Scrutiny Committee

Members of the Scrutiny Committee:

Mrs M Dewsbury (Chairman)
Mr B McClenning (Vice Chairman)
Mr L Hornby
Mr T Lewis
Mr A Pond
Mrs S Thomson
Mr K Tilcock
Mr G Watt
Mr K Weeks
Mrs J Wilby
Mr M Windridge

Group Meetings

Conservatives:
Blomefield Room 9.00 am

Liberal Democrats:
Kett Room 9.00 am

If any member of the public wishes to speak on a non-confidential item, they may do so at the discretion of the Chairman

Agenda

Date
Wednesday 1 October 2014

Time
9.30 am

Place
Colman & Cavell Rooms

South Norfolk House
Long Stratton
Norwich
Norfolk
NR15 2XE

Contact
Sue Elliott  tel (01508) 533685
South Norfolk District Council
Swan Lane
Long Stratton Norwich
NR15 2XE

Email: democracy@s-norfolk.gov.uk

If you have any special requirements in order to attend this meeting, please let us know in advance

Large print version can be made available
AGENDA

At the discretion of the Chairman, a short break will be taken after the meeting has been running for approximately two hours.

1. - To report apologies for absence and to identify substitute members;

2. - Any items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act, 1972. Urgent business may only be taken if, "by reason of special circumstances" (which will be recorded in the minutes), the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered as a matter of urgency;

3. - To Receive Declarations of Interest from Members;
   (Please see guidance form and flow chart attached – page 4)

4. - To confirm the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 2 July 2014
   (attached – page 6)

5. - South Norfolk Market Towns’ Initiative;
   (report attached – page 12)

6. - Scrutiny Work Programme, Recommendation Tracker and Cabinet Core Agenda;
   (attached – page 23)
Working style of the scrutiny committee and a protocol for those attending scrutiny

Independence
Members of the Scrutiny Committee will not be subject to whipping arrangements by party groups.

Member leadership
Members of the Committee will take the lead in selecting topics for and in questioning witnesses. The Committee will expect members of Cabinet, rather than officers, to take the main responsibility for answering the Committee’s questions about topics, which relate mainly to the Council’s activities.

A constructive atmosphere
Meetings of the Committee will be constructive, and not judgmental, accepting that effective overview and scrutiny is best achieved through challenging and constructive enquiry. People giving evidence at the Committee should not feel under attack.

Respect and trust
Meetings will be conducted in a spirit of mutual respect and trust.

Openness and transparency
The Committee’s business will be open and transparent, except where there are sound reasons for protecting confidentiality. In particular, the minutes of the Committee’s meetings will explain the discussion and debate, so that it could be understood by those who were not present.

Consensus
Members of the Committee will work together and, while recognising political allegiances, will attempt to achieve consensus and agreed recommendations.

Impartial and independent officer advice
Officers who advise and support the Committee will give impartial and independent advice, recognising the importance of the Scrutiny Committee in the Council’s arrangements for governance, as set out in the Constitution.

Regular review
There will be regular reviews of how the overview and scrutiny process is working, and a willingness to change if it is not working well.

Programming and planning
The Scrutiny Committee will have a programme of work. Members will agree the topics to be included in the work programme, the extent of the investigation to be undertaken in relation to resources, and the witnesses to be invited to give evidence.

Managing time
The Committee will attempt to conclude the business of each meeting in reasonable time. The order of business will be arranged as far as possible to minimise the demands on the time of witnesses.
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AT MEETINGS

When declaring an interest at a meeting Members are asked to indicate whether their interest in the matter is pecuniary, or if the matter relates to, or affects a pecuniary interest they have, or if it is another type of interest. Members are required to identify the nature of the interest and the agenda item to which it relates. In the case of other interests, the member may speak and vote. If it is a pecuniary interest, the member must withdraw from the meeting when it is discussed. If it affects or relates to a pecuniary interest the member has, they have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public but must then withdraw from the meeting. Members are also requested when appropriate to make any declarations under the Code of Practice on Planning and Judicial matters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you declared the interest in the register of interests as a pecuniary interest? If Yes, you will need to withdraw from the room when it is discussed.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Does the interest directly:</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. affect yours, or your spouse / partner’s financial position?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or your spouse / partner?</td>
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<td>3. Relate to a contract you, or your spouse / partner have with the Council</td>
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<td>4. Affect land you or your spouse / partner own</td>
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<td>5. Affect a company that you or your partner own, or have a shareholding in</td>
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<td>If the answer is “yes” to any of the above, it is likely to be pecuniary.</td>
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<td>Please refer to the guidance given on declaring pecuniary interests in the register of interest forms. If you have a pecuniary interest, you will need to inform the meeting and then withdraw from the room when it is discussed. If it has not been previously declared, you will also need to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the interest indirectly affect or relate any pecuniary interest you have already declared, or an interest you have identified at 1-5 above?</td>
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<td>If yes, you need to inform the meeting. When it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but must then withdraw from the meeting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the interest not related to any of the above? If so, it is likely to be an other interest. You will need to declare the interest, but may participate in discussion and voting on the item.</td>
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<td>Have you made any statements or undertaken any actions that would indicate that you have a closed mind on a matter under discussion? If so, you may be predetermined on the issue; you will need to inform the meeting, and when it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but must then withdraw from the meeting.</td>
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FOR GUIDANCE REFER TO THE FLOWCHART OVERLEAF.
PLEASE REFER ANY QUERIES TO THE MONITORING OFFICER IN THE FIRST INSTANCE
DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

What matters are being discussed at the meeting?

