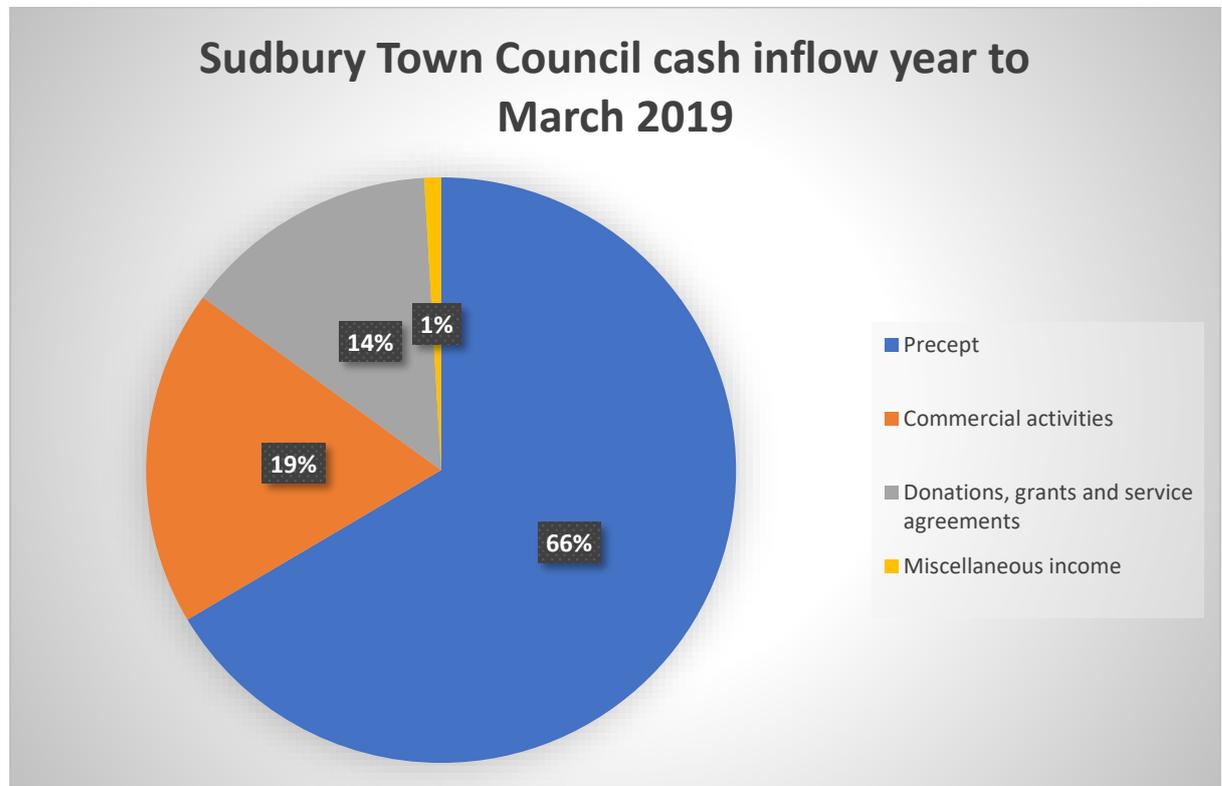
Actively update the Business Plan and use action items to set priorities and budgeting.

Financial implications.

A number of the items above fall within the day to day business of officers. However additional resources may need to be budgeted for the Website and data base management (unless voluntarily done by an interested councillor).

Section 5. Sudbury Town Council, Finance, Assets and Resources.

Current financial situation.



According to the Income and Expenditure Statement in 2018/19 Sudbury Town council recorded expenditure of £852,855 (2017/18 £900,517) and income of £974,538 (2017/18 £939,846) resulting in a surplus of income over expenditure of £121,683 (2017/18 £39,329.)

The charts above, which reflect actual cash paid and received by the council, are indicative of where money was spent and where it came from.

The main source of income for the council is the Precept, collected as Council Tax from approximately 4200 households. This amounts to a little under £650,000 and accounts for 66% of income. Thus a 1% increase in the Town Council's part of Council Tax raises an additional £6500 for the council. The remaining income is largely made up from grants, donations and payment for service agreements from individuals, local organisations and the District and County Councils and, secondly, by the council charging for goods and services such as burial fees and the hire of the Town Hall.

The largest item of expenditure for the council is central costs and overheads, including salaries of those involved in central administration.

