

West Suffolk Local Plan: Preferred Options stage: Screening Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Question	Response	
Summary		
1. Name of the strategy, policy, programme or project being assessed.	West Suffolk Local Plan – Preferred Options	
2. Summarise the purpose of the policy or proposal, and its desired outcomes.	<p>This is the second stage of the draft new local plan for the entirety of the West Suffolk Council area. It contains strategic objectives, local policy parameters (that will become policies to be used to help determine planning applications) and site allocations. The document considers land use and plans for new homes and employment areas until 2040.</p> <p>This is a strategic document: for every new development in West Suffolk there would be a planning application, through which the detailed equalities considerations will be determined.</p>	
Evidence- Do you think that any of the policy proposals in the draft Preferred Options Local Plan would have a disproportionate impact on any individual or group who has protected characteristics under the equalities legislation (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation)?		
3. What does the current evidence tell us about possible inequalities in relation to this proposal?	Equality group or characteristic	Issue(s)
Do you think that any of the policy proposals in the draft Preferred Options Local Plan would have a disproportionate impact on any individual or group	Appendix 1 to this document includes a summary of the key statistics relating to the population of West Suffolk and the representation within the population of individuals and groups sharing a protected characteristic. These figures show that compared with elsewhere in England, West Suffolk is more rural , and has an ageing population and so these traits should be targeted in the EqIA and consultation. Ensuring that the document covers the housing needs for Gypsy and Travellers should also be a focus.	

<p>who has protected characteristics under the equalities legislation (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation)?</p>	Age - positive	<p>The local plan contains policy parameters for specialist elderly accommodation, starter homes for young families, affordable homes, children’s play areas and other facilities for different age groups.</p> <p>Strategic objective SO7 supports a range of dwelling types and tenures designed to be inclusive to meet the changing needs of people including different ages.</p> <p>Policy NSP33 supports new or extensions to existing accommodation for elderly and/ or vulnerable people. Subject to viability such dwellings will be built to building regulations M4(2) “accessible and adaptable” standard, with 10 per cent pf new market homes and 25 per cent of affordable homes being built to building regulations M4(3) “wheelchair user” standard. Suitable amenity space should be provided.</p>
	Disability – positive	<p>The local plan policy parameters relating to design will consider disabled access to buildings and public open spaces.</p> <p>Strategic objective SO8 seeks to create safe, cohesive, inclusive and accessible places.</p> <p>Policy NSP30 requires all new dwellings to meet the nationally described space standard and be built to building regulations M4(2) “accessible and adaptable” standard, with 10 per cent pf new market homes and 25 per cent of affordable homes being built to building regulations M4(3) “wheelchair user” standard. This will ensure that residents have homes suitable for their needs.</p>
	Sex - neutral	<p>The document plans positively for the future and will benefit all groups of people, regardless of sex or gender.</p>
	Pregnancy and maternity – neutral	<p>The document plans positively for the future and will benefit all groups of people, regardless of pregnancy and maternity status.</p>

	Marriage or civil partnership - neutral	The document plans positively for the future and will benefit all groups of people, regardless of marriage or civil partnership status.
	Race – positive	<p>West Suffolk has an established Gypsy and Traveller community. Gypsies and Travellers are legally recognised as ethnic groups and are protected from discrimination. The provision of new sites for Gypsies and Travellers will assist in meeting the culturally specific accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers.</p> <p>In 2020, the Cambridge sub-region Housing Market Area (which includes Cambridgeshire county and West Suffolk district), and the two adjoining authorities to the north – Peterborough and Kings Lynn & West Norfolk commissioned RRR Consultancy Ltd to undertake a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA) for the period 2020-2040. The results will be used as an evidence base to inform policies and allocations in the emerging local plan. The methodology for this study involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An online survey, and interviews with key stakeholders providing qualitative data regarding the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers, Travelling Showpeople, boat dwellers and travellers, and residential caravan dwellers. • Extensive telephone, email and face-to-face surveys of Gypsies, Travellers, Travelling Showpeople, boat travellers, boat dwellers and residential caravan dwellers, and representatives of respective community covering a range of issues related to accommodation and service needs. <p>The initial findings of this study have informed the policies in the Preferred Options Local Plan which also includes a call for sites to help accommodate the identified need.</p>