Do any relate to an interest I have?

A  Have I declared it as a pecuniary interest?
   OR

B  Does it directly affect me, my partner or spouse’s financial position, in particular:
   •  employment, employers or businesses;
   •  companies in which they are a director or where they have a shareholding of more
     than £25,000 face value or more than 1% of nominal share holding
   •  land or leases they own or hold
   •  contracts, licenses, approvals or consents

Pecuniary Interest

YES

The interest is pecuniary – disclose the interest, withdraw from the meeting by leaving the room. Do not try to improperly influence the decision

If you have not already done so, notify the Monitoring Officer to update your declaration of interests

NO

Related pecuniary interest

YES

The interest is related to a pecuniary interest. Disclose the interest at the meeting. You may make representations as a member of the public, but then withdraw from the room

Does the matter indirectly affects or relates to a pecuniary interest I have declared, or a matter noted at B above?

NO

Other Interest

YES

The Interest is not pecuniary nor affects your pecuniary interests. Disclose the interest at the meeting. You may participate in the meeting and vote

Have I declared the interest as an other interest on my declaration of interest form? OR

Does it relate to a matter highlighted at B that impacts upon my family or a close associate? OR

Does it affect an organisation I am involved with or a member of? OR

Is it a matter I have been, or have lobbied on?

NO

You are unlikely to have an interest. You do not need to do anything further.
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE -

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee of South Norfolk District Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on 2 July 2014 at 9.30 am.

Committee Members Present: Councillors M Dewsbury (Chairman), L Hornby, B McClenning, A Pond, S Thomson, K Tilcock, G Watt, K Weeks and J Wilby

Apologies: Councillors T Lewis and M Windridge

Substitutes: Councillor M Gray (for T Lewis)

Cabinet Members in Attendance: Councillors Y Bendle, K Kiddie, M Wilby

Officers in Attendance: The Director of Growth & Localism (T Horpole), the Scrutiny Officer (E Goddard), the Communities Officer – Sport and Wellbeing (M Heazle), and the Communities and Active Life Manager (I Lambert)

Also in attendance: Mr M Shaw (Chairman) Whitlingham Charitable Trust
Mr R Bennett (Trustee) Whitlingham Charitable Trust

(the press and three members of the public were in attendance)

1116 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following members declared “other” interests in the matters listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Councillor</th>
<th>Minute</th>
<th>Declaration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S Thomson</td>
<td>1118</td>
<td>SNC representative on the Whitlingham Charitable Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Gray</td>
<td>1118</td>
<td>Member of the Broads Authority</td>
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1117 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings of the Scrutiny Committee held 21 May 2014, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
Cllr M Wilby introduced the item and welcomed two of the Whitlingham Charitable Trust (WCT) members to the meeting. He advised the Committee that the Country Park was a valuable and popular asset in the District and that he was pleased with the contents of the report and welcomed the opportunity to discuss the Council’s continued support for the work of the Trust.

The Communities and Active Life Manager advised members that the reason for the report was to ensure that during the renegotiation of the funding agreement with the WCT, there would be synergy with the Council’s corporate priorities, and that members would have the opportunity to consider and recommend measures/performance indicators for agreed outcomes.

The Committee was introduced to Mr Martin Shaw, Chairman of the Whitlingham Charitable Trust and Mr Rob Bennett, a trustee.

Mr Shaw gave an overview of the way in which the Trust worked and the management arrangements for the park, confirming that there were eight trustees in total, who met bi-monthly. The original vision for the park had been to provide quiet enjoyment for visitors. This presented the Trust with a challenge at times but the layout of the park had been carefully considered, ensuring that areas of intensive activity were close to the entrance of the park while the areas further away from the entrance were quieter and more peaceful.

Mr Shaw confirmed that the Broads Authority leased and managed the Flint Barn (visitor centre), and were also responsible under a service level agreement for the management of the land within the park, whilst Norfolk County Council managed the areas of water and operated the Outdoor Education Centre. Members were advised that the success of the park depended on the continued partnership working. Mr Shaw advised members that recent achievements included the upgrading of the roadway at Whitlingham Lane, improved footpaths throughout the park and a steady increase in visitor numbers. Numbers were calculated by a counter at the visitor centre which only gave numbers of those entering the Flint Barn, and not those who just visited the parkland/waters. It was considered however that this still gave a good indication of visitor numbers.

The Committee was informed that a public consultation exercise had recently been carried out at the park and feedback was mostly positive with the only major negative being a need for more public toilets. The Trust had responded to this by the provision of new toilets which were due to be ready for use within weeks.

Mr Bennett spoke of the financial challenges faced by the Trust in light of the increasing pressure on spending every year, whilst grant funding had reduced, and in some cases discontinued completely. He confirmed that the grant received from the Council last year had been vital to the Trust, and that they had managed to finish the year with a small surplus.