In the year to March 2019 this, excluding the cost of the Mayor and central financial charges, accounted for 22% of the total, up from 21% in the year to March 2018. As anticipated, expenditure on the Town Hall building, which was exceptionally high in 2017/18, has returned to more normal levels, and was last year similar to other relatively large items such as the cost of the Community Wardens and money spent on Public Events such as the firework display and Christmas lights. The Advice Centre, which the Town Council runs on behalf of itself, Suffolk County Council and Babergh District Council is also a significant item of expenditure.

The Council receives grants and service contributions in a number of different service areas from both Babergh District Council and Suffolk County Council. It should be noted that these contributions are steadily declining over time, and in some case disappearing, despite higher costs to the Town Council. As a matter of policy, the Town Council needs to consider this issue. This is particularly true in view of the fact that the Council is looking to take on more work for which other local authorities are responsible.

The Council currently employs some 24 staff, both full and part time. The total costs of salaries etc. to the council amounts to £511,307, which is 60% of total cash expenditure. Staff costs were just 0.1% higher in 2018/19 than in the previous year. In some cases, this figure is partially offset by payments and grants from third parties.

More detail on income and expenditure is included under the description of individual areas of activity below.

In the year end to March 2019 the Council had reserves of £540,937 (2018: £419,254), of which £431,725 are not earmarked for specific projects. This represents 50% of last year's reported expenditure which is acceptable but by no means excessive.

Assets: At the end of March 2018 the Council's fixed and other non-current assets were valued at approximately £3 million.

Long Term Debt: The Town Council has long term debt amounting to £330,929 (2018 £336,561) relating to loans taken out to purchase strategic property assets. The total interest payable in the current year on these loans amounts to £15,725 (£16,003), and capital repayments to £5631 (£5498). A small proportion of this debt will be paid off in March 2022 and the remainder in September 2057.

Budget. The council's budget is set in every year. The Business Plan is taken into account when setting priorities.

Section 6. The Activities of Sudbury Town Council for which the Council takes full responsibility.

Environmental Commitment

The council is committed to pursuing excellent environmental practice both in its own operations and as an exemplar for the town and its residents

6.1. The Market.

There has been a Market in Sudbury since the 11th Century. The Town Council has the responsibility for organising and administering the market, which is held twice a week on Thursdays and Saturdays. The market offers a wide range of goods and is well supported by people from the Town and surrounding area. The market generates funding for the council which is used to provide services for the community. The Town Council employs a Market Manager to organise the market and liaise with stallholders.

In 2015/16 the gross profit from the market amounted to £36,380 and in 2016/17 £31,806. In 2017/18 £28,241 and in 2018/19 £17,972. An improvement is anticipated in the year to March 2020. Until 2017/18 total receipts from the market were largely static. However last year this was not the case, as market rents and tolls fell from c. £77,000 to £70,000. Costs were also higher, but rose more slowly than in recent years. The fall in market rents is thought to reflect the lower footfall that is being experienced in the town, possibly the result of more people shopping on the internet etc.

Objective

To support the future growth and sustainability of the market.

Actions:

Seek to reverse static turnover from the market at a time when retail activity in the town centre is threatened by on line shopping.

Find ways to improve the physical appearance and organisation of the market

Continue to meet with stallholders to meet their concerns

Seek ways to encourage new regular stallholders and in partnership with stallholders, investigate ways of promoting the market via press advertising and social media.

6.2. Care for the local environment and public facilities

Objective: A clean, green and tidy town.

6.2.1. The Sudbury Town Wardens

The Town Council employs community wardens to patrol the local area and deal with a wide range of issues affecting the environment such as dog fouling, littering and vandalism.

The team is employed by Sudbury Town Council but also works in partnership with other nearby parishes including Great Waldingfield, Chilton and Lavenham which contributes to STC's funds. In 2018/19 this activity generated over £17,000 for the council, which was ahead of budget. A similar contribution is expected in the year to March 2020.

The Town Wardens encourage volunteers in the community to work alongside them in activities such as litter picking etc. They also visit neighbourhood schools to talk about the environment and have for several years promoted a successful art competition for children sponsored by Tesco Sudbury.

Recently the Town Community Wardens have worked with Suffolk County Council to take on additional minor highways related works such as maintenance and cleaning of street signage (see paragraph on Highways 9.2 below for further information).