		<p>Policy SP7 seeks to meet the needs of West Suffolk’s Gypsy and Travellers and travelling show people over the period 2020-2040 (building on the most recent needs assessment) and for 2020-2025 it identifies 33 new pitches (NPPF definition) or 25 new pitches (planning policy for Traveller sites,) and seven plots for travelling showpeople.</p> <p>Policy NSP39 aims to address the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and travelling showpeople in West Suffolk and sets out criteria that planning applications will be considered against. The policy parameters consider plot allocations subject to criteria, transit pitches and the need to protect existing sites from redevelopment.</p>
	Religion -positive	<p>Strategic objective SO17 enables healthy lifestyles and fosters healthy communities permitting access to community infrastructure, cultural and leisure facilities.</p> <p>Policy NSP41 protects and enhances existing and new community facilities such as places of worship.</p>
	Sexual orientation - neutral	The document plans positively for the future and will benefit all groups of people regardless of sexual orientation.
	Gender reassignment - neutral	The document plans positively for the future and will benefit all groups of people, regardless of gender reassignment.
	Other – families, those with caring responsibilities, people on low income, people suffering rural isolation and those for whom English is not their first language. -positive	<p>The local plan does not have specific policies for all groups, but indirectly it will have a positive effect.</p> <p>For example, Strategic objective SO17 enables healthy lifestyles and fosters healthy communities permitting access to community infrastructure, cultural and leisure facilities and green spaces.</p>

		<p>People on a low income Strategic objective SO18 seeks to tackle health inequalities and enables the provision of accessible facilities to improve residents' physical and mental wellbeing.</p> <p>Families and those with caring responsibilities Policy SP2 aims to optimise health and wellbeing for people living and working in West Suffolk. Policy parameters include that homes should be well designed, high quality places to live. Developments should consider access to green infrastructure, open space, leisure, social spaces, the countryside and allotments. Health impact assessments should be submitted with new development proposals. Policy SP3 seeks to enhance wellbeing through good design such as designing health and wellbeing into place. Policy NSP42 seeks to enable the enhancement of leisure and cultural facilities, which will help to improve the health and wellbeing of local people.</p> <p>People on a low income Policy SP7 will address the housing needs of different people including those who need affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families and Gypsies and Travellers. The increase in dwellings will positively benefit people who live in West Suffolk as presently the housing supply does not meet current demand. The document plans for a mix of dwellings as set out in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Housing Needs of Specific Groups - October 2021 Policy SP9 makes provision for employment land and Policy NSP43 safeguards employment land, which will increase job opportunities.</p>
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Consultation		
4. How do you plan to seek the views of the groups outlined above?	Method	Specific actions
	General consultation event (open to all)	Virtual exhibition including live chat function Social media based on each local plan theme Media articles in the press Parish Magazine articles Invitations to respond to the consultation to previous consultees and stakeholders

		<p>In-person information stalls and meetings in towns and key service centres. This supports the need to engage with people who are digitally excluded.</p> <p>Online workshops with parish councils, statutory consultees, neighbouring authorities, business, tourism, leisure, disabled and local groups and schools.</p> <p>Outreach by Rural Coffee caravan, in recognition of the more rural nature of West Suffolk's population.</p>
	All documents within the virtual exhibition and at in-person events	In order to assist people whose first language is not English, all documents will be written in plain English. The needs of individual languages can be addressed at planning application stage, as required.
	Specific and targeted consultation workshop	<p>Attendance at the Disability Forum, linked to the Suffolk Coalition of Disabled People, including a bespoke online workshop about the local plan and how to get involved, followed by information on their websites.</p> <p>Attendance at Western Assembly of Youth online, and local schools and colleges in person with presentations about the local plan and how to get involved. A bespoke competition for young people in each school to entice feedback.</p>
	Seek specialist advice from relevant organisations	<p>Suffolk Coalition of Disabled People regarding accessibility of the local plan documents.</p> <p>Western Assembly of Youth regarding engaging young people.</p>
	Commission research	Background evidence documents that support the local plan
	Other (please detail)	