One of the major sources of income was from the Trust’s investment fund, which was a significant amount received by the Trust under the original endowment. Due to the ailing economy this income had reduced in recent years but trustees wanted to develop this income in future years. It was not envisaged that any of the capital invested would be spent in the foreseeable future.
Members discussed the WCT’s accounts and suggested looking for additional sources of funding such as the seeking of donations/legacies from visitors as well as looking into the possibility of holding concerts and ‘picnic in the park’ type events. Cllr Weeks suggested that the Trust should consider embarking on an advertising campaign to increase visitor numbers. Members were advised that the Trust was always looking for new ways to attract visitors and was working on improving the website, and returning to three year forecasts for commercial/business planning. The Committee discussed the merits of achieving Green Flag Award status. Members were confident that the park was already meeting the standards that would enable it to achieve this award and were generally of the view that it was not necessary for the Trust to reapply for this.

Members were advised that the car parking arrangement provided the Trust with its main vital source of income, helping with the funding of both maintenance and management of the park. There had been some recent difficulties in this regard through vandalism and theft at the park, and on one occasion the sum of £2000 was stolen from machines over a weekend. In the past income had also suffered when pay machines had been out of order.

Mr Bennett confirmed that car parking charges had remained the same since 2009. The Trust considered the charges payable each year, balancing the need for income from car parking charges against the desire to encourage access to the park. The Trustees were currently considering the possibility of increasing the chargeable parking times to 24 hours in order to capture fees from those parking before 8am and/or leaving after 8pm.

Cllr S Thomson advised members that visitors to the park had the option to purchase an annual parking pass for £30 which represented good value for frequent visitors, and that many people visited the park regularly to walk dogs. She advised that the park hosted large sports meetings/events from time to time which brought large numbers of participants and observers to the park. It was therefore essential to maintain the facilities in good order.

Cllr T Lewis (District member for Stoke Holy Cross ward which included most of the park) sent his apologies to the meeting but asked for his comments to be read to the Committee by Cllr Gray. He welcomed the report, and suggested that the Council should continue to support funding to the park, and should not await a third-party endorsement such as a Green Flag award. He considered that a commitment to ongoing funding by the Council would assist with the obtaining of other forms of recognition such as a Green Flag award.

Members discussed the issue of car parking at some length, focussing in detail on the Trust’s contract with ParkingEye. Mr Bennett confirmed that the contract had three further years to run, the arrangement being that the Trust received as income all monies raised from the sale of annual parking permits as well as the cash paid into machines. ParkingEye were entitled to retain any monies received from the penalty notices issued when a vehicle left the car park after the period paid for. ParkingEye provided and maintained all equipment and organised/managed cash collections. They were not responsible for any maintenance of the car park itself. The Trust paid approximately £10,000 per year to the Broads Authority in respect of the upkeep of the car park.

Members were advised that approximately £100,000 income per year was received by the Trust from the car parking arrangement, whilst ParkingEye received an income of approximately £90,000 per year from the penalty notices.
Cllr L Hornby was concerned that the vehicle plate registration system used by ParkingEye was very unpopular with the general public. He was also concerned that visitors to the park were being penalised significant amounts of money for being only a minute or two late back to their car, with the Council receiving a number of complaints and negative reports in the local press. Cllr Hornby suggested it would be preferable to employ an attendant to collect parking monies as visitors drove into the car park.

Mr Shaw confirmed that the majority of visitors to the park were generally happy, in principle, to pay for parking at the country park, but that there were two main issues. Firstly, the vehicle plate recognition system was very precise, and visitors had to pay the correct fee for the amount of time they spent at the park. If visitors stayed beyond the period up to which they had pre-paid, they were able to add additional payment retrospectively to ‘top up’ to the correct fee payable. Secondly, for those who left the car park having not paid the full amount, penalty notices were not issued if they were only one minute late. Mr Shaw advised that a certain amount of time was allowed before a penalty notice would be issued, although he was unable to confirm how many minutes ‘grace’ was given in such cases. He informed members that there had been a long history at the park of visitors avoiding paying for car parking at the park which meant that income had previously been lost. The ParkingEye system ensured a level of income that could be relied upon. Members were reassured that the penalty was waived when genuine mistakes or other mitigating situations had arisen.

Cllr K Weeks expressed concern that visitors and tourists who had received a penalty notice may have felt they had been treated badly and would not return. He felt that this damaged both the Council’s and the Whitlingham Country Park’s reputation. He restated the importance of good clear signage at the car parks.

Cllr Hornby moved, and was seconded by Cllr A Pond, that the Council should not provide any further funding to the Trust until the ParkingEye contract had either ceased or been significantly amended to the Council’s satisfaction. This motion was not supported by the Committee as the contract still had three years left to run and it did not appear that ParkingEye was in breach of the contract. Members were generally supportive of negotiations continuing between Council officers and Trustees before any further funding was agreed.

Members generally felt that it was important to improve the car parking signage which should clearly advise the public that they were able to ‘top up’ their parking fee retrospectively. The signs should also give a clear warning that penalty notices would be issued if they left the car park without having paid the full fee. Members also felt it was important that visitors understood how the parking monies were spent by the Trust and understood that the parking charges were a vital source of funding for the Trust, paying for the maintenance and management of the park.

Members were informed that a number of South Norfolk schools visited the park and that the forest school programme had proved very successful. The Trust was working on plans to improve and build on the outdoor classroom and also improve the infrastructure so that it could be better used by visiting schoolchildren.