At present there are three wardens (2 FTE) and an apprentice warden.

Actions:

Promote the further use of the Community Wardens in the surrounding area with the aim of expanding the service, while planning to maintain a high level of service within the town.

Aspire to improve response times when dealing with current issues.

Consider further ways in which using our directly employed Wardens can save external contracting costs.

6.2.2. The Town Hall.

The maintenance of Sudbury's impressive Town Hall, completed in 1895, is the responsibility of the Town Council. Reported net expenditure in the year to March 2019 amounted to £76,739 (2018: £64,553, plus £38,500 from reserves) a lower amount is budgeted for the year to March 2020. This figure includes interest and capital repayment of c. £18,150 relating to a loan taken out to fund the purchase of the strategically important area to the rear of the building.

In the past four years the exterior has been decorated and necessary work has been carried out to the roof and outside walls and down pipes. In addition in the year to March 2019 the office was redecorated and some other refurbishment undertaken. Following a number of years of relatively high expenditure on the Town Hall building, costs are now expected to return to more normal levels.

The Council encourages the use of the Town Hall by local groups and charities, aiming to cover the direct costs of the lettings. Concessionary rates are available to not for profit organisations.

The council owns land at the back of the Town Hall which is currently used as a car park and store.

Actions:

Continue to monitor the physical state of the Town Hall and undertake necessary repairs in a timely manner.

Promote the use of the Town Hall by both not for profit and business organisations.

Keep options under review for the use of land at the back of the Town Hall

Ensure that sufficient reserves are available to meet future renovation and repair and consider the creation of a specific sinking fund.

6.2.3. Allotments

Sudbury Town Council operates two allotment sites which are rented out to residents for a small annual fee. The Newton Road Site consists of 30 plots and the Ballingdon Street site has 6 plots. Both sites have access to water. In recent years interest from those wishing to cultivate an allotment in Sudbury has been high and there is currently a waiting list.

The allotments make a small net contribution to council finances.

6.2.4. The Cemetery.

Sudbury Town Council manages the Town Cemetery in Newton Road. Founded in 1859. The Chapel and Flint Lodge on the site have been renovated in recent years. Town Hall staff are able to help interested parties in researching those buried on the site. The Council also runs a Green Burial Site.

Expenditure on the cemetery is to a large degree offset by burial charges and letting income from a detached house on the site.

Recently the Town Council agreed that steps should be taken to further improve and promote the use of the Chapel of Rest. An Open Day is to be held in spring 2020 to which local funeral directors will be invited.

The Town Cemetery in Newton Road is almost full. In December 2019 it was estimated that there is space for c. 6 years of future burials. Two sites for future burials have been considered and currently land owned by the Town Council is under consideration subject to planning considerations.

The Council is responsible for the maintenance of three closed Churchyards within the town. A contractor is employed to cut grass and maintain trees and shrubs

Actions:

Seek further space for burials in the Sudbury area.

Promote the use of the Chapel of Rest for burial and memorial services

6.2.5. Other public places and facilities

The Town Council takes responsibility for the maintenance of a number of other public places/facilities in Sudbury. These include public clocks, bus shelters, The War Memorial, The Croft, Mill Acre, three closed churchyards at All Saints Church, St Gregory's Church and St Peter's Church, contributions to the upkeep of the Sudbury Museum, floral displays, public lighting, litter and dog bins and public seats. The War Memorial has recently undergone refurbishment and in 2018 it was decided to refurbish the boating pond. This cost a little over £13,000 which was covered by a grant of £2000, plus a contribution from the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy.

In addition to its own contribution of c £20,000 towards provision of floral displays in the town, the Council supports the Sudbury in Bloom Committee through the Grant process

Actions:

To support the Sudbury in Bloom Committee in its ambition to achieve a Gold Award in the Anglia in Bloom competition.

6.3. Town Events and Town Centre Management.

The Council aims to encourage and preserve a vibrant town centre that can be enjoyed by all residents and which promotes local businesses and the local economy.

Different events are organised in the town throughout the year. Annual features are the Christmas Fair, the Party in the Park, the Firework display in November and the Old Age Pensioners Christmas Party. Suffolk Day 2019 was celebrated as well as Heritage Day in September 2019 with many buildings not normally open to the public welcoming visitors. In September 2019 the first Sudbury Silk Festival took place. This very successful event was supported by the Town Council.

