

West Suffolk District Councillor Parish Council Report September 2026



The current local plan, adopted in July 2025 provides enough land to for fill WSC's statutory obligation for new housing until 2031. The former target of 807 homes annually, in West Suffolk has been increased to 1200.

For the emerging new local plan, now in progress:

More than 300 sites are being examined for possible inclusion in a district's new blueprint for thousands of homes and jobs.

West Suffolk Council is assessing 328 sites to determine if they are suitable, available and deliverable within the timescales of its next Local Plan.

Following an appeal by the authority, developers and landowners have put forward locations for consideration for housing, employment, infrastructure and green infrastructure such as parks, playing fields, allotments and woodland.

No decisions have been made yet on any of the sites and there will be opportunities for residents to have their say during two stages of public consultation, the first of which is due next year.

Cllr Frank Stennett, cabinet member for planning, said: "We know that some developers have already chosen to start marketing their sites to communities and that has set off some alarm bells among residents.

I am not about to pass comment on any particular site, but what I can say is that we are still at a very early stage in the preparation of the next local plan.

"We are listening to residents and there will be a public consultation in which we will be encouraging everyone to have their say."

Once adopted, the plan will govern where new homes could be built and the council has to allocate land for the delivery of about 1,200 homes a year to meet the Government's local housing need assessment.

A map including details of all 328 sites submitted by landowners and developers in the call for sites, is due to be published next month.

West Suffolk will publish its assessment of each site in the autumn, but even then, no decisions will have been made about the allocation of sites.

Part of the consultation next year will be to understand people's views on one of the central building blocks for a local plan, the spatial strategy.

This sets out how new housing growth is to be distributed across the district over the plan period.

There will also be a further stage of public consultation, scheduled for 2028, which will be on a draft version of the plan.

Residents are encouraged to register now on the council's local plan consultation system.

This will allow them to be kept informed and engaged at every opportunity.

Bury St Edmunds £10m waste hub expansion to meet bin demands

(Planning now approved)

Plans for a £10 million expansion of a waste hub including the creation of 175-space car park have been recommended for approval by planners. West Suffolk Council's proposal for the operational hub in Fornham St Martin, near Bury St Edmunds, is set to be discussed by its development control committee on Wednesday. The council is applying to build a new 175-space staff car park with solar canopies over most of it, although it is unclear when these would be built as they would require funding. Meanwhile, the existing 125-space car park would retain 17 spaces and be repurposed as a storage area for light waste, operational vehicles and other equipment. A new 40mph speed limit would be requested for the western part of Fornham Road to improve safety, but Suffolk County Council's highways team said reducing it to 50mph would be more likely. The project, costing £10 million in total, will help accommodate new recycling services introduced this year. A statement on behalf of the council said the site was at operational capacity after the Government introduced new recycling rules requiring local authorities to collect glass, metal, plastic, paper, card and food waste.

The changes are meant to bring the council's recycling rates to 65 per cent but, as a consequence, led the authority to have to use three other council-owned sites in the district to support its operations. Based on housing and employment projects alone, the council is also expecting to have to handle a third more waste than it currently does. To accommodate future expansion, outline plans have been included to use the agricultural land to the east of the hub – which the council bought for £6 million in February. This expansion would include new storage areas, yards and other infrastructure, but details around what these buildings look like, how they would be accessed and screened would require future planning approval. Planning officers have recommended the plans for approval after no concerns were raised by residents or nearby parish councils. A list of just over 70 conditions is attached to their recommendation.

New commercial units which could create 600 jobs have faced widescale opposition over the danger to locals and horses.

(Planning now approved)

Sansovino Developments Limited wants to build three large business units on a five hectare parcel at Hatchfield Farm, in Fordham Road, Newmarket.

A previous statement from the company said the new buildings could create the equivalent of 605 new full-time jobs across 18,990 square metres of employment space.

It received outline approval in April last year and is now hoping for a green light for the buildings' internal access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale.

The plans will be discussed at a meeting of West Suffolk Council's development control committee on Wednesday.

The proposals were called in for a discussion by Cllr Janne Jarvis, the ward councillor for Newmarket North, after a unanimous objection from Newmarket Town Council.

Further objections were lodged by Nick Timothy, the town's MP, as well as members of the horseracing community.

Their concerns were mainly around the impact of an increase in HGV numbers when taking into account the extra traffic created by the wider housing estate.

Mr Timothy added: "This proposal risks increasing the amount of heavy traffic on Fordham Road, a key route for accessing shops, schools and services which already becomes heavily congested and gridlocked at particular periods of the day.

"This will harm the quality of life of residents, impede commuters and undermine Newmarket's economy."

Plans for 43-hectare solar farm off A1 065 at Brandon which could power 7,600 homes approved

Plans for a 28 megawatt solar farm on 43 hectares of farmland outside a town have been approved.

West Suffolk Council granted permission to the proposals from Energy UK 22 Ltd for the development off the A1 065 outside Brandon.

The land is by a road leading from Brandon to Fenhouse Farm; the development would utilise a 'ghost island' on the A1065 to access the site via Brick Kiln Farm Lane. The junction is already used by traffic associated with Frederick Hiam Foods.

The development — which would produce enough energy to power around 7,670 homes — would also include associated infrastructure such as inverters/transformers, substations, a control room, fencing and CCTV.

The site is made up of a pig farm and arable land.

Officers had said the plans should be approved but Brandon Town Council recommended they be refused, meaning the application was considered by the council's delegation panel.

Local Government Reorganisation.

Following updated and privileged legal advice, ministers will review plans for Local Government Reorganisation.

The review — which was announced by the Secretary of State in Parliament — includes decisions on Essex, Hampshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, which have been withdrawn in light of new legal advice.

Plans for 14 other areas, along with Cambridgeshire & Peterborough and West Sussex, are also being reviewed and paused while this is carried out.

To reassure local leaders and communities while this review takes place, the government has confirmed that local elections in May 2027 will go ahead on existing council boundaries and remains committed to effective and sustainable local government and simplifying these structures.



Mike Chester

West Suffolk
Council

District Councillor for the Chedburgh and Chevington Ward