Cllr Gray reminded the Committee of the many benefits the park brought to the residents of South Norfolk, and how supporting the park fitted in the Council’s priorities of enhancing the quality of life for its residents as well as promoting a thriving local economy. The park also served as a major hub for the Broads Authority.
Members discussed the suggestion that donations should be sought from visitors, and the importance of informing visitors how essential the monies received were, and how they would be used by the Trust.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. Endorse the contents of the report

2. Request that (before any further financial contribution is made by South Norfolk Council) the WCT and partners at the Broads Authority liaise with South Norfolk Council officers and the Council’s representative, Cllr S Thomson to:

   (i) Develop robust outcome measures and performance indicators with which the Council’s investment can be justified

   (ii) Consider
       - Improving signage regarding car park fees and how the park is funded
       - Seeking donations and legacy funding
       - Three-year financial forecasting
       - Increasing promotion of the park to increase visitor numbers
       - Installing cameras at the car parks to detect/deter crime

3. Receive a report on the outcome(s) of the above discussions at the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee scheduled to take place on 1 October 2014

### 1119 THE WELFARE REFORM AGENDA ONE YEAR ON - AN UPDATE

The item was introduced by Cllr Y Bendle, portfolio holder for Housing & Public Health, who advised members that the report gave a comprehensive look at the changes implemented this year, and the opportunity to review the impact on South Norfolk residents and the preventative work done by officers. She confirmed that officers had done exceptionally well during the welfare reform transition and in spite of the large workload, collection rates and claim processing figures remained above target.

Members were generally in agreement that the work of the officers within the Revenues and Benefits Team meant that many of the more vulnerable residents within the District were well supported and that officers should be commended.

**RESOLVED:**

To endorse the report and the work taken to implement the welfare reform agenda
1120 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND THE CABINET CORE AGENDA

Members noted the Scrutiny Committee Work Programme.

The Chairman advised members that Cllr C Kemp had been invited to a future meeting of the Committee to give a short presentation and answer questions from members on the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner in particular with regard to the number of PCSOs employed in South Norfolk, which had been an issue of some concern to members recently.

The Chairman suggested that Cllr Kemp should provide a presentation to a member briefing session later in the year.

(The meeting concluded at 12.00 pm)

Chairman
Agenda Item 5

South Norfolk Market Towns’ Initiative

Director of Growth and Localism

This report reviews the progress of the Council’s Market Towns Initiative (covering Diss, Harleston, Loddon and Wymondham) and outlines how it is proposed to develop the next phase of the initiative.

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<th>Cabinet member(s):</th>
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<tr>
<td>Martin Wilby, John Fuller</td>
<td>All</td>
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Contact Officer, telephone number, and e-mail:
Tim Horspole 01508533806 thorspole@s-nprfolk.gov.uk

1. - Purpose of Scrutiny
1.1. The purpose of scrutiny is that the Scrutiny Committee may gauge the views of the individuals on the teams with regard to how the project is going

2. - Scope of Scrutiny
2.1. The report summarises the progress of the Market Towns Initiative to date, and details the next phase.

3. - Findings
3.1 - Market Towns Initiative success so far
Phase 1 of the Market Towns Initiative has seen remarkable success, including:
- The establishment of strong town teams that have shaped the programme of events and interventions,
- The creation of a strong “brand” for each of the market towns, based on the unique offer they present,
- A series of events in the town centres that have drawn in large numbers of visitors,
- The improvement of the street scene, including signage and increased street cleaning,
- Capital investment programme including improved public toilets,
- The increase in capacity of high street shops using the skills academy,
- Strategic co-ordination of the individual local initiatives

The initiative also has established an evidence base that we hold for each of the market towns, which has led to the development of a bespoke performance measurement framework.

(See appendix for more detail of the work of the initiative.)

4.0 Drivers for change
Since the launch of the initiative several issues have arisen that suggest we need to review and refresh the current approach, making changes that will see the initiative develop. These drivers for change include:

- The need to deliver growth in our Market Towns in a manner that integrates the new housing areas into the existing town community.
- Need for a greater emphasis on drawing visitors to the towns, and increasing tourism.
- There is a need to widen the scope of the MTI, to include all sectors of economic growth and not solely focus on retail.
- Need for town teams to be sustainable in the long term, with a higher degree of autonomy
- The need to start “future proofing” our market towns to ensure they evolve to maximise their contribution to economic growth
- Changes to the Council’s approach to Community Development

This report makes recommendations that reinforce, reorganise and refresh the MTI and develop a distinct phase two of the programme. The refreshed MTI will capitalise on existing arrangements and will be developed in consultation with the local town teams. This project will run until March 2016

4.1 Revised Objectives
Taking account of the factors listed above it is proposed to amend the objectives of the Market Towns, the proposed objectives are:

- To ensure our market towns have economic vibrancy and vitality. We want to encourage and promote the economic and commercial vitality of the towns, which will not only serve residents but also benefit the rural areas surrounding the towns.
To develop projects that can maximise the investment from external funding opportunities. We want to use our investment of the New Homes Bonus to draw in additional funding into the district and to use growth to support our communities.

To protect and improve the high-quality environment the towns. We want to facilitate growth in our market towns to meet the needs of current and new residents, in a way that protects and enhances the distinct character of each of the towns.

To make our towns attractive and popular destinations for visitors and tourists. We want to promote the market towns individually and collectively to visitors, increasing the footfall and spending in the town centres.

To create a socially inclusive and caring communities in our market towns. We want to ensure our towns have strong communities, which are self-supporting, embrace existing and new residents and take on the responsibility for developing their well-being.

