

# **The New Strategic Direction Explained**

**Council services to be delivered  
differently in the future**

# Council services to be delivered differently in the future

Suffolk County Council's New Strategic Direction (NSD) is about people coming together to get Suffolk through the crisis that will be generated by public spending cuts. It is also about developing a different way of working that will see the role of the council change in the long term.

In the face of a 28% reduction in funding for local government over the next four years (around £110 million for Suffolk County Council) the council faces some difficult decisions. Doing nothing is not an option, if we don't face up to the problem we will make the situation worse and if we just cut the costs of services, the most vulnerable in our communities will suffer. This leaves us with the option of finding another way to cut the cost of delivering services so that we can maintain as many services as possible - particularly for those who need them the most. The New Strategic Direction is our new way of working.

On 23 September Suffolk County Council made a decision to adopt the New Strategic Direction. This decision will change the way the council will operate in the future so that it can

maintain the quality of its services in an era where there will be much less money to spend. The change renews the existing drive to cut out waste and bureaucracy. It will give the people of Suffolk a stronger say in how services are delivered and it introduces different ways of providing services.

This document explains the New Strategic Direction in more detail, using practical examples of how it has worked in Suffolk and elsewhere.

Staff, councillors and our partners will have a crucial role in sharing information about the council's New Strategic Direction and facilitating conversations with our communities.

## Setting the scene

### The national picture

In June the Coalition Government's emergency budget was announced. The urgent need to repay the country's debt meant that £6.2 billion of savings needed to be made this year. Local government's share of these savings is £1.165 billion. Suffolk County Council was required to contribute by reducing its budget by £1.1 million in 2010/2011.

Further reductions have been confirmed in the Comprehensive Spending Review, amounting to a reduction in funding to local government of 28% over the next four years.

### What does it mean for us?

Demand for our services continues to rise and now that we have to cope with a reduction in our funding we cannot operate as we have done in the past. If we do then the quality and extent of the service we provide will suffer dramatically.

We could take the easy option and cut services across the board. Rather than do that we are aiming to save money through focusing on the things that really matter to people, re-designing services so that they cost less and work better and asking people to get involved.

### Our new way of working

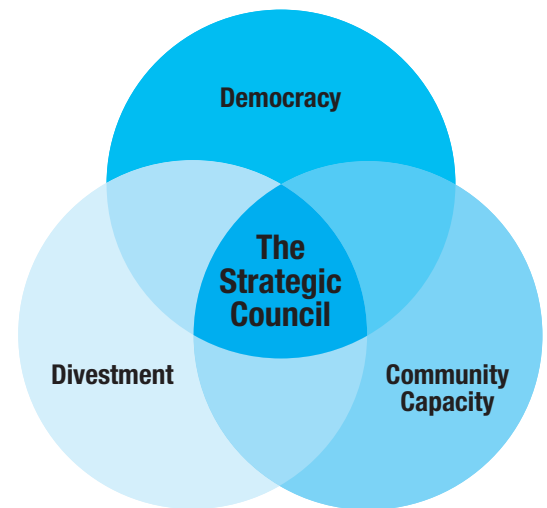
The council will look very different in the future. It will still provide strong political leadership, determine strategic priorities and funding to new service providers and inform people about how services are performing so that they can make informed choices.

Our approach has three themes: democracy, divestment and community capacity.

- Democracy means the role of the local county councillor will become more important.
- Divestment means that some council services which are currently delivered by the council will be delivered outside of the organisation through social enterprises, charities, community organisations and the private sector.
- Community capacity means giving communities more say and choice over services by delegating budgets and transferring assets.

# Democracy

In the future, the council will continue to make important decisions and as such democracy must remain at the heart of the council. The council's emphasis on local solutions for local areas places an added importance on the role of all elected members as community leaders. Councillors will be encouraged and supported to work closely with their community to facilitate solutions to local problems and mobilise community involvement.



# Divestment

Some services which are currently delivered by the council will be delivered outside of the organisation through social enterprises, charities, community organisations and the private sector. For example, a community could decide to take on the running of their local library, or staff from a service could decide they could run it more efficiently on their own. This will happen with help and guidance from the county council and we will still be responsible for ensuring quality standards are met.

