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 Suffolk Tories



November 2025 Town and Parish Newsletter

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To strengthen our local economy



To provide value for money for the Suffolk taxpayer



To protect and enhance our environment



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Page 27 - Suffolk Archives Awarded National Accreditation

Suffolk Archives, a Suffolk County Council Service, has been awarded Archive Service Accreditation.

Consultation into next phase of Active Travel Woodbridge gets underway

The public is being invited to give its views on proposed plans to boost walking, wheeling, and cycling in Woodbridge.

The proposals for Thoroughfare and Cumberland Street are the latest phase of Suffolk County Council's Active Travel scheme aiming to transform how people get around the town centre.



They aim to minimise traffic from the Thoroughfare and Cumberland Street travelling through Market Hill, while maintaining convenient routes for drivers leaving the town centre.

This would involve:

- Reversing the traffic flow, making it one-way eastbound. Vehicles would enter from Quay Street and exit onto Lime Kiln Quay Road.
- When the southbound exit via Quay Street is removed, this change would help divert delivery vehicles and other permitted traffic away from Market Hill, reducing congestion in the historic town centre.
- Existing access rights to the Thoroughfare would be retained.

Cumberland Street

Two options are being considered for Cumberland Street, both designed to support the wider town centre improvements:

Option 1 – One-way westbound

- Cumberland Street would become one-way westbound towards Ipswich Road, giving drivers an exit route from Quay Street.
- Existing traffic restrictions would be removed.

Option 2 - Modal filter

- A modal filter to restrict certain vehicle types would be installed between Woodbridge School Prep and the Royal Mail exit.
- Emergency and waste vehicles could still pass through using removable bollards.
- Two-way access from Ipswich Road would be kept minimising disruption.
- The short section between Quay Street and the filter would also be two-way, maintaining access for residents and businesses.
- Existing traffic restrictions removed.

The proposals come following a public consultation earlier this year to gather views on how to provide more options and to make it safer to walk, wheel and cycle by providing more space – such as widening pavements - safer crossing points and creating safer junctions. Following this consultation plans to widen pavements on Quay Street to improve pedestrian safety and accessibility have already been confirmed.

To support these improvements, Quay Street will become one-way northbound.

Councillor Alexander Nicoll, Suffolk County Council Deputy Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy, said: “We have been working closely with Woodbridge Town Council to assess and develop new proposals for traffic movements to help make central Woodbridge quieter, safer and more welcoming for everyone.



“We want to know what people think of these proposals for the Thoroughfare and Cumberland Street and I would urge them to give us their thoughts.

Councillor Nigel Phipps, Mayor of Woodbridge and chair of Woodbridge Town Council, said: “Woodbridge Town Council is pleased to support Suffolk County Council on this third consultation.

“We look forward to hearing the views of our residents before final decisions are made regarding the Active Travel programme for the town centre.”

A survey to gather views has now started and runs until December 12.

For more details and to take part in the survey, go to the [Active Travel Woodbridge](#) website. For a printed copy of the survey to be posted please contact Customer.services@suffolk.gov.uk or call 0345 603 1842.

Suffolk County Council announces £63m A12 highway improvement proposals

Suffolk County Council has unveiled a full planning application for a package of highway improvements worth in the region of £63 million along the A12.

The works will be between the A12/A14 Seven Hills Junction and Woods Lane junction north of Woodbridge.

They aim to enhance transport connectivity, safety, and accessibility for all users, including motorists, cyclists, pedestrians, and public transport passengers.

Suffolk County Council is responsible for this section of the A12 and the proposals feature significant upgrades to the 6.8 mile (11km) stretch.