The revised objectives retain the themes of the initial phase of the initiative of physical improvements and co-ordinated events.

4.2 Governance and Structure

The refreshed strategy and second phase of the programme will be developed with town team partners. It is important to ensure that we take this opportunity to get the local management and co-ordination right. Initial work with partners will stress the importance of evidence based local & strategic action plans and the importance of monitoring and celebrating success. The main purpose of these governance and structural arrangements is to establish formal but flexible structures to ensure effective programme development and delivery with all parties understanding their role and their partners.

4.3 The initial phase will include:

Simple Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference will spell out that SNC can provide support to the management of complex initiatives initially but will skill up town teams to become self-sustaining in the future.

The terms of reference will be clear about the balance between funding local action plans and investment in larger scale initiatives by SNC to make sure it meets its objectives.

They will define a role for town teams in identifying local and district wide opportunities for external funding sources (including through the LEP).
which will be needed to sustain town teams beyond the lifespan / budget of New Homes Bonus.

These terms of reference will include confirmation that South Norfolk Council will form part of the Town Team, in each town, as a full and equal partner. These Terms of Reference will be clear that the aim is to create local teams that are sustainable in the long-term with SNC as partners but as more limited funders.

**Engagement with businesses in each Town**

South Norfolk Council will work with local Business Forums and the Town Teams to determine how local businesses, beyond the high street, can be flexibly engaged in the work of the Town Team without being tied to formal meetings and structures. This will necessitate effective ongoing communication channels with Business Forums.

### 4.4 SNC Internal Organisation

The realignment of the Communities Team has introduced the post of Head of Growth and Economic Development. This post is best placed to take the strategic lead for the MTI work. In addition, the “Head of” role will need “on the ground” support to deal with the day-to-day actions. It is, therefore, proposed to create a new role of Market Towns Co-ordinator, looking to appoint someone with a background in town centres management.

The Market Towns Co-ordinator will be the lead officer for the Market Towns Initiative, and would serve as the point of contact between the Council and the Town teams. It is proposed that this lead post is supported by the members of the Economic Development Group (which is made up of the Economic Development Officer, the funding Manager, heads of service and other senior officers, chaired by the Director of Growth and Localism). This ‘core group’ would be expected to meet regularly in the initial three months, co-ordinating SNCs contribution, as the second phase of the programme takes shape. However, thereafter the role should not be too onerous but allowance will need to be made for the additional time commitment. This group will be responsible for ensuring inter-departmental coordination and co-operation.

### 4.5 New Homes Bonus Investment

It is recommended that South Norfolk Council’s investment be split in two ways:

**Local Action Plans**

The first is a top slice of the NHB budget to fund South Norfolk Council’s contribution to local Action Plans developed by the Town Teams with
appropriate involvement from SNC representatives. These local action plans would include relatively small, locally responsive initiatives (based on locally identified need) and the current “Harleston’s Future Action Plan” provides a precedent for such local planning – it is recommended that the investment be £20,000 per town which equates to approximately 10% of the NHB investment identified for community investment in 2015/16.

**South Norfolk Council’s Investment Priorities**

In addition to making funds available to provide a contribution to locally developed action plans, SNC will also have its own programme of investment across the Market Towns. This programme would constitute around 90% of the NHB funding and while initiatives may be developed at a local level, and differ from town to town, the broad approach will be consistent across the towns and will in accordance with the Council’s priorities. In essence the money will fund physical improvements and events.

One of the key characteristics of this investment is sustainability. At this time there has been no decision on New Homes Bonus investment 2016/17 and all initiatives development in the meantime need to avoid ongoing commitment and foster sustainability for the future.

4.6 - **South Norfolk Council Priorities for Investment.**

South Norfolk Council remains committed to investing a proportion of its New Homes Bonus money to the market towns of South Norfolk to achieve the objectives identified above. The focus will continue to be on the four towns of Diss, Harleston, Loddon and Wymondham. However it is also recognised that it may be appropriate to fund initiatives in other towns, such as Hingham and Long Stratton (or even Poringland and Costessy) either as part of a wider district initiative or because a particularly innovative or pressing scheme has emerged from one of these communities.

4.7 - It is proposed that the key focus of the Council’s investment remains as physical improvements to the environment of our market towns and events (including promotion) of the towns. The intended outcomes will include:

- New campaigns to maintain and enhance economic, cultural and social vibrancy within the towns
- Increased community capacity in the towns, with an increase in the numbers of volunteers engaged on improving the fabric of the town and supporting vulnerable residents (such as the young and elderly).
- Physical projects to broaden economic opportunities which will sustain into the future, for example, improved broadband services.
- Establishing effective links with NALEP and other strategic partners to identify and secure external sources of funding for MTI initiatives; and
- Self-sustainable towns, not reliant on continuing SNC funding.

