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January District Councillor report

Local Government White Paper

We received from the Government the Local Government white paper on 16th December. In the New Year things moved at a pace, with our County Council colleagues voted in favour of a county combined authority across Norfolk and Suffolk on the 9th of January, with the potential for county elections next year to be postponed and for us across Norfolk and Suffolk to engage in a conversation around the unitarization of the current county and district model. The time scale for these changes would see the first Mayoral election in May '26 and elections to the new unitary authorities in May '27. All of this suggests that 2025 and 2026 will be years of significant change for us all. I am sure that there will be many twists and turns along the way.

Government Council tax grant

We were told that there would be no change in the amount we would receive as a grant for Council tax. Last year we received £8.4m, this year we will get £7.964m in reality a cut of £4.19k. However the increase in NI costs of £507k will be funded. There will be an increase in the Extended Resource Responsibility grant up from £250k to £2,12m which will more than cover the actual reduction in the main grant.

New Homes bonus will be reformed.

Business rates to be reformed also.

Food Waste

Food waste will be part of the budget for Apr 2026, new vehicles are being ordered as are bins for every house and business. New operatives will need to be employed. This will only be partially funded by Government the rest will come from a tax on business in relation to packaging i.e. businesses need to change packaging to all recyclables.

Temporary Accommodation

It is anticipated that the cost of T/A will be to approx £1m per year as more pressure is placed on councils to house those in need.

Dental School

There is to be a new dental school at the UEA at a cost of £1.5m to SNC but backed by a Gov grant of £2.1m to run it.

Solar Farms

An application for the solar farm at The Maltings Tivetshall St Margaret has been submitted. It will supply power to Simpsons Malt and the local grid. Council stated that solar farms should only be put on land designated grade 4-5. Food or power.