Conclusions, following completion of the Equality Impact Assessment

No adjustments to the Preferred Options Local Plan are necessary as a result of the Screening Equalities Impact Assessment at this time. The Preferred Options Local Plan consultation results will feed into the Pre-Submission Local Plan.

The local plan is a strategic document, which considers land uses across West Suffolk. Final decisions on the details of development are not made until relevant planning applications are determined, by officers in the development management or councillors, at which time there is further public consultation and the opportunity to feedback on material planning considerations. The planning report for the application will detail how all relevant issues have been taken account of, including equalities matters, and whether people of a protected characteristic are affected. If the granting of planning permission would have a disproportionate impact on any individual or group who has protected characteristics under the equalities legislation, then this impact will be taken account of, and weighed in the planning balance before a decision is made.

Appendix 1 statistics reveal that compared with elsewhere West Suffolk is more rural with an ageing population and so these traits will be targeted in the consultation as set out above. The specific housing needs for Gypsy and Travellers should be met and are presently identified by the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment West Suffolk Interim Statement May 2022.

Sign off section

This EqIA was completed by:

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Job title: Service Manager – Strategic Planning

Signature: M Smith

Date: 06/04/2022

On completion, please submit this document with the policy or proposal. Guidance and advice on draft and final versions can be obtained from:

Tanya Sturman, Corporate Policy Team

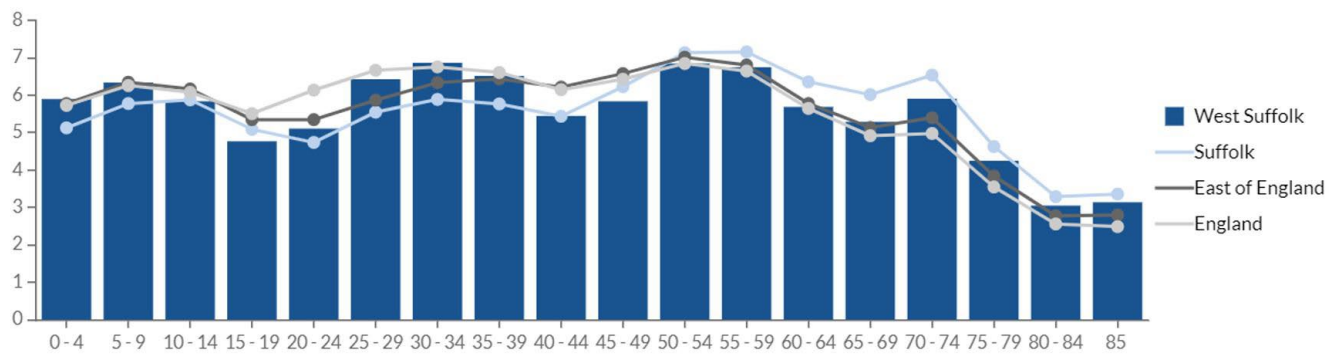
01638 719473

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Appendix 1 – Data from Suffolk Observatory April 2022