There are 6 reasons why this will benefit the council and the community. It will:

1. reduce the overheads of being in a large organisation – currently services delivered within the council, in common with any large organisation, carry significant overheads. By moving services out of the council they can be delivered without the same financial burden.
2. change the role of the council from an organisation that provides services to one which focuses on its role as a community leader and advocate - as it stands the council both delivers and rations services, enables but also regulates local initiatives and empowers communities through grants but constrains development by enforcing compliance. Divestment enables us to simplify these relationships and be clearer about our role.
3. create more localised and joined up public services - it has been acknowledged for some time that there are divides between services which do not make sense to customers. Divestment gives us the opportunity to bring previously separate services together in a practical way.
4. hand back responsibility to our residents and communities – in recent years central and local government has taken too much upon itself. The consequences have been ever increasing expectations and cost. Divestment opens the way to strike a new balance with communities between what government does and what is best done by the private and independent sectors and local communities.
5. unlock staff creativity, know-how and experience - divestment gives us an opportunity to re-design service provision, shifting resources into the hands of the people that will make the best use of them. By freeing our staff from the restrictions of a big bureaucratic organisation we can draw on their creativity and knowledge.
6. financially empower those who use services and pay providers by results - many council services focus on inputs, volume and activity which have stifled innovation. Through divestment we have the opportunity in the future to pay by results, to specify what we want from our services and leave service providers to be creative and innovative.

# Community Capacity

We are aiming to inspire and support communities to take the lead themselves, without continuous intervention from the county council. We want to promote volunteering and active communities alongside services being provided on a much more local level, and better suited to the local needs.

# Strategic Council

If many of the services that the council currently delivers are moved outside of the organisation, the size and role of the council will change.

The Strategic council will maintain relationships with those who are providing services, ensuring that quality is maintained and that value for money is delivered.

Strategic decisions on the future of Suffolk services will remain with the council, however we will be working with communities and individuals to do more for themselves.

Personalised budgets will be given to individuals so that they can choose which services they want to purchase and communities will be able to influence local decision making and the allocation of local budgets.

## What next?

We will be taking every opportunity to have a conversation with our communities and stakeholders to explore the opportunities presented by our new way of working and to address any concerns. We want to engage with communities across the geography of Suffolk and its interest groups.

As we move forward with the divestment programme there is a commitment to engage stakeholders, both provider of services and potential customers prior to any decisions being made about any specific services.

More information about how we intend to do this is outlined in the Engagement Strategy and Action Plan which is on the council's website at [www.suffolk.gov.uk/newstrategicdirection](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/newstrategicdirection)

There is also an opportunity on our website to share your thoughts on our new way of working. Results received during November will be reported to Suffolk County Council on the 2 December 2010.

If you don't have online access, there is a hard copy of the survey attached to the back of this document which can be returned FREEPOST.

# Glossary

## Big society (smaller government)

Giving communities a bigger say and a greater part to play in delivering services. It is less about the county council determining what services people need and more about individuals and communities deciding what they need and having the resources to achieve it.

## Localism

Taking a more local community based approach to delivering services.

## Social capital

Capacity that comes from strong, mutually supportive networks, which encourage people to get involved, volunteer and work together.

## Local democracy

A bigger role for local elected members and their communities in the decisions which affect their local area.

## Community capacity

A resource that enables communities to have more control over services, assets and budgets.

## Social enterprise

A business driven by a social or environmental purpose, where profits are put back towards that purpose.

## Community Interest Company (CIC)

Limited companies, created for the use of people who want a business or other activity to have a community benefit, and not to just be for private advantage. Examples include Stutton Community Shop.

# Case studies - Divestment and community capacity in action

We've put together a few examples of where creative solutions to service delivery have met with positive results. Not all the examples relate to council services, however they demonstrate the opportunities that divestment and building community capacity presents.

## Examples from outside Suffolk

### Sunlight Development

**An example of where a public organisation has divested services to a Trust that is also involved in social enterprise and community capacity building.**

Based in Gillingham, Kent, Sunlight Development Trust aims to reduce health and social inequalities and improve local well-being through a range of social, medical and community activities. Although it works in partnership with other local agencies and businesses it has a strong ethos of self-help and self-direction. The Trust was originally founded as Project Sunlight in 1999, a Healthy Living Centre partnership project between Medway Council, Medway Council for Voluntary Service and Medway PCT. It became independent in 2006.

In 2007, the Trust set up Sunlight Social Enterprises, which manages a diverse business portfolio offering training and employment for local people whilst generating a trading surplus which it returns to the Trust for community development, networking and support services.

At present, there are five businesses operating under the Sunlight Social Enterprise umbrella:

- Café Sunlight: A network of four cafés across the Medway area, which provide training, volunteering and vocational placements and buys local food whenever it can.
- Sunlight Studios: A professional recording facility, offering recording services, rehearsal space, music workshops, CD duplication, graphic design and work experience opportunities.
- Parentis: Provides parenting courses for parents and carers, and outreach practitioner training for staff in children's centres.
- Sunlight Media Hub: Provides video and new media services, and marketing and design services for printed or online use.
- Sunlight People: Offering training, workshops and consultancy services.

