

West Suffolk District Councillor  
Report 2  
for  
Hargrave Parish Council  
January 2025



## Devolution

The Government is proposing the creation of a single Unitary Council for Suffolk along with other Counties within the UK, other UK Unitary Councils were also created under the previous Government. This will radically alter local government by combining Borough, District and County Councils into a single Unitary Authority. Much detail has yet to emerge, although one key point is Suffolk may not have a large enough population to meet the criteria for Unitary, thus invoking joining with other Counties. The key to this proposal is greater efficiency and savings and combined services. More detail will follow.

Below is a press release from Councillor Cliff Waterman, Leader of West Suffolk Council.

Dear Councillor,

You will have heard today that the Government have published their English Devolution White Paper setting out their thoughts on their commitment to devolution and local government re-organisation.

As you would expect we are now going through the details of this and what it means as well as talking with our colleagues in neighbouring councils. We will of course be engaging with you and partners.

You can find the full paper and guidance [English Devolution White Paper - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/464242/English-Devolution-White-Paper-2016.pdf) as well as the initial news release from the District Council Network [‘Mega councils’ threaten local services and delivery of homes and jobs | District Councils' Network](#).

A briefing is also expected from the Local Government Association, which will be to follow separately.

I have also been asked for a statement from the media which I have included below.

*Cllr Cliff Waterman, Leader of West Suffolk Council, said: "We now need to go through the detail of the white paper that has just been published. However, the announcement of the Government's continued commitment to devolution is one I welcome".*

*"In terms of Local Government Re-organisation, I will continue to work with our neighbouring councils to seek what is the best for local communities. One size does not fit all and the council system we have currently has brought benefits for local communities and businesses. Reorganisation needs to be an opportunity to look beyond geographic and organisational boundaries and not just at councils' services but a holistic approach to how public services can be better delivered locally in terms of outcomes and value".*

*"We will now look at the detail contained in the document and engage with councillors and partners and talk with our neighbouring councils".*

*"Whatever the outcome our main aim is to ensure that the people of West Suffolk remain close to and at the heart of decision making on policies, initiatives and services that affect them."*

## **Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre maintenance and refurbishment project: consultation and next steps**

2.

Following the outcome of the full public consultation on the Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre, the additional funding (over and above the £6.2 million set out in the approved capital programme) be agreed, as set out in the business case included in the Council report on 16 July 2024 (report number COU/WS/24/012) shall be in the sum of £2.16 million, subject to delegated authority being granted to the S151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and with the Portfolio Holder for Resources to allow:

a. any further invest to save/earn case being made by

Abbeycroft for an increased capital funding element from the Council investing in our Growth Fund. That any increased capital funding be subject to an updated business case and to align with the outcome of the public consultation outcomes set out in this report.

b. one off costs associated with the project, such as net income losses during planned centre disruptions and reprovision service costs, be funded from the capital financing reserve.

## **Review of chemical weed treatment on land owned by the Council**

Executive Summary This report recommends a return to the controlled use of appropriate chemicals (including Glyphosate) to control unwanted vegetation and weeds in very strictly defined areas of the district. Unwanted vegetation growth has led to a rise in complaints, diverts scarce resources from other tasks and can cause accelerated deterioration to infrastructure which will be costly to repair. Suffolk County Council Highways returned to using Glyphosate from April 2024, having established, as we have, that other forms of treatment are impractical and costly. Under these proposals, the Council's use of Glyphosate will be exclusively limited to hard landscaped areas and around man-made structures. This will have minimal biodiversity impact. Its application will be controlled to minimise the impact on pollinators in terms of both timing and through avoiding plants that are in flower. The Council will continue to explore alternative methods of vegetation control to minimise the use of chemicals.

