

Stoke Holy Cross District Councillor Report 21st May 2025

Member Ward Grants

Member Ward Grants for 2025/26 are now available. Requests for support with small projects (typically up to £1,000 per project) to benefit the local community can be made to your District Councillors.

Community Action Fund Grants

Applications for grants of between £1,000 and £15,000 can be made via a District Councillor. The closing date for applications is 30th June. Successful projects are likely to have matched funding in place, be able to complete within 12 months of the grant and be able to demonstrate considerable community benefit and community support.

Devolution & Local Government Reform

The Government has provided advisory feedback on the initial plans for local government reform submitted by the Norfolk County and District Councils. Further feedback will be delivered individually to each of the councils. Key points include:

- Final proposals from each Council must cover the whole of the area (Norfolk).
- The rationale for a population materially different to 500,000 per unitary authority (UA) must be explained.
- Efficiencies for a UA must be assessed relative to a benchmark population of 500,000.
- Detail on how disaggregation of key services (Children's Services, Social Care) would be managed is needed.
- Detail is required to show that there are sensible population sizes across the constituent councils of the Norfolk and Suffolk Mayoral Strategic Authority.

The feedback also requests “detail on your plans for neighbourhood-based governance, the impact on parish councils, and the thoughts about formal neighbourhood partnerships and area committees”.

Norfolk County Council undertook an online consultation (closed on May 20th) which invited individuals and companies “to share your thoughts and shape the future of local government in Norfolk”.

Daniel Elmer, Leader of South Norfolk Council, has written to town and parish councils in the area asking for initial thoughts on priorities and concerns over Local Government Reform.

LGR Update!

In an article in the 16th May EDP newspaper, the government has been branded a ‘shambles’ by the Breckland cabinet member for Devolution and Local Government Reform. Just five days after sending councils feedback on their initial submissions, civil servants have issued a fresh report and told councils to ignore the previous document.

*In the initial 2nd May feedback letter, the **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government** stated that: Final proposals (by each council) due in September should ‘benchmark’ potentials against a population size of 500k. However just days later, on 7th May the report removed any reference to ‘benchmarking’ against a 500k population. The email to council executives containing the fresh feedback asked them to disregard the 2nd May version.*

South Norfolk and Broadland Design Code

The draft Design Code for new housing in the area is now available online for review. Feedback can be given through the online consultation which closes on 23rd June.

<https://southnorfolkandbroadland.placechangers.co.uk/page>

South Norfolk Community Awards

These awards celebrate the extraordinary individuals and groups who give their time, energy, and passion to make South Norfolk a better place to live, work, and visit. This could be through organising community events, supporting vulnerable people, or helping to protect the environment. Nominations close on 30th May.

<https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/communities/south-norfolk-community-awards>

New Town Proposal

South Norfolk Council and Ben Goldsborough MP have expressed interest in the district being considered as a site for a new town as part of the Government's new town initiative, subject to certain conditions. It is understood that this is seen as a way of meeting higher local housing targets, rather than seeking even more growth locally.

CPRE Norfolk, the countryside charity, are opposed to this proposal. A letter detailing their concerns has been sent to South Norfolk parish and town councils. A copy can be found on:

<https://www.cprenorfolk.org.uk> together with possible alternatives to tackle the housing shortage.

Orsted Hornsea 3 Onshore Converter Station

The latest progress report provides a useful explanation of the construction work next to the A47/B1113. It also explains some of grant awards made through the Community Benefit Fund; applications for this year's awards close on 4th June. The report is not yet online, but should soon be available here:

<https://hornseaproject3.co.uk/construction-updates#resources>

'Norwich to Tilbury' Update

National Grid have advised that archaeological surveys including trial trenching at some locations along the proposed route will be continuing for 6 months.

The National Grid application for a Development Consent Order is expected later this year.

PylonsEastAnglia are continuing to campaign against the pylon proposals. For further information visit

<https://pylonseastanglia.co.uk/actions>

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