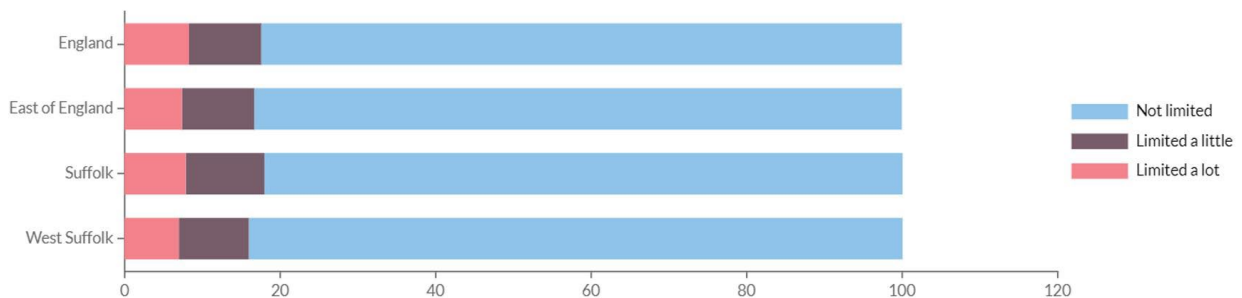
Population estimates

This chart shows estimate percentage of the population by five-year age groups for West Suffolk in 2020 (Office of National Statistics) compared with the region and country. West Suffolk has an ageing population with a lower-than-average number of teenagers and a higher-than-average number of over 65s.



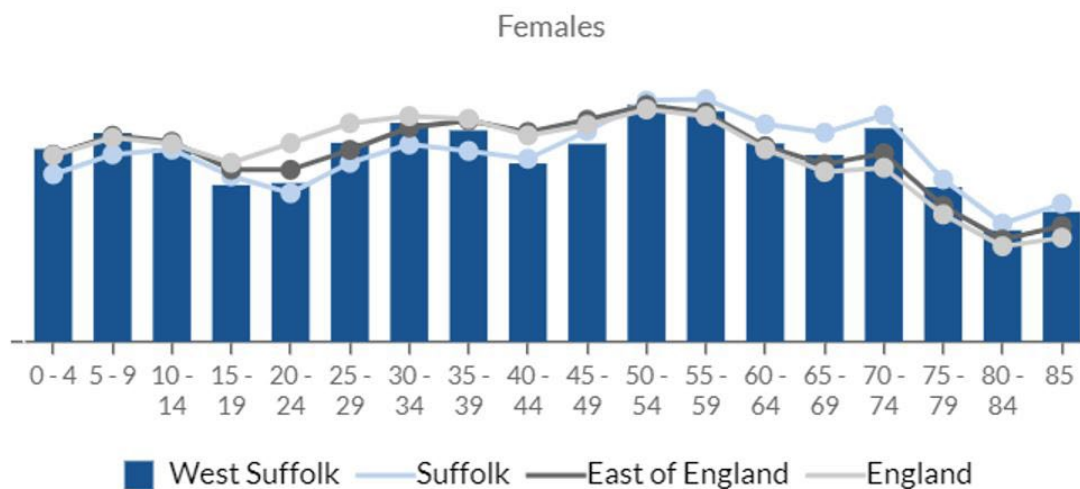
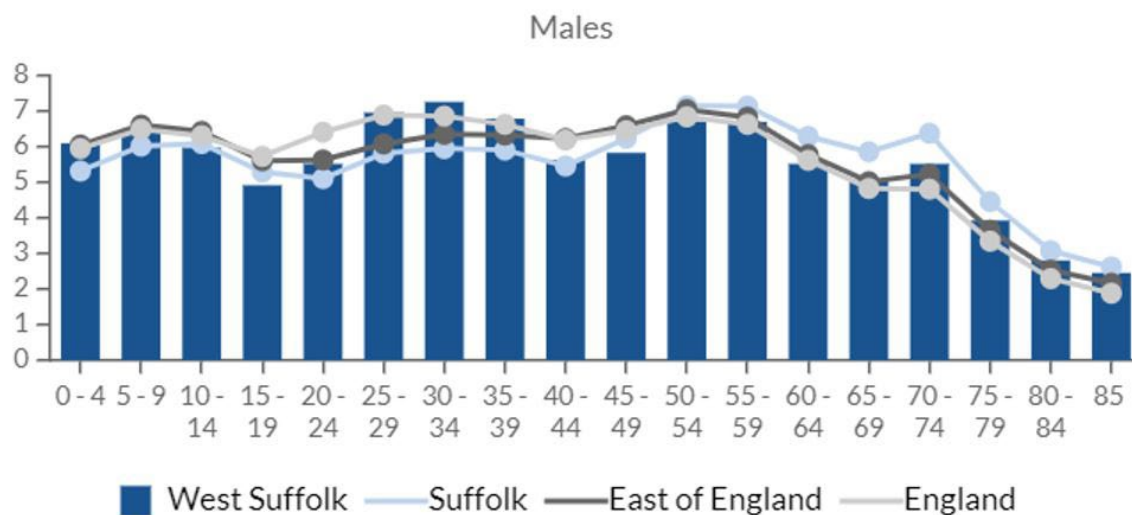
Disability

