
September 2019 District Councillor report

for

Depden Parish Council

West Suffolk Council Rural Task Force

Purpose. To make recommendations on how best to ensure the different issues facing residents, communities and businesses in more rural areas (villages and outlying dwellings), as opposed to more urban areas, are considered by West Suffolk Council in all of its future activities and decision making.

Background: West Suffolk covers a varied area, ranging from medium-sized towns to open countryside. As such, it is important that the differing circumstances of all its places are considered. Research has shown that 'rural' areas (in West Suffolk, this means the areas outside the 5 main market towns) can fare less well than more urban areas in terms of: access to services (including health and social care); personal financial management; transport; access to affordable housing; integration with social networks; access to skills and training; and business infrastructure.

The Taskforce will take evidence from Councillors and external stakeholders, including town and parish councils, partners, stakeholders, community groups, residents and businesses as it considers appropriate.

West Suffolk Rural Taskforce survey (sent to all Parish Council Clerks)

We write to request your support in completing the survey, and if appropriate, asking your councillors (with their individual thoughts) and residents to take part.

One of the first actions of the new West Suffolk Council was to establish a Rural Task Force, to help ensure that the unique factors affecting our rural communities can be considered in making decisions.

The taskforce has begun its first phase of listening and evidence gathering, and we are keen to hear your views and those of West Suffolk residents you work with. We recognise all parts of our area have their unique features, and we want to understand the different needs and priorities in each part of the wider community.

The link below has options for organisations and individuals to respond. We would value your response as a local council serving your specific area. The survey typically takes between 10 and 12 minutes to complete, depending on how much you want to tell us.

<https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Consultations/ruralopportunitiesandissuesurvey.cfm>

We would also be most grateful if you could help raise awareness of the survey through your local networks. This may mean a newsletter, your website, and regular contacts. We have posters in A4 and A5 formats, editorial and graphics, available on request. We can also provide hard copy surveys through the contact details below.

If you have any questions, please contact policy@westsuffolk.gov.uk or 01284 757633

Thank you in anticipation,

Kind regards

Cllr Mike Chester. Chair, West Suffolk Rural Taskforce

Public meetings

Listed below are the four public meetings arranged by the Rural Task Force to help engage with the wider public, we hope that many of you are able to attend the venue nearest to you. We aim to make these sessions as profitable as possible, more details to follow shortly.

- Monday 16th September:** **Freckenham** Village Hall Fordham Road,
Freckenham, IP28 8JB: 2.30pm to 4.00pm
- Weds 18th September:** **Stanton** Village Hall, The Recreation Ground,
Old Bury Road, Stanton, IP31 2BX: 5.30pm to
7pm
- Monday 23rd September:** **Kedington** Royal British Legion Hall, Kedington,
Suffolk, CB9 7NR: 2.30pm to 4.00pm
- Weds 25th September:** **Erksine Centre Chevington Road, Chedburgh.**
Suffolk, IP29 4UL: 6pm to 7.30pm

The Rural Task Force reports to West Suffolk Council Cabinet in September with further updates up until January 2020 when the final recommendations are presented to Council.

Your input is both welcome and vital in sustaining our rural communities.

Mike Chester

District Councillor Chedburgh and Chevington Ward

Rede-Depden-Chedburgh-Chevington-Hargrave-Ousden-Lidgate-Dalham