As of 2008-09, the Sunlight's activities encompassed over 130 different groups. 70% of Sunlight's activities and services are run by the local community. But it also houses direct primary care services, a GP practice, and is under contract to the PCT to provide health prevention services.

In 2008-09 Sunlight had a combined turnover of £1.3m and supported the delivery of £2m of external funding in the area. In the same year, Sunlight's social enterprise businesses generated £600k of income.

For further information: [www.sunlighttrust.org.uk](http://www.sunlighttrust.org.uk)

### Central Surrey Health

**An example of where two public organisations have come together to divest services into a limited company, with staff as co-owners.**

Central Surrey Health is a not-for-profit limited liability company, set up in 2006, and under contract to provide community nursing and therapy services on behalf of NHS Surrey and other partners, including Surrey County Council.

It employs around 770 co-owners, including district nurses, school nurses, community hospital nurses, nursery nurses, physiotherapists, dieticians, speech therapists, and support and administration staff, all of whom previously delivered such services from within the local PCT.

On transferring to the new company, all members of staff received a single share, and as co-owners are now collectively responsible for the delivery of services and shaping the company's future.

For further information visit: [www.centralsurreyhealth.nhs.uk](http://www.centralsurreyhealth.nhs.uk)

## Disability Action Yorkshire

**This project is an example of social enterprise which provides services for disabled people.**

Disability Action Yorkshire, based in Thirsk, is a charity and social enterprise that provides services for disabled people in Yorkshire, with a view to helping them live the lifestyle of their choosing. Services include:

- **Spot On:** A social enterprise that offers commercial design, print, packaging and mailing services as a means of providing employment training opportunities for disabled people, including IT, Health & Safety, packing, quality control, stock control and basic administration. It also works with local businesses to provide work taster sessions and wider work experience placements.
- **Alpha Care:** A domiciliary care service providing personal care, domestic support, shopping service and companionship for disabled people.
- **Claro Road:** A care home for adults aged between 18 and 65 with physical disabilities. It aims to develop independent living skills to allow people to move into community or supported accommodation.
- Administration of CRB disclosure checks for local organisations.

For further information visit:

[www.disabilityactionyorkshire.org.uk](http://www.disabilityactionyorkshire.org.uk)

## Wycombe Leisure Limited

**An example of how a not-for-profit company was able to retain facilities for community use by delivering them cheaper than the public sector.**

Wycombe Leisure Ltd was founded in 1996 after Wycombe District Council concluded that operating leisure centres through its own DSO was no longer sustainable.

It is registered as an Industrial Provident Society and operates as a non-profit distributing company, whereby all surpluses are returned to the services operated. This can take the form of capital investment or improvements to service levels. Employees can buy a share in the society, which entitles them to attend and vote at the AGM, but which are not redeemable or transferable and receive no interest or dividend.

The society is run by a Management Board that consist of 10 staff members, 3 customer members (elected from and by users of the society's facilities) and 3 local authority members nominated by the authorities in whose areas the society is active. The Board agrees the society's strategy and annual business and financial plans. Delivery against these plans is by specialist directors and their support teams, such as Finance, Operations, HR, and Commercial.

Wycombe Leisure Limited is classed as a charity for Corporation Tax, enjoys partial exemption from VAT and

receives NNDR rebates of between 80% and 100%.

The society now operates facilities for four local authorities as well as a number of schools and community groups and claims that 95% of income is derived from trading as opposed to grant funding. Annual turnover is around £14m.

For further information visit: [www.nexuscommunity.co.uk](http://www.nexuscommunity.co.uk)

## Local Area Co-ordinators

**An example of how a local approach to service delivery can result in improvements to the quality of the service, whilst also reducing costs.**

In Western Australia, as in other developed countries, the costs of residential social care far exceed the cost of care provided for people in the community. Faced with constrained resources, the Western Australia government took a radical approach to rebalancing the provision of residential to non-residential care in providing services for people with learning disabilities.

They appointed government-trained 'Local Area Coordinators' (LACs) to act as a local point of contact in a community, to plan and organise care services around the needs of the service user. Local Area Coordinators have been able to draw on people's existing resources and networks and to build specialist skills for self-management of care amongst individuals, their families and friends.

Rather than waiting for people to fall into crisis, Local Area Coordination is designed to help people stay strong and make communities more resilient in coping with needs. With the introduction of Local Area Coordinators, the Western Australia government realised a 35 per cent cost saving from traditional social service-led approaches to delivering care. From their position within the community, LACs were also able to access traditionally hard-to-reach people, advancing the take-up rate of community services and preventative care.