This chart shows the percentage of population whose day-to-day activities are limited in West Suffolk in 2011 (Census 2011) compared with the region and country. This shows that the population of West Suffolk has less movement limitations representing disabilities, than nationally.



Population estimates

The charts show the estimated percentage of male and female population by five-year age group for West Suffolk in 2020, compared with the region and country. There is a higher than average number of males in the 30-34 age category, which is likely to be because of the presence of RAF Mildenhall and RAF Lakenheath personnel.



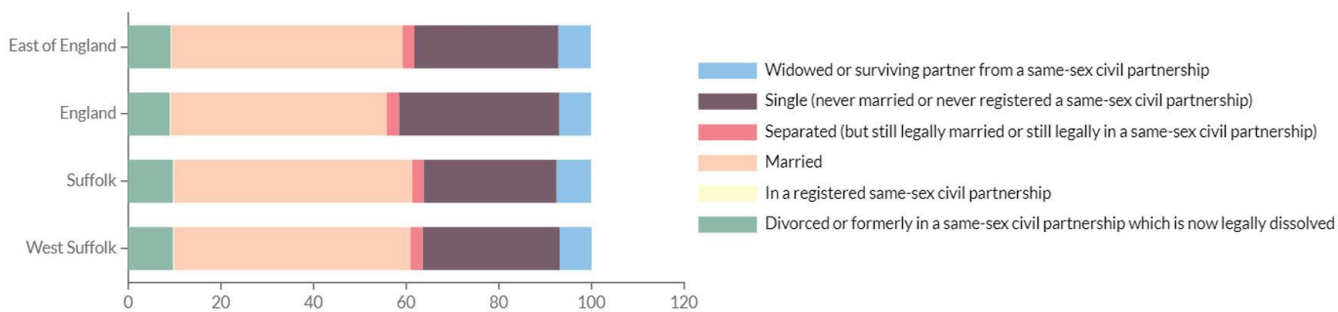
Gender reassignment

Gender reassignment local data is not currently available, but the Gender identity Development Service (GIDS) provide summary referral information:

<http://gids.nhs.uk/number-referrals>

Marriage and Civil Partnership

The chart shows the percentage of the population in each group in West Suffolk in 2011, (Census 2011) compared with region and country. This shows that West Suffolk has a higher proportion of married people than East of England, or England as a whole. The level of marriage is broadly the same across Suffolk.