4.8 - Initial proposals emerging from officer work and recommendations from consultants Ingham/Pinnock (funded by DCLG) The potential proposals include:

4.9 **New Campaigns:**

A campaign of events for the rest of the calendar year has been initiated, and includes a mix of SNC delivery and (increasingly) delivery by others. All of the towns have capacity for organising quality events and SNC’s role will increasingly be one of facilitation. Some of the proposed activities include:

- Discovery days, Shop South Norfolk
- Retailer Awards, Lets Go To Market - East Anglian Film Archive
- A Taste of South Norfolk, Happy Halloween
- Towns of Christmas Spirit

4.10 **Physical Projects:**

In response to the focus of phase one of the MTI on softer projects and programmes where practicable these strategies need to focus more on physical interventions. The action plans might seek to include achievable physical projects examples of which might include:

- Undertaking targeted soft market testing with prospective inward investment and brokering relationships between investors and existing landowners / tenants
- Addressing prominent vacant or derelict properties and developing individual strategies for their redevelopment / reuse
- Undertaking works to improve gateways to towns, employment estates and town centres – including Highways signage
- Establishing regeneration or restoration programmes for key spaces and historic buildings and preparing applications for funding from relevant agencies such as HLF
- Undertaking de-cluttering and minor public realm works such as the introduction of lighting and landscaping.
- Invest in cycling facilities – racks, shelters etc – and ensure the promotion and up keep of cycle trails.
4.11 Links to NALEP and other strategic partners

The refreshed strategy should include strong links with NALEP and other strategic partners to ensure that economic growth opportunities are maximised and funding opportunities exploited. The role identified for the new Head of Growth and Economic Development should facilitate this along with support from colleagues, the Funding Manager and SNC’s prominent position on the LEP Board. Specifically, Ingham Pinnock Associates identified the need to:

- increase awareness of NALEP locally
- Raise the profile of market towns economies and potential capital projects with NALEP
- Tailor proposals to suit its strategic ambitions:
  - Tourism, food and drink, an important component of the local economy
  - Increasing e-commerce, particularly pertinent to traditional high street retailers
  - SMEs in priority sectors (advanced manufacturing / engineering, energy, ICT and digital creative, life sciences, food and agri-tech)
- Explore possibilities under Greater Norwich City Deal eg capital investment in public realm projects.
- Identify and support inward investment:
  - Soft market testing and directly engaging investors
  - Promoting heritage and higher value added opportunities
  - Working with UKTI on local economic specialisation

4.12 Establishing self-sustainability – focusing more widely than retail/high street;

A key recommendation is that SNC invests in building capacity within communities. The focus of this component is investment in skilling up the Town Teams/Town Councils and other community leaders to become self-sustaining. Proposals include:

- using some of the Retail Skills Academy programmes including social media training for Town Councils/Town Teams/community leaders including:
  - Following up each RSA programme every two months to see what businesses are doing with the learning.
Scrutiny Committee
1 October 2014

• Using “graduating” businesses in an ambassadorial role – mentoring
• Coaching in how to use LinkedIn
• Fostering independent mystery shopping programmes.
• Holding Retailer Awards – on the back of RSA training.
• Promoting and monitoring take up of the Enterprise Norfolk offer
• Creating “toolkits” for Market Towns – PR, Marketing etc

• Facilitating Crowd Funding;
• Helping new start-ups – help them to “pop up” then move on to leasing premises;
• Establishing a Town Team marketing group in each Town.
• Developing “Concierge – style” services – other services eg business services too.
• Seeking charitable status for Town Teams to facilitate greater fundraising potential.

4.13 Building economic capacity and self-sustainability sits alongside the need for wider community capacity to be built. The Early Help agenda will be highly pertinent to the Market Towns and it is proposed that investment be made in capacity building and particularly in the establishment of Early Help hubs in other market towns following the implementation of the Hub in Diss.

4.14 - Funding/Budget

It is proposed that as part of the revised MTI Strategy funding will be released following Cabinet’s approval of an overall programme in a way which will allow proposals and single initiatives to be taken forward without the need for further formal Member approval. Broad criteria which address the objectives of the MTI should be agreed by Cabinet following which spend will be delegated to officers subject to existing delegation levels and scrutiny and monitoring by Members. Member oversight would continue to be provided through Growth and Localism Committee and the Scrutiny committee.

5. - Relevant Corporate Priorities

5.1. Enhancing our quality of life and the environment we live in.

5.2. Promoting a thriving local economy.
   Supporting communities to realise their potential.

6. - Conclusion

6.1. Market Towns Initiative has had a positive impact on the vitality and vibrancy to the five towns, and has a good basis to develop further.

7. - Action Required

7.1. Scrutiny Committee to evaluate and make recommendations as it feels fit.
Appendix
Market Towns Initiative

Delivered to date:

Benchmarking

In May we commissioned Towns Alive (formerly Action for Market Towns) to conduct a benchmarking survey for Loddon, Wymondham and Harleston to give us baseline data by which to measure the success of the Market Towns Initiative. Diss commissioned their survey separately with funds achieved through the Portas Pilots in 2013.

The resulting reports provide valuable insight into the current performance in each town and have been shared with key groups. The reports measure performance against 12 KPIs – including footfall – and progress will be monitored year on year.

Support for businesses

Since December we have offered a programme of specially targeted training to support retail businesses in our towns delivered by the Retail Skills Academy – part of City College, Norwich.

In total we have delivered courses on four themes, each over a variety of dates and times to best suit retail businesses. Courses have been delivered on

- Window dressing
- Social media for retail
- Advanced Visual Merchandising
- Selling

Over 100 participants from 43 different retailers across the four market towns have attended and participated.

Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and many retailers have participated in multiple courses.

- “An amazing opportunity from the council.”
- “Looking forward to attending more courses in the future, excellent.”
- “A good opportunity from the council – we would like to continue.”
- “Worth our time and the South Norfolk District Councils money.”
- “Very valuable course to a new business like myself.”

