

## Case study: The future of West Suffolk councils

Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils have been jointly delivering their services since 2012 and have achieved annual savings of £4million by doing so. In 2017 the leaders of both authorities agreed to build on that success by taking the opportunity to look at the option to replace the two councils with a new district-level council for West Suffolk. This was considered both locally and nationally to be an ambitious plan which would help the councils to meet future challenges and better drive prosperity in West Suffolk.

The councils produced a business case and undertook a comprehensive programme of engagement receiving strong support from residents, businesses and MPs as well as the County Council and other public sector partners. An independent poll of local residents, carried out by ComRes, identified that more than 70% of residents supported the creation of a new West Suffolk Council.

In January 2018 the proposals to create a new West Suffolk Council were backed by the Secretary of State, giving the authorities the go ahead to start to get ready for elections to the new Council in May 2019. Orders to create a new West Suffolk Council have been supported by the Grand Committee in the House of Lords, following a debate in the House of Commons a week before where MPs also supported the proposals.

The Secretary of State highlighted our bid at the District Council Network Conference and the authorities are seen as leading transformational councils nationally. This groundbreaking work is enabling the councils to meet future challenges and continuing to deliver services while encouraging growth, jobs and supporting local communities. The new council will generate hundreds of thousands of pounds of savings and efficiencies and at the same time it will be able to better support, invest in and meet the challenges facing communities, such as increased population, demand on health care and housing as well as reduced funding nationally.

Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury councils



**West Suffolk**  
working together