The Town Centre Manager is the first point of contact for the council for 300 businesses in the town. She also researches funding opportunities for events and projects in Sudbury and is a source of funding information for local businesses and organisations.

Until recently the Town Council employed an Events Co-ordinator/ Town Centre Manager. The role had two aspects: the organisation of events and the promotion of the town centre.

It was found that too much of the Events co-ordinator/Town Centre Manager's time was occupied by administration related to events. This limited the time that could be spent on the Town Centre Management role and in the previous version of this plan it was suggested that the scope of the role should be rebalanced. In June, following a change in circumstances, it was decided that the roles should be split between two officers involving no increased cost to the council.

The net cost of these activities to the Council in the year to March 2019 amounted to £46,124 (2018: £48,237). The sum includes employment cost relating to the Events Coordinator/Town Centre Manager and some income from donations, grants and ticket receipts etc.

Actions:

Monitor the arrangements for Events Co-ordination and the Town Centre Management Role.

Section 7. Areas which The Town Council runs in partnership with, or on behalf of, other bodies

The Town Council has taken on the day to day running of a number of services on behalf of other councils. These services are governed by service agreements which compensate the Town Council for their work. The Town Council is prepared to take on local services that are currently carried out by larger authorities because this often offers better value for Council Tax payers, and it is also more efficient for such services to be delivered locally. Indeed there is scope to take on more work in a number of areas, for example the maintenance of road signage (see 10.2 below) and street cleaning. The Town Council is however keen to ensure that the work they do is fairly remunerated by the higher authority so that the burden does not fall disproportionately on local residents.

General Objective.

To provide a good service to the District and County Councils in undertaking work on their behalf both now and in the future, and to ensure that the Town Council is adequately rewarded for its work.

Actions:

Continue to carry out existing contracts efficiently.

To save money and improve services by exploring other service activities that could be taken on by the Town Council.

Ensure that the compensation received under current and future contracts is fair to both parties.

7.1. The Advice Centre.

The Town Council has run this service for many years in partnership with Babergh District Council and Suffolk County Council. Helping over 15,000 residents annually, the Centre offers advice and information about a wide range of council services. A list of the services on offer can be found on the Town Council's website. The size of the operation has been increased in recent months owing to the closure of Babergh District Council's head office in Hadleigh. The Centre currently employs three advisors.

The provision of these facilities by the Town Council is of great value to the District and County Councils. It is necessary to ensure that the council is adequately rewarded for its efforts and is not penalised in the event of cessation of activities.

Financial information.

In the year to March 2019, gross expenditure on the Advice Centre amounted to £89,281 (2018: £79,721) which was offset by payments from our partners and other income of £82,503 (2018: £42,126), resulting in a net cost to the Town Council of c. £6,778 (2018: £37,595).

Objective

To ensure that the Town Council is fairly compensated for work carried out for other councils and is protected against the impact of cessation of the contract.

Action:

Ensure that the terms of the Service Level Agreement are fair and give sufficient notice of withdrawal.

7.2. The Tourist Information Centre.

The Town Council took over responsibility for the management of the TIC from Babergh District Council in 2011.

The Town Council is keen to promote tourism in Sudbury.

The Town Council believes that continuation of the activities of the Tourist Information Centre, now managed by the Town Council, is important both in presenting a welcoming face to the world, and also to encourage further tourist visits. The Town Council produces a Sudbury Calendar annually, which is sold at a profit through the TIC. Funding from Babergh District Council that supports the TIC (currently £10,000 per annum) has fallen in recent years and could reduce further.

In the year to March 2019 the net cost to the Council of running the TIC was £24,138 (2018: £25,262), and in the current year the cost is budgeted to increase to £30,604 reflecting higher forecast staff costs. The contribution from Babergh District Council is expected to be the same as last year.

Objective

To secure continuation of TIC activities in the Town

Action:

Develop a strategy for the continued promotion of Tourism and provision of Tourist Information facilities.

7.3. Public Conveniences/Street cleaning

The Town Council is paid a grant of c. £20,000 by Babergh to manage the public conveniences and to undertake some street cleaning.

In the light of anticipated changes in the number of visitors to the Town Centre, (See 10.3. below) there is a need to review the provision of toilet facilities in Sudbury. It is understood that Babergh are currently undertaking a review of toilet facilities in the Town.

Objective

To ensure adequate provision of toilet facilities in Sudbury.