LACs are already being piloted in Scotland and in Middlesbrough. The Scottish Government is currently undertaking a review of the programme which is starting to generate remarkable cost implications.

The total cost of a social care package in Scotland is on average £35,525 compared to the £250 per capita cost of the LAC programme. By decentralising the coordination of services, having a deeper and more personal relationship with service users to determine their needs and simplifying access to care, Local Area Coordinators are having a radical effect on the way in which services are organised, keeping costs down and improving the lives of people who use them.

This example was taken from the discussion paper 'Schumpeter Comes to Whitehall: Cuts and Innovation in Public Services' published by NESTA

[www.nesta.org.uk/publications](http://www.nesta.org.uk/publications)

## Restorative Justice – starting with social solutions to reduce demand for services

**An example of where local communities have been active in dealing with local problems, and helped to reduce the financial burden to the tax payer.**

Restorative justice is an approach to justice already being used in many communities in the UK. Restorative justice sets up a safe, controlled environment where the anger, trauma and guilt surrounding an offence can be addressed and redressed by victim and offender.

It takes into account the social, psychological and emotional damage caused by offending and encourages offenders to assume active responsibility for their actions, drastically reducing re-offending rates. Encouraging discussion about an offender's motivations exposes other social issues where useful intervention could be made – patterns of unemployment in the area, drug or alcohol problems or underperformance in schools, for example:-

In the Somerset town of Chard, local Community Justice Panels are incorporating some of the most effective practices in restorative justice, encouraging local people to take responsibility for justice and building community capacity to rehabilitate and understand the needs of offenders.

The Community Justice Panels deal with cases sent by the police, local authorities and housing associations where offenders have accepted that they are guilty. Dealing with these cases in a restorative manner diverts offenders from incarceration, tackles local fear of crime and prevents re-offending. Chard's practice remains specific to the local area, but the principles of the Community Justice Panel have been adopted across other parts of Somerset and have spread to Sheffield.

Evaluations of restorative justice practices by the Ministry of Justice have found an average fall of 27% in re-offending rates and the Restorative Justice Consortium estimates that every £1 spent on restorative 'Conferences' (where the offender's family and peers are brought together to map out a plan to prevent re-offending) saves £9 in reducing reconviction costs. As every offence leading to reconviction costs the UK justice.

This example comes from the discussion paper 'Small is Beautiful – Innovation from the frontline of local government' written by Glyn Gaskarth, Local Government Information Unit [www.nesta.org.uk/news\\_events/assets/events/small\\_is\\_beautiful\\_-\\_innovation\\_in\\_local\\_government](http://www.nesta.org.uk/news_events/assets/events/small_is_beautiful_-_innovation_in_local_government)

## Suffolk examples

There are many examples of community capacity and divestment in action around Suffolk too...

### Grow your own enterprise

**A social enterprise which supports the local economy and provides employment for those disadvantaged in the job market.**

Developing a successful horticulture enterprise has provided a unique opportunity for people with learning disabilities to spend their days out in the fresh air and learn skills for employment.

Growing Places originally opened in 1998 following a successful bid for European funding. When the funding ran out, Suffolk County Council took over the management of Growing Places, helping it to apply for funding to set up as a social enterprise.

A range of activities are now carried out by the Growing Places team including delivering 200 boxes of fruit and veg per week in the local area, holding produce stalls and a contract gardening and maintenance business. Meanwhile it offers on-the-job training, employment opportunities and advice to people who may usually be disadvantaged in the job market, supporting them to gradually move into mainstream employment.

Strong partnerships have also been formed with local growers, producers, farmers and businesses, cementing the value of the social enterprise in the surrounding community.

This all enables Growing Places to meet its targets. Just like any other business, a social enterprise has to make a profit on the goods or services that it provides in order for it to be able to survive; at least half of their income must come from trade rather than grants or donations.

## The Bridge Project, Sudbury

**A charity which provides employment and training opportunities for disadvantaged adults.**

A 'community within a community' is what the Bridge Project aims to create for adults who face disadvantages including learning and physical disabilities, and other 'hidden' disabilities such as autism, depression and Asperger's syndrome.

It was set up in 1995 as a charity and offers vocational training, continual education and employment opportunities that are fully accessible in a safe, supportive and welcoming environment. To achieve this it works closely with other organisations including those in the public and voluntary sectors such as Suffolk Association of Voluntary Organisations (SAVO), MENCAP, West Suffolk College and the county council.

The project is based at Bradbury Courtyard, which is open for members of the public to make the most of the café and a range of workshops. There are also conference and training facilities available for hire, and a range of clubs which take place.

