

District Councillor Annual Report Information 2024/2025 – May

Local Government Reorganisation

- Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) , hot topic, West Suffolk Council resolved, via a full council debate and vote, and ratified by Cabinet, on Tuesday 18th February, that West Suffolk will be putting in a proposal to Government that our preferred option for LGR will be for either 2 or 3 new unitary councils to be formed for Suffolk, this would be, a Unitary for the West, a Unitary for the East and the third would cover the Ipswich and Surrounding area, if a 2 Unitary model is chosen, it would be just West and East. Suffolk County Council have chosen a single Unitary model.
- West Suffolk Council has received feedback from Government on our initial proposal for a 3 unitary make-up and we believe that the 3 unitary make-up for the County will be both viable financially and also the best model to help deliver the services that our residents require.
- The final proposal will be submitted to Government by the 26th September (2025), prior to that there is a survey we are hoping that all residents will complete, so please encourage as many of your residents as you can, (please ignore that it has Mid Suffolk on it, they are the ones that created it on behalf of all the Districts.) The survey runs until the 25th July - [Project: Have Your Say on the Future of Local Government... | Mid Suffolk District Council](#)

Transport – Bus Services

- A rural bus task force has been set up, it consists of a group of West Suffolk Councillors, chaired by me and is aimed to understanding and advocating for our rural communities to improve the rural bus services. It is aimed to be a collaborative initiative and will work with the bus providers to create potential solutions. I shall keep you informed and ensure our rural communities have your say. Please do give me any evidence and statements from your residents that would enable us to understand the demand signal for better bus services. The bus services will be changing under both the Mayoral Strategic Authority (coming into place in May 2026) and the New Unitary Council (established in May 2027 and taking over from May 2028), so please use the opportunity to help shape the future of our bus services.
- We also have Suffolk County Council's bus stop improvement grant which is now accepting applications, offering a valuable opportunity to enhance public transport infrastructure in our communities. SCC have shared this information with Parish and Town Councils and asked that we make district members aware.

Grant Overview:

- **Total Funding:** £500,000 available for infrastructure improvements
- **Funding Source:** Department for Transport via SCC
- **Expected Timeline:** SCC anticipates receiving funds by June 2025

Eligible Improvements

Applications may include (but are not limited to) multiple infrastructure elements such as:

- New kerbing installations
- Enhanced signage systems, including solar-powered real-time information displays
- Bus shelter construction and upgrades
- Footpath improvements and accessibility enhancements
- Vegetation clearance (restricted to Suffolk County Council-owned land)

Implementation Timeline

SCC has confirmed the funding allocation and is currently awaiting receipt of the capital funding.

Next Steps

Organisations and stakeholders interested in accessing these improvement grants should apply with details of proposed enhancements and their alignment with the program's objectives.

Application form can be found at the bottom of the following link: [Bus Service Improvement Plan - Suffolkonboard](#)

The link includes full application details, eligibility criteria, and submission requirements. Given the competitive nature of this funding, early application is recommended.

Contact Information: For application support and queries, please contact: bus.strategy@suffolk.gov.uk

Simpler Recycling

West Suffolk Council's Cabinet backed plans to increase what is collected for the 'dry' recycling collection service from 2026, this will take place now in June 2026, and will include glass and cartons. These will also see the separation of the cardboard and paper. There will be an additional brand-new weekly food waste collection, with plastic film to be incorporated in 2027.

West Suffolk Council has taken the decision to increase the number of items that can be recycled while retaining collection of household waste every two weeks has been agreed at the Council meeting on Tuesday 15 October. Please encourage your residents to increase their current recycling rates, and please advertise and help influence residents to gear up to the coming changes.

Localities Budget and Playground Grant

I'm pleased to have helped the parish with a £500 localities contribution to a parish community event, I hope we can use the funds to help celebrate our community cohesion.

I'm also pleased to have helped the parish obtain a grant of £1600 to help with the feasibility of the village playground.

The localities budget has again been renewed, please do let me know if you have any projects that your communities would benefit from having some funding. I'm supported by Chris Swarbrick, Chris.Swarbrick@westsuffolk.gov.uk in delivering the funding and applications. The deadlines for this year have changed and we must now work towards a deadline of the end of year calendar year rather than end of FY calendar.

Market Development

The Market Development Plan has been progressing, and whilst Markets may not be at the forefront of the parish priorities, I'd still encourage the council to advertise the markets as not just a place to buy items from but also if your residents are looking to start their own business, looking for a secondary source of income, or looking to make something from a hobby etc, we are really encouraging new stall holders especially on the occasional Makers Markets and Young Traders Markets.

If there are any issues across any of the topics, please let me know.

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