Action:

Work with Babergh to achieve best result from their review of toilet facilities.

Section 8. Partnership working with the local voluntary sector.

The Town Council seeks to support and work in partnership with local voluntary organisations, not for profit bodies and local charities.

8.1. Representation on Boards/Friends Organisations etc.

Sudbury Town Councillors sit as representatives on the boards/friends organisations of the following organisations:-

Citizens Advice

Gainsborough's House Forum

Sudbury Museum Trust

Sudbury Ephemera Archive

Quay Theatre

Suffolk Association of Local Councils

The Town Steering Group

Friends of St Peter's

(list correct as of July 2019)

At a recent meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee it was proposed that the Town Council should only appoint a representative to outside bodies where the council regularly gives grants to that body, or where it is felt important that the council receives regular updates of an organisation's activities and decisions. The list of outside bodies should be reviewed annually to ensure that these criteria are maintained.

Objective:

To support and enjoy the benefits of co-operation with local organisations.

Action:

The Policy and Resources Committee to regularly review the Town Council's representation on local bodies to reflect above policy.

8.2. Community Grants

The Town Council offers grants to support the activities of local charities.

Grants, responsibility for which is delegated to the Finance Committee, are awarded twice a year on a first come first served basis. To be successful the activities of the organisation and the purpose of the grant must be compatible with the priorities of the Council as stated in this Business Plan.

In 2017/18 the Council awarded grants amounting to £49,500 and in 2018/19 this fell to £43,008.

In 2017/19 the three largest recipients of grants were: The Quay Theatre, Gainsborough's House and Citizens Advice.

Actions:

To promote the Community Grants Scheme to encourage local charities to apply.

To ensure that Grants continue to be awarded in accordance with the priorities of the Council.

Section 9. Areas in which the Town Council seeks to improve Sudbury by working in partnership with, and seeking to influence, other local authorities

Objective

To achieve satisfactory outcomes for Sudbury residents by effective engagement with other public bodies

9.1 Routine planning applications.

The Town Council is an important statutory consultee of the local Planning Authority, Babergh District Council, where final decisions about planning applications for Sudbury are made. The Planning and Development Committee meet every other week where consideration of planning applications that fall within the Town boundary, or within adjacent areas when appropriate, is undertaken. Regard is given to planning history and local planning policy. The Committee also considers consultations from the Planning Authorities, Babergh District and Suffolk County Councils, that may take place from time to time relating to planning matters and makes recommendations to Full Council regarding its response. Examples of such consultations include strategic sites within the town and local plan policies including waste & mineral proposals, schools etc.

Members of the Public who have a particular interest in a planning application may attend the meeting of the Committee and give their opinion which should be based on planning grounds. They may also submit their opinions by post or email to Sudbury Town Council & Babergh District Council.

The Planning and Development Committee may also consider the views of local organisations, for example the planning committee of the Sudbury Society.

Action:

To consider how information posted on social media (Twitter and Facebook), linked to the Town Council Website, could be used to encourage interested members of the public to attend Planning Meetings and give their opinion.

9.2 Highways maintenance and improvement

Suffolk County Council has responsibility for providing and maintaining highways in the Sudbury Area. The Leisure, Environment and Highways Committee works with SCC to try to ensure that the town's roads are safe and in good order and that signage is appropriate and of a high standard. In recent years budget constraints at the County Council have meant that Sudbury's roads are currently in a poor condition and a number of 'action items' identified by the Town Council have been outstanding for some time.

Reorganisation of the County Council's Highways Department has resulted in a situation where individual officers do not appear to take responsibility for work in particular areas. This means that meetings between the County council officers and Sudbury Town Council are difficult to arrange, and the service received by the Town Council is inferior to that received in the past.

From time to time utility companies also undertake work on Sudbury's road system which results in traffic being disrupted. In recent months UK Power Networks and Anglian Water have been prepared to engage with the council with a view to mitigating inconvenience to residents.

In recent months Suffolk County Council has held a consultation with regard to devolving responsibility for certain routine maintenance work on roads, signage etc. Sudbury Town Council, through the Town Wardens, already undertake some of this work and have recently benefitted from training and better equipment provided by the County Council. In addition the Town Council has been considering the purchase of a road sweeper to improve the state of the roads and the appearance of the Town.

Actions:

Through our County Councillors, to continue to engage with the officers of the County Council in order to work through the long list of outstanding highways issues.