A mini learner-led enterprise has also recently been set up to carry out voluntary work in the community. Four learners and their tutor work with a local residential home to run activities for the residents, allowing them to build their skills and provide a service.

## Developing Care Farms in Suffolk

**A project which uses the county's farming heritage to support disadvantaged people learn new skills, and also to promote wellbeing.**

Drawing on our county's farming heritage and combining the care of the land with the care of people is helping us break away from traditional day and residential care services.

Care farms provide opportunities for disadvantaged people to learn new skills and feel valued. By looking after animals or tending to fruit, vegetables or crops, care farms help promote mental and physical health and wellbeing. They help people to reconnect with nature and their communities, which in turn offers them a pathway towards recovery, progression and social inclusion.

They also enable farmers to create more diversification on their farms and play a central part in local communities. Farming has become very separated from society, with many farmers working long hours with little human contact. This way, they have an increase in manpower and a decrease in isolation.

## Get CREATE-ive

**A social enterprise which uses its profits to provide opportunities for disadvantaged people to learn new skills and find employment.**

CREATE, originally called Suffolk Scrap Store, is a social enterprise which has been in operation since 2000, providing social care and employment opportunities for disadvantaged people.

CREATE specialises in recycling surplus materials from local businesses and manufacturers which would otherwise go to landfill, for re-use in schools, playgroups, theatres and art projects. They've also recently launched their website and eco-friendly craft kits which are now available at independent stores.

The re-branding and product launch of CREATE marks the beginning of an exciting new era for this eco-friendly social enterprise which aims to re-invest 100% of its wholesale profits back into providing places for people to learn new skills, meet new people and find employment.

If you need help to understand this information in another language please call **08456 066 067**

إذا تحتاج إلى مساعدة لفهم هذه المعلومات في أي لغة أخرى فالرجاء الاتصال على الرقم التالي. **Arabic**

এই লেখাটি যদি অন্য ভাষাতে বুঝতে চান তাহলে নিচের নম্বরে ফোন করুন **Bengali**

如果你需要其他語言來幫助你了解這些資訊，請撥以下電話。 **Chinese**

જો તમારે આ માહિતી બીજા ભાષામાં સમજવા માટે જોઈતી હોય, તો કૃપા કરી નીચેના નંબર પર કૉલ કરો. **Gujarati**

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بکە.وهی خوارە ژمارەندی بەیهوه پەزمان کی ئەر ئکایە

Jeżeli potrzebujesz pomocy w zrozumieniu tych informacji w swoim języku zadzwoń na podany poniżej numer. **Polish**

Se precisar de ajuda para ler estas informações em outra língua, por favor telefone para o número abaixo. **Portuguese**

If you would like this information in another format, including audio tape or large print, please call **08456 066 067**.





## 4. Getting involved and volunteering continued

We're interested to know how involved you would like to be. Which of the following applies most to your situation and would result in you starting to or becoming further involved in volunteering in your local community?

- If a service I used received a reduction in funding
- If it were on a project or service I felt passionately about
- If I had more time
- I do not wish to be more involved
- I do not wish to be involved at all
- Other (please specify)

## 5. How are you answering this survey?

- I am answering this survey as an individual
- I am answering this survey on behalf of an organisation

## 6. About you

For us to properly understand and make the best use of the responses we receive it would be very helpful if you would tell us a little about yourself.

### Age

- 16 - 24 years
- 25 - 34 years
- 35 - 44 years
- 45 - 54 years
- 55 - 64 years
- 65 - 74 years
- 75 - 84 years
- 85 years+

### Gender

- Male
- Female

### What is your ethnic group?

Please tick the appropriate box

- White British
- White Irish
- Mixed White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed White and Black African
- Mixed White and Asian
- Asian or Asian British: Indian
- Asian or Asian British: Pakistani
- Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi
- Black or Black British: Caribbean
- Black or Black British: African
- Chinese or other ethnic group: Chinese

## 7. Knowledge of this survey

How did you find out about this survey?

- Through local media
- Attending a meeting or event
- Through a member of staff
- Through an elected member
- From our website
- Other (please specify)

### Thank you for completing this survey.

#### Please return FREEPOST to:

Suffolk County Council  
FREEPOST NAT18364  
Ipswich  
IP1 2BR

Section: Business Development

The responses you have given will help inform and shape the decisions made in relation to the council's future direction. These are due to be formally reported to full council in December 2010.

If you would like to receive an email alert to the report containing the results of this consultation please provide your email details below, or go to the committee pages on our web site a few days before the full council meeting on 2 December 2010 where this report will also be available.