## **Wixoe Parish Meeting – Section 109 order**

### **1. Context to this report**

- 1.1 In West Suffolk's administrative area there are ten small parish areas that do not have a parish council. In those parishes, decisions about parish matters are taken by a parish meeting. A parish meeting is open to all electors of that parish, who are entitled to speak and vote on any matter under discussion.
- 1.2 Parish meetings have limited powers compared to parish councils although, in many cases, they can be very active in representing their local communities. They can ask the residents of the parish to contribute to expenditure as part of the council tax setting process, but they can only do so where they have the power to carry out the function in the first place.
- 1.3 A parish meeting that wishes to carry out and, where relevant, incur expenditure on parish functions for which it currently has no power can make a request to the district council for the rights and powers to be conferred on the Parish Meeting. The district council can consider and confer powers on the Parish Meeting under section 109 of the Local Government Act 1972.

## **2. Proposals within this report**

2.1 Wixoe Parish Meeting wishes to carry out, and incur expenditure on, a variety of parish functions for which it currently has no power. The parish meeting has requested the rights and powers as listed below. The letter from the parish meeting is included at appendix A.

### **1. Under the Local Government Act 1972**

- i. Section 111: Subsidiary powers of local authorities.
- ii.

## **1. The West Suffolk Council remuneration scheme**

1.1 All councils are required to form a scheme of allowances that:

- determines how much individual members receive for being a councillor (the basic allowance)
- determines how much those members who have additional responsibilities should receive (special responsibility allowances)
- determines the circumstances under which members may claim expenses for costs they have incurred because they are a member.

1.2 The council must set the scheme in accordance with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. The scheme has been produced on the recommendation of an Independent Remuneration Panel, a group of individuals who are entirely separate from the Council who have considered how much members should receive.

1.3 This scheme was approved by West Suffolk Council on 19 December 2023 and as required by the regulations, will be subject to annual review.

## **2. Basic allowance**

2.1 Each member shall receive a payment of £6,606.30 per year for undertaking their work as a councillor. This payment is intended to include all expenses and costs they incur that fall outside the scope of the expenses scheme (see below), including costs of stationery, printing, phone calls, mobile phone, and home energy and internet costs. In addition to the basic allowance, members are offered a laptop and sundries (keyboard, mouse, and so on).

2.2 The sum of £6,606.30 shall be uplifted each year by the same rate as the Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) index as at 1 April in each year commencing on

1 April 2025. Should this be greater than three percent, the Remuneration Panel shall consider the level of increase and make recommendations to the Council accordingly.

## **Schedule 1**

### **Rates of allowances – as at 14 May 2024**

<b>Tier</b>	<b>Value in relation to basic</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Value</b> Special responsibility allowances are paid in addition to the basic allowance
	1	Basic allowance	£6,606.30
1	2.5	Leader of the Council	£16,515.74
2	1.5	Deputy Leader of the Council	£9,909.44
3	1.25	Cabinet Members Chair of Council	£8,257.87
4	0.9	Chair of Development Control Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Chair of Performance and Audit Scrutiny	£5,945.67
5	0.66	Chair of Licensing Vice-Chair of Council Vice-Chair of Development Control	£4,360.16
6	0.4	Vice-Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Vice-Chair of Performance and Audit Scrutiny	£2,642.52
7	0.35	Vice-Chair of Licensing	£2,312.20

### **Rates of allowances: group leaders**

<b>Tier</b>	<b>Value in relation to basic</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Value</b>
7	0.35	Group size of 21-32	£2,312.20
	2/3 of 0.35 (tier 7)	Group size of 11-20	£1,541.47
	1/3 of 0.35 (tier 7)	Group size of 3-10	£770.73

### **Rates of allowance: non-elected, non-voting, independent co-optees of Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee**

<b>Allowance</b> (paid per annum)	<b>Attendance fee</b> (paid per event attended, as prescribed in paragraph 6.2 above, in addition to the annual allowance)
<b>£300</b>	<b>£100</b>



*Mike Chester*



District Councillor for the Chedburgh and Chevington Ward