To consider how the Town Council might take on further minor works related to highways, with the proviso that this does not result in significant additional costs to the council.

To encourage utility companies and the County Council to engage with the Town Council to try to mitigate the inconvenience of road works related to their activities.

9.3 Car Parking

The Town Council has for a long time supported the maintenance of free short-term car parking in Sudbury to encourage visitors and shoppers from outside the town to support the retail and catering businesses, the market and the town's tourist attractions

Long term changes are anticipated in respect of parking in the town centre and it is important that the Town Council seeks to influence these.

A working group comprising representatives from the Police, District and Borough Councils and the County Council is currently working towards the establishment of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE). This will shift responsibility for the enforcement of matters relating to on street parking from the Police to the Local Authorities. It is planned to have this system in place by spring 2020. The change is likely to lead to a more effective parking enforcement regime in the Town. In response to this, and the prospect of future residential and business growth in the Town, the District Council is currently developing a parking strategy for Sudbury.

Actions

Continue to support free short-term car parking

Seek to influence changes to parking provision in the Town

9.4 Law and Order

Relationship with the Police

Although crime levels for Suffolk as a whole are lower than the National Average, some parts of Sudbury do not score well. The Town Council's relationship with the police force is therefore of great importance.

A senior representative from Sudbury Police attended this year's Annual Meeting of the Town Council.

Regrettably due to cost cutting by Suffolk Constabulary regular Police presence and feedback is no longer a feature of Town Council Meetings. In addition, the service from PCSO's has been dramatically reduced.

The Town Council has in the past part funded a PCSO and has recently been offered the opportunity to fully fund a PCSO in Sudbury at a cost of £34,000. At present it has been decided to refuse this offer due to concerns about the amount of control the Town Council would be able to exercise over this officer and also due to funding constraints (were this amount to be funded through the precept it would imply an additional increase of approximately 6 %). It is the opinion of the council that PCSO's do valuable work in the community and that their activities prevent low level crime and anti-social behaviour. It has therefore been agreed to revisit this at a later stage possibly with a view to seeking to share the cost with adjacent parishes.

Actions

To keep under review the possibility of funding a PCSO, probably in partnership with adjacent parishes.

To continue to engage with Sudbury Police

9.5 Economic development and strategic Town Planning

The Town Council is committed to the promotion of Sudbury as an active and vibrant town. The Council seeks to work in partnership with the District and County Councils and other public bodies to ensure that the view of the Town Council in respect of the future development of the Town is taken into account and reflected and incorporated into future strategic plans.

The Policy and Resources Committee has developed a paper which reflects the Council's aspirations for the future of the Town Centre. This was adopted by Full Council in July 2018 and is attached to this Business Plan as Appendix One. This work has been recognised in the District Council's Sudbury Vision for Prosperity which was launched in June 2018. It is hoped that the Town Council's aspirations will also be taken into account when future infrastructure is developed by the County Council, Central Government and other bodies such as British Rail.

Funding for longer term projects

The Town Council now receives 15% of the Community Infrastructure Levy received from the developers of new developments in the Town. The Town Council has the opportunity to bid for further funding from this source, either alone or in partnership with adjacent areas or bodies. In order to make such applications the Council must prepare a Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan. At present it has been decided not to create such a plan, although the necessity to arrange funding in the future to resource the development of Hamilton Road and other areas of the Town Centre is likely to change this decision.

Funds for infrastructure might also be brought into the Town if the Council seeks to promote a Town Bid. This would cost approximately £10,000 for a feasibility study.

Objective

The promotion of Sudbury as an active and vibrant town both now and in the future.

Actions

Continue to work with Babergh District Council on developing a Vision for the regeneration and improvement of the Town Centre

Engage more closely with the County Council and other bodies in respect of long term provision of, and alterations to, necessary infrastructure, schools, health provision etc.

Create a plan for the spending of future receipts from the Town's own CIL contributions

Review the possibility of preparing a Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan to access further CIL funding for expected longer term development.

Review of the Business Plan

The Business Plan will be updated and reviewed on a regular basis by the Policy and Resources Committee, in consultation with other committees as appropriate. Any significant recommended changes will be presented to Full Council for approval. The Business Plan as a whole will be revised and republished as appropriate, but at least every four years.

