

TOP-TEN REPORT FOR BUNGAY AND THE VILLAGES (FEBRUARY 2025 & MARCH 2025)
East Suffolk Councillors Toby Hammond and Anthony Specia

1. At our recent meeting, East Suffolk Council agreed to recommend to Government that there should remain multiple unitary authorities in Suffolk after any local government reorganisation. East Suffolk Council is joined in this recommendation by all other district and borough councils in Suffolk, which reached the same conclusion in their own recent meetings.
2. Anthony and Toby believe that a multiple unitary authority model is the most preferable option for our communities. Suffolk is a geographically large county, with a mainly rural landscape, and a dispersed population living in a highly diverse set of hamlets, villages, towns and cities. A single unitary authority for Suffolk would risk undermining local interests and local democracy.
3. By contrast, Suffolk County Council has recommended to Government that there should be only one unitary authority for all of Suffolk. This would effectively mean that local powers currently exercised by district and borough councils would be pushed up to county level. We understand that Government will decide between these competing recommendations in September.
4. Suffolk County Council has recently decided to terminate its relationship with the Suffolk Libraries charity, and to take over direct management of the county's libraries. Anthony and Toby are concerned that this decision may have been taken less to preserve a much-loved community institution than to strengthen Suffolk County Council's negotiating position with Government over funding for a single unitary authority. We fear that our libraries will be deprioritised if additional Government funding isn't forthcoming, which seems distinctly possible.
5. After more than five years of controversy, and over 2,000 planning documents submitted, a final decision on the huge poultry-production unit at Mill Lane, Shadingfield, is expected to be made soon. Nitrogen-based air pollution may be a deciding factor, and the application will be referred to East Suffolk Council's Planning Committee should planning officers approve it. Toby and Anthony are strongly opposed to this type of intensive poultry farming, which has serious health and environmental consequences. Waveney MP Adrian Ramsay has also expressed his opposition.
6. VC Cooke have begun construction of their waste incinerator at Ellough, with the smoke-stack now visible from the A145 roundabout nearby. However, VC Cooke have not yet provided East Suffolk Council with the necessary emissions management plans to unlock their Environmental Permit, which they need to begin operating their facility. Anthony and Toby are looking forward to meetings with specialist consultants during April in order to maximise our ability to limit the impact of this facility on our communities.
7. Toby is pleased to report that a new charity led by outdoor-education group Kinda Education has now reached agreement with the liquidators for the Ringsfield Hall Trust to take ownership of Ringsfield Hall and its 14-acre site. Kinda has secured an anchor funder for this very positive project, which will save Ringsfield Hall as an educational facility for future generations of children, especially vulnerable children excluded from mainstream education. Kinda will shortly be launching a crowdfund appeal to raise further funds.
8. Anthony is pleased to report that, at their second meeting in February, East Suffolk Youth Council passed a motion calling on East Suffolk Council to involve Youth Councillors in the development of the new East Suffolk Local Plan, and in decisions regarding the allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy funding. East Suffolk Council approved this call unanimously. Once again, the Youth Councillors made their case with true professionalism and substantial backing research.
9. Waveney MP Adrian Ramsay continues his regular constituency surgeries in Bungay, and he is hearing from residents about a wide range of issues of concern. To book an appointment at his next visit, contact his team at adrian.ramsay.mp@parliament.uk.
10. As Chair of Council, Anthony attended the Waveney District Scouting Showcase in Halesworth, where he was pleased to present badges and certificates to talented young Scouts.