Shape Tomorrow Together

First say on the new West Suffolk Local Plan

People from across West Suffolk are encouraged to give their views on the first stage of consultation on a new local plan and shape tomorrow together.

The new West Suffolk Local Plan will plan where new homes, and employment can be built to meet local needs to the year 2045. It will also include polices one example being around the delivery of affordable housing. West Suffolk Council was among the first councils in the country to up its affordable housing policy on greenfield sites with a requirement that 40 per cent of new homes be affordable. That policy is in its current local plan adopted in July last year.

Since then, the Government has revised housing need figures – for West Suffolk this means that rather than planning for the delivery of 765 homes a year, it needs to cater for closer to 1200.

The increase in local housing needs is recognised and is also reflected through West Suffolk Council's Housing, Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy which was shaped through public engagement and identified the need for more homes, particularly affordable housing, to be built to meet the needs of West Suffolk's communities. The new housing targets are not without their challenges but are best addressed through preparation of a local plan.

The Government's local plan making regulations require West Suffolk to formally begin work on the local plan this month. This is because the current local plan housing requirement is less than 80 per cent of the Government's latest assessment of housing need for West Suffolk.

If the council doesn't progress work on a new local plan, it won't be able to continue to demonstrate a 5-year land supply, something that is crucial for West Suffolk and its communities to maintain a plan led approach and resist speculative development.

With or without a local plan, new homes will still be built.

By planning positively for growth, the council can ensure a coordinated approach that avoids piecemeal development and ensures that necessary developer funds are secured towards critical infrastructure such as community facilities, education, health, and transport.

Planning for where new homes and employment can be built also provides the ability for the council and the communities it serves to say no to some of the speculative development that may otherwise come forward.

Cllr Frank Stennett, Cabinet Member for Planning at West Suffolk Council, said: "The Local Plan is crucial to our communities, now and into the future. We know locally that more homes are needed through the work that shaped our housing strategy and from the households currently on our housing register. And we know through our continuing engagement with businesses that land is needed to support their ambitions for growth, delivering new jobs and skills as well as to encourage new businesses development including start-ups in West Suffolk. But the local plan isn't

just about homes and employment. That's why we are encouraging everyone to take part, to Shape Tomorrow Together through this, the very first stage of consultation on a brand-new plan for West Suffolk."

The national process for preparing local plans has also been changed to streamline the plan making process.

The first stage of the new local plan is a scoping consultation which runs from 9am 16 June to 5pm on 28 July 2026. It asks people for their views on what is important to them and what the local plan should contain, how they would like to be kept engaged going forward and consulted with during the preparation of the plan. The feedback received will help inform the first draft of the Local Plan to be published in spring 2027, as well as the development of a new community engagement strategy. The new local plan will take around 30 months to prepare, with adoption of the plan currently scheduled for May 2029.

To Shape Tomorrow Together visit
https://westsuffolk.inconsult.uk/Scoping_Consultation_2026/consultationHome

West Suffolk Council will also be holding a number of drop in events to raise awareness of the consultation and provide an opportunity for residents to talk to planning officers. People do not have to attend an event to have your say. All of the events are open to any resident from across West Suffolk – they are not specifically about the area in which the drop in is being held. The table below details these events.

Date	**Location**	**Time**
Sunday 21 June	Bury St Edmunds Community Market, Abbey Gardens	11am to 4pm
Wednesday 1 July	Bury St Edmunds Market	9am to 4pm
Friday 3 July	Haverhill Market	9am to 3pm
Saturday 4 July	Mildenhall Hub	9am to 1pm
Tuesday 7 July	Newmarket Market	9am to 3pm
Thursday 9 July	Brandon Market	8.30am to 1pm
Saturday 18 July	Clare Market	8.30am to 1.30pm