Sudbury Town Council Business Plan was created by Jenny Antill, Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee 2018/20, with the help and support of the Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

Date of adoption by Full Council

Appendix A

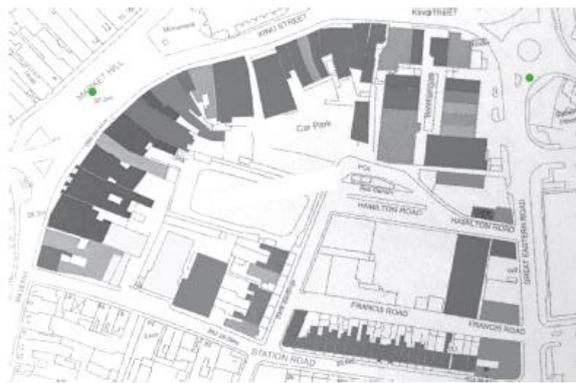
Aspirations for how this key area of the town centre should develop include:

- Establishment of infrastructure to encourage a non-food anchor store and satellite, branded retail shops to underpin existing town centre retail economy.
- A multi-screen cinema complex to add to the night-time economy
- Housing and offices at first floor level
- Redevelopment of Borehamgate to create prime access to the complex and present an enhanced retail frontage to Great Eastern Road
- Create a walking link from the rail station to the Market Hill



Hamilton Road Quarter

With removal of the bus station from this site the town centre has the chance to expand to meet the demands of the current 92,000 catchment and Sudbury's future growth.



Ambitions for Sudbury Town Centre

What we deliver for this town on our watch should be a gift for future generations



Gainsborough's House
Upgrade TIC to promote town as part of the package that goes with advertising GH new extension

North Street
Seek to improve north end of the street to create more footfall and revitalise shops

Siam Garden
Upgrade and create Weaving History link to Heritage Centre

Belle Vue Junction
Review SCC Highways advice on road layout. Create better pedestrian access to Belle Vue site and improve visual appearance.

Belle Vue House site
Ideally retention of the existing House and development of perhaps a hotel to bring more visitors and transform the area

Belle Vue Park
Retain all existing facilities and seek to enhance these. Also seek to open up front of park to Belle Vue Junction. More STC involvement with content and maintenance

Rail
New Colchester/Sudbury Rail link. New rolling stock. Encourage visitors from Colchester to Sudbury and promote 'Gainsborough Line'

Waitrose / station access
Improve access with mini roundabout in front of Roys / exit at Edgworth Road junction to ease congestion at peak times

Multi-storey car park
Explore feasibility and consider suitable site. North Street car park or to service Hamilton Road Quarter

Lorry park
Relocate away from town centre and encourage motor home users needing night stop-overs. Bus layover on current Lorry Park to replace existing bus station

Gainsborough's House
Create coach put-down point outside House to encourage visitor numbers.

Buses
Work with SCC Highways to create bus stops/shelters around town to replace existing bus station

Toilets
Makeover of facilities at Town Hall and intensify standard of regular maintenance. Refurbish and re-open Burkitts Lane toilets. Ditto toilets at park.

Town centre Road signage
Rationalise existing Highways signage and improve aesthetic appearance. Review and add to town centre information signage

Vitality and viability is key to town centre health. Encouraging visitors and shoppers with an offering that makes their stay here an enjoyable experience. All points here are intended to underline that objective.

What we would like to see in general for our town centre

Creating a 'living' town centre, with the Market Hill as a friendlier place - to reduce its traffic-oriented role, 'soften' the area with planting; turn it into an area to relax and enjoy over a cup of coffee. Saturday & Thursday market could be spread to the front of the Town Hall and Old Market Place, allowing shared space and parking on market days.

'Probably the finest urban space in East Anglia' -

John Betjeman

Town Hall
Bring forward plans to redevelop town hall 'car park' to create further TH / community facilities and possible income. Link use of facilities with St Peters

Parking
Rearrange parking area and access to allow free movement of traffic on south side.

Planting
Softening the view with pleached trees in planters

Café culture
Widening the pavement on the north side of Market Hill in order to encourage al fresco snacking

Road surfacing
Change road surface to make through traffic respect nature of town centre space

Traffic lights
Examine need for traffic lights and alternatives with regard to allowing better flow of traffic and pedestrians

Promotion
Digital Poster Board on the Market Hill

TIC & Library

St Peter's community hub

Town Hall & Heritage Centre

View of new Market entrance from King Street

to Gainsborough's House