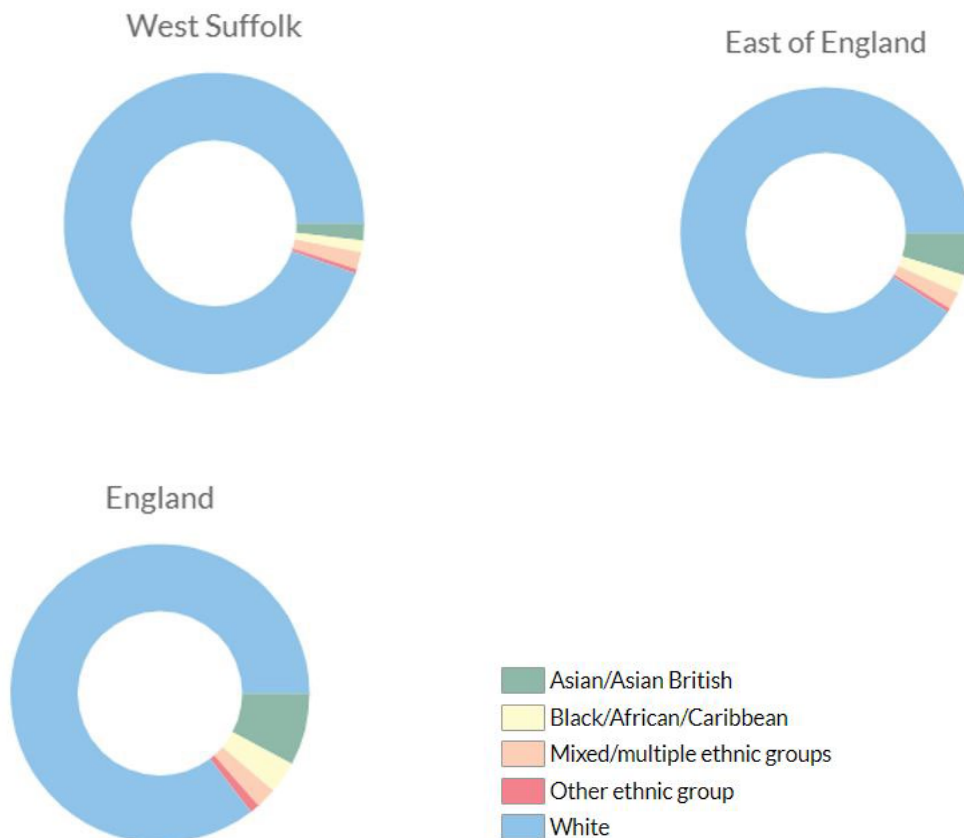


Pregnancy and Maternity

There is no fertility data available for West Suffolk from Public Health England.

Race and ethnicity

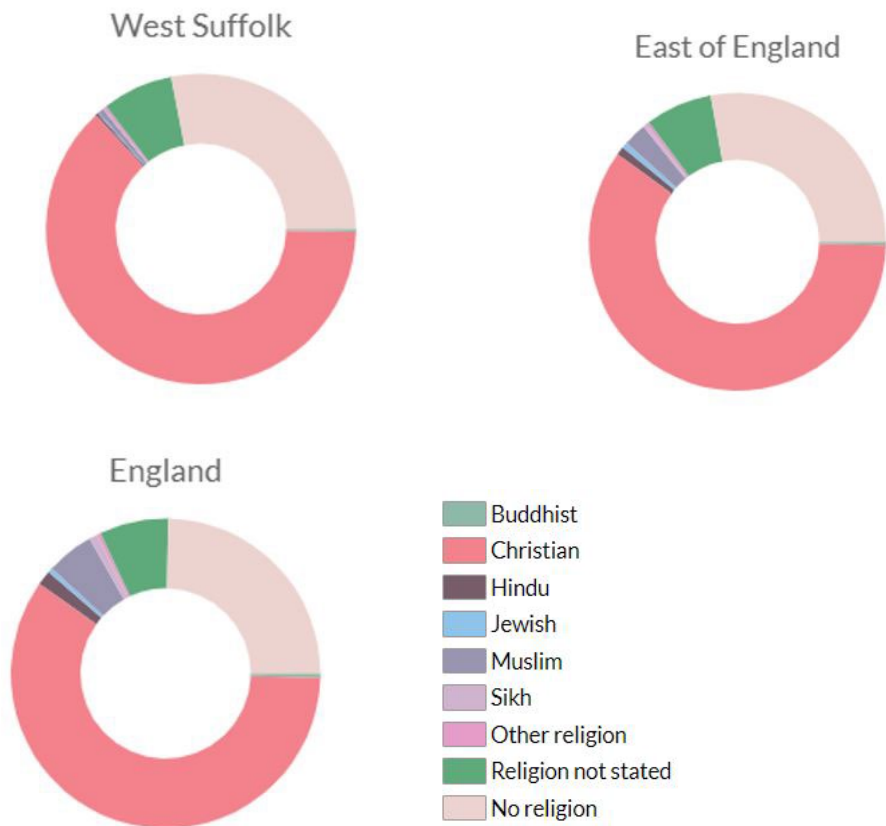
The charts show the percentage of the population of West Suffolk in different race/ethnicity groups in 2011 (Census 2011), compared with the region and country. They show that West Suffolk is predominately white, with a lower percentage of Asian or Asian British than East Anglia or England.