Support for organisations

Event Management Workshop

At the end of January, we held an Event Management Workshop for community groups and organisations based in our Market Towns to provide support and
guidance on promoting events, licensing, risk assessments and programming creative content.

57 participants from community organisations across South Norfolk attended the workshop.

Events to drive footfall

Since January we have delivered more than 25 individual events in our Market Towns to drive footfall and to attract new visitors. In addition we have worked with organisations such as the Norfolk & Norwich Festival to bring six Festival events, including a free family fun day in Diss attracting more than 300 people, and four schools workshops to the towns. We also worked with local agency The Lively Crew who engaged students in Diss and Wymondham to encourage visitors to celebrate what they 'love' the most about their town.

We have focussed our efforts in supporting key retail trading periods – eg Christmas, Easter, School holidays – driving footfall in to the towns to support businesses. We have worked in partnership with a range of retailers in each town to promote trails around the town centres, helping visitors to discover new shops and raising awareness of what each town has to offer. During the two-week Easter period more than 1300 participants took part in trails around Wymondham, Loddon and Diss – each town trail included 10 individual businesses.

- “A lot of people that never come up to this end of town have visited - albeit briefly but they have been surprised at how much there is to see in St Nicholas Street.” Rags, Bows & Curios, Diss
- “Brings customers into the shop including new customers who haven't been in before.” Yum Yums, Wymondham
- “Good footfall down this end of town.” The Lemon Tree, Wymondham
- “Brought a lot of people in.” Loddon Garden & Seed Centre

Over the summer holidays we worked on a smaller trail across the 4 towns and saw over 300 families participating.

- “It was lovely to see families in the shop, many for the first time. We would be keen to take part in other initiatives.” Jewellery Workshop, Diss.
- “The trail was busy but because it was spread out over a longer period of time it was more manageable than the Easter trail, which was sometimes too busy to cope with as we had a lot of customers over this busy period.” Claire’s Sugarcraft, Diss
- “Definitely helped business-wise. Bringing children and parents into the shop. Sales have been boosted due to the campaign.” Roy Minshull

In May we engaged with the national focus on markets by participating in ‘Love Your Local Market’ fortnight. We helped to create additional interest and focus on our markets with the help of a cookery theatre and music, and by working with schools to create dishes from produce sold on the markets.
“appreciate you (SNC) trying to do something to support us.” Mark Gilbert, Market trader

“Street activities hold people in the town.” Robert Hollingworth, Market Trader.

Further events

- Festive Fusion
- Indoor Theatre – February Half Term
- National Science & Engineering Week
- South Norfolk on Show
- Summer Outdoor theatre

Individual town identities

We have supported each town to each create a strong and effective new identity which is meaningful to residents, visitors and businesses. We engaged the professional support of Norwich based marketing and branding agency, Balloon Dog, to build upon the initial findings from our town walkarounds and meetings last summer, and to work with groupings in each town to identify the things that are truly unique and special about it.

Through this process we were also able to develop an identity for the Market Towns Initiative itself – South Norfolk Market Towns of Character - which will help to raise the profile of our work.

Town Identities

- Wymondham – A Market Town Apart
- Loddon – Perfectly Placed
- Harleston – Time for everyone
- Diss – A Market Town at Heart

We will now support each town to ensure that the maximum benefit is obtained from this.

VisitNorwich.co.uk

We continue to work with VisitNorwich to ensure that the website is an effective portal to information about South Norfolk.

In August there were 41,567 visits to the site by 34,698 individual users. 75% of these visits were by new visitors. Market Towns was the 10th most visited page across the site in this month with 1178 views. The Diss page attracted 366 views, Wymondham 228 views, Harleston 210 views and Loddon 249 views.

The site provides the content for the TIPs in Wymondham and Diss.
Scrutiny Committee – Work Programme

In setting future Scrutiny TOPICS, the Committee is asked to consider the following: T imely – O bjective – P erformance – I nterest – C orporate Priority?

T Is this the right time to review this issue and is there sufficient Officer time and resource to conduct the review? What is the timescale?

O What is the reason for review; do officers have a clear objective?

P Can performance in this area be improved by input from Scrutiny?

I Is there sufficient interest (particular from the public)? The concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen for scrutiny.

