**Parish Report – May 2025**

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**Local government reform and devolution**

Update received Friday 2 May

The interim report submitted to Government by the borough and district councils said creating multiple unitary authorities for Suffolk would achieve greater outcomes for residents, grow the economy and provide flexible solutions to meet the needs of local communities – in a way that a single mega-council covering a vast geographical area would fail to do.

Multi unitary authorities will provide:

• localism and neighbourhood delivery

• cost effective and high-quality services for Suffolk residents

• long term financial sustainability

• economic growth and support to local industry

• stronger democratic representation, community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment

• governance and support systems which can adapt to future aspirations and sustainable growth

• ambitions to drive progress, innovation, and long-term success

• structures to support and enable thriving communities and economies.

Multiple unitary authorities would ensure strong democratic representation, whereas one council would be too remote for residents to be heard. It offers the best solution to ensure decision makers and the communities they represent remain at the heart of local government and guarantees that services are designed and delivered in a tailored way, built on local knowledge. Resulting in both value for money and better outcomes.

A multiple unitary model also offers a balanced approach to the governance of the Norfolk and Suffolk Mayoral Combined Authority, ensuring fair representation for Suffolk residents.

**A briefing pack for Planning for the Future has been produced for Mid Suffolk and Babergh.**

The briefing pack outlines the numbers of additional housing that is being called for with the latest government drive to increase house building over the next 20 year period.

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| Parish (ONS labelled)  | Indicative requirement over 20- year period  | Identified residual dwellings (on commenced sites)  | Permitted residual dwellings (on not started sites)2  | Indicative requirement minus permitted dwellings  |
| Buxhall | 70 | 4 | - | 66 |
| Drinkstone | 80 | 4 | 3 | 73 |
| Felsham | 70 | 1 | 3 | 66 |
| Gedding | 20 | 1 | - | 19 |
| Hessett | 60 | - | - | 60 |
| Rattlesden | 140 | 8 | 12 | 120 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

Developing and updating neighbourhood plans is advised.

**New-look grant sees more than £580k given to community projects**

From filmmaking workshops to mental health support for young people, dozens of community projects across Babergh and Mid Suffolk have received a share of more than £580,000 as part of a new grant from the district councils.

The Community Development Fund has been introduced to coincide with the start of the 2025/26 financial year and aims to streamline how council grants are administered.

Previously, grants had been separated between ‘capital’ and ‘revenue’ funding, but the new Community Development fund encompasses both, making the application process simpler for organisations to complete and receive the funding they need.

Local VCFSE (voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise) organisations could apply for up to £20,000 toward new or existing projects that provide important services and support to their communities.

In total, £583,412.41 has been allocated across the districts, with £271,479.91 shared between 23 projects in Babergh and £311,932.50 between 16 projects in Mid Suffolk.

These awards include two larger allocations of £100,000 to Sudbury & District Citizens Advice and £125,500 to Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice as legacy partners of the councils, recognising the vital work of these organisations and ensuring that they have the funding they need to keep serving those in the districts.

<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/community-funding>

**A reminder that I have now been issued with this year’s Locality Budget to support activities and groups in the Rattlesden Ward.**