Belief and religion

The charts show the breakdown of religions and beliefs for West Suffolk for 2011 (Census 2011), compared with the region and country. It shows that West Suffolk is

predominately Christian, with a lower than England's level of practising Muslim and Sikhs.

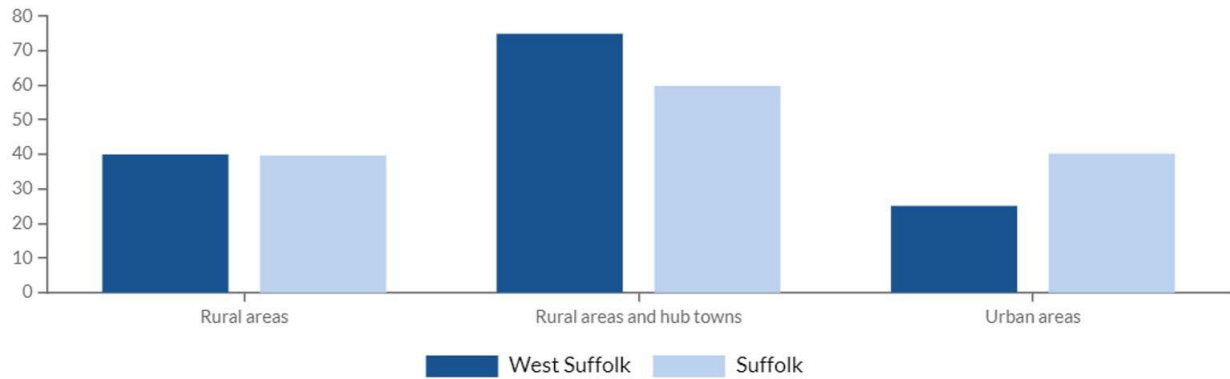


Sexual orientation

No local data is available, but experimental estimates are available at regional level: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/datasets/sexualidentityuk>

Rurality

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has a 2011 Rural-Urban Classification. This defines areas as rural if they are outside settlements with more than 10,000 resident population, and as urban if inside such settlements. Hub towns are settlements with a population of between 10,000 and 30,000 people. The chart shows that compared to the rest of Suffolk, West Suffolk has mostly rural areas and hub towns, and is more rural than not.



Conclusion

In summary, West Suffolk follows many of the population trends expressed nationally, but is more rural, predominately white, with a high level of Christianity and marriage levels, and an ageing population.

Report source: Suffolk Observatory - [Suffolk - EIA - District - v3 | West Suffolk | InstantAtlas Reports \(suffolkobservatory.info\)](#)

Gypsy and Travellers

The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment West Suffolk Interim Statement May 2022 identifies the needs of Gypsies and Travellers over the plan period to 2040. The Preferred Options Local Plan Policy SP7 seeks to meet the needs of West Suffolk's Gypsy and Travellers and travelling show people 2020-2040 and for 2020-2025 it identifies 33 new pitches (NPPF definition) or 25 new pitches (planning policy for Traveller sites,) and seven plots for travelling showpeople. Policy NSP39 aims to address the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and travelling showpeople in West Suffolk and sets out criteria that planning applications will be considered against. The policy parameters consider plot allocations subject to criteria, transit pitches and the need to protect existing sites from redevelopment.