C Will the review assist the Council achieve its Corporate Priorities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of meeting</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Organisation / Officer / Responsible Cabinet Member</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Method(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Oct 14</td>
<td>Market Towns Initiative</td>
<td>Director of Growth and Localism and Cllr M Wilby</td>
<td>For members to receive an update on the Market Towns Initiative and evaluate forward planning regarding the scheme.</td>
<td>Officer report</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 Nov 14 (Friday)</td>
<td>Review of nplaw: update</td>
<td>Compliance and Risk Manager &amp; Cllr G Wheatley</td>
<td>For members to consider a review of nplaw since the last scrutiny review in November 2013, including the performance of the service received from nplaw, satisfaction levels, savings achieved, impact on resilience and the reliance on legal advice from Solicitors.</td>
<td>Officer report</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 Nov 14 (Friday)</td>
<td>Whitlingham Charitable Trust Funding Agreement</td>
<td>The Communities Officer - Sport and Wellbeing &amp; Cllr M Wilby</td>
<td>For Scrutiny Committee members to consider the outcome of discussions with Whitlingham Charitable Trust regarding its acceptance or otherwise of the Committee’s recommendations following its review in July 2014.</td>
<td>Officer report</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 Dec 14 (Monday)</td>
<td>No items scheduled</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 2015</td>
<td>No items scheduled</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 Feb 15</td>
<td>Budget 2015/16</td>
<td>Head of Finance &amp; Cllr G Wheatley</td>
<td>For members to consider the Council’s 2015/16 budget and the recommendations of Cabinet. For Scrutiny Committee to make its own recommendations to Council regarding the budget for consideration at its meeting at the end of February 2015.</td>
<td>Officer report</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2015</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Working Review</td>
<td>Compliance and Risk Manager &amp; Cllr M Wilby</td>
<td>Members to review the new way of neighbourhood working, particularly the criteria for allocating funding from both budgets, how members and the Chairmen have worked together, and the outcomes that have been achieved.</td>
<td>Officer report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date to be confirmed</td>
<td>CNC regional hub progress</td>
<td>Business Development Manager &amp; Cllr D Bills</td>
<td>Members to consider a report on progress and options regarding CNC Building Control establishing a regional hub with a view to establishing a recommendation from the Committee regarding this.</td>
<td>Officer report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Responsible Officer &amp; Committee</td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>Progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 May 2014</td>
<td>Review of South Norfolk Job Clubs</td>
<td>Mike Pursehouse</td>
<td>1. endorse the report; 2. support the approach of developing a more targeted ‘jobs service’ as part of the early-help integrated approach; 3. recommend that officers consider: - establishing targets and ensuring these are monitored; - requesting that the provider collect information regarding repeat attendees so reporting can be standardised; - improving advertising and creating an identity; - evaluating the focus of the Jobs Clubs and developing them to become more interactive; - attending schools to promote the service at an early stage; - exploring the possibility of developing two schemes – one for young people and another to cater for more mature adults.</td>
<td>A review of job clubs is being carried out in autumn 2014 to bring the agenda much closer towards the early help work. The main theme of early help running through the programme is economic resilience and so job clubs are an integral part of this work. Future focus will be on working with individuals (both young and old) who are nearly work ready, to provide the final piece of support to get them into work or training. The review will also look at how we engage businesses to understand current and future need.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 July 2014</td>
<td>Review of Whitlingham Charitable Trust Funding</td>
<td>Mark Heazle</td>
<td>1. Endorse the contents of the report 2. Request that (before any further financial contribution is made by South Norfolk Council) the WCT and partners at the Broads Authority</td>
<td>Officers and the Council’s member representative are yet to meet with representatives of Trust and therefore no funding has been made yet.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Responsible Officer &amp; Committee</td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>Progress</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agreement</td>
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<td>liaise with South Norfolk Council officers and the Council’s representative, Cllr S Thomson to:</td>
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<td>(i) Develop robust outcome measures and performance indicators with which the Council’s investment can be justified</td>
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<td>(ii) Consider</td>
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<td>• Improving signage regarding car park fees and how the park is funded</td>
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<td>• Seeking donations and legacy funding</td>
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<td>• Three-year financial forecasting</td>
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<td>• Increasing promotion of the park to increase visitor numbers</td>
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<td>• Installing cameras at the car parks to detect/deter crime</td>
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<td>3. Receive a report on the outcome(s) of the above discussions at the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee scheduled to take place on 1 October 2014.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 July 2014</td>
<td>The welfare reform agenda one year on - an update</td>
<td>Amanda Adams</td>
<td>To endorse the report and the work taken to implement the welfare reform agenda</td>
<td>No action required</td>
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### CABINET CORE AGENDA 2014 -

<table>
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<th>Decisions: Key, Policy, Operational</th>
<th>Key Decision/Item</th>
<th>Lead Officer</th>
<th>Cabinet Member</th>
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<td><strong>Committee</strong></td>
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<td><strong>15 Oct</strong></td>
<td>O Pre-Application Planning Charges</td>
<td>T Horspole</td>
<td>K Kiddie</td>
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<td>O Performance Risk and Revenue</td>
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<td>D Lorimer /</td>
<td>G Wheatley</td>
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<td>O Budget Quarter 2 2014/15</td>
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<td>W Salmons /</td>
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<td>O E Goddard</td>
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<td>G Wheatley</td>
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<tr>
<td>O Capital Report Quarter 2 2014/15</td>
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<td>D Lorimer</td>
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<tr>
<td>O Treasury Management Report</td>
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<td>M Fernandez-</td>
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<tr>
<td>O Quarter 2 2014/15</td>
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<td>Graham</td>
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<td>O A11 Growth Corridor</td>
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<td>N Cunningham</td>
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<td>O Changes in Community Grants</td>
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<td>O JVC/Frameworks (Exempt)</td>
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<td>R Garfoot</td>
<td>G Wheatley</td>
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<tr>
<td>O Audit Procurement (Exempt)</td>
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<td>E Hodds</td>
<td>G Wheatley</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>8 Dec</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FULL COUNCIL 15 DECEMBER</strong></td>
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</table>

Key decisions are those which result in income, expenditure or savings with a gross full year effect of £100,000 or 10% of the Council’s net portfolio budget whichever is the greater which has not been included in the relevant portfolio budget, or are significant (e.g. in environmental, physical, social or economic) in terms of its effect on the communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral divisions in the area of the local authority.