Key elements of the scheme are:

- Highway upgrades to improve traffic flow and safety, including enhancements to seven road junctions.
- Construction of a mobility hub at Adastral Park, designed to support sustainable travel options and improve public transport integration
- Replacement of the Martlesham footbridge with a new non-motorised users bridge to improve accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists
- New signalised bus link junction north of Anson Road, connecting the A12 and Main Road via Portal Avenue
- Dual carriageway upgrade between the A12/B1438 Ipswich Road junction and the A12/B1079 Grundisburgh Road junction, including a new layby, shared use footway/cycleway, and agricultural accessway

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- New shared use footway/cycleways at Portal Avenue and north of A1152 Woods Lane, along with improved crossing facilities at key junctions
 - Additional highway features, such as maintenance bays, traffic signs, upgraded signals, and pedestrian crossings

Councillor Chris Chambers, Suffolk County Council Cabinet member for Transport Strategy, said: “This council is committed to enhancing local infrastructure, aiding sustainable economic recovery and developing growth.

“These proposals are a transformative infrastructure investment which reflect the council’s dedication to improving regional mobility, reducing congestion, and promoting sustainable transport.”

The proposals have been drawn up following two public consultations since the scheme was first outlined in 2020.

They will be formally submitted to the council’s planning directorate on November 14. Members of the public and interested stakeholders can submit their views regarding the planning application after this date.

Comments should be sent to: Suffolk County Council, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich, IP1 2BX, or via email to planning@suffolk.gov.uk

Project Celebrating Disability in Suffolk gets £139k grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund

The project has been made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players, we will honour the resilience and contributions of people with disabilities, while also helping wider communities better understand the barriers they face today.

Beyond Labels will collect and preserve personal stories, alongside the histories of organisations, schools, and charities that support disabled people to create a record that celebrates disability while sparking conversations about inclusion, accessibility, and equality. This exciting initiative begins with the recruitment of a dedicated project officer and volunteers, the launch of a community forum, and a programme of activities designed to capture and share lived experiences.

As part of the project, Suffolk Archives, a Suffolk County Council service, will work with local schools and community groups, offering free workshops that teach skills in recording, organising, and preserving archives. There will also be workshops around the county that provide opportunities for participants to co-create projects that amplify disabled voices and educate others about the challenges faced in daily life.



It also includes cataloguing and selective digitisation of existing disability-related records, making them more accessible to the public and ensuring that Suffolk Archives reflects the diversity of society today.

A key outcome will be a free public exhibition at The Hold on Ipswich Waterfront, running from February to May 2026. Co-curated with local communities, this exhibition will celebrate the stories collected through the project and encourage greater awareness and empathy across Suffolk.

Cllr Nadia Cenci, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Communities, said: "I'm delighted that this project has received the backing of the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Beyond Labels is not only about uncovering Suffolk's disability history, but also about celebrating the people with disabilities living in our communities today. By sharing their voices, we can build greater understanding and help more people feel a sense of belonging in Suffolk."

Liz Bates, Director, England, Midlands and East at The National Lottery Fund, said: "We are pleased to support Suffolk Archives with a grant of £139,000 to collect and explore stories of people with disabilities working with local schools and community groups. Thanks to National Lottery players this project will be able to preserve and highlight experiences of life in the UK that might otherwise go unrecorded."

Suffolk County Council objects to Sea Link as Examination begins

Suffolk County Council has made clear its objection to the Sea Link project, as the Planning Inspectorate begins official proceedings on the scheme's application for development consent.

The first Open Floor Hearing, saw the beginning of the Examination phase which began on Wednesday 5 November at Snape Maltings. This is an opportunity for people present their views in person to the Examination panel.

The county council maintains that development consent should not be granted, and it continues to object to the Sea Link proposals.

Councillor Richard Rout presented a summary of the council's concerns, the reasons for its objection are:

- Inadequate road access arrangements
- Poor-quality design of the converter station and its integration with the surrounding landscape
- Cumulative impacts of the scheme, its relationship and timing with other projects
- Disproportionate proposals for a new bridge

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- Impacts of the scheme on the Suffolk and Essex Coast and Heaths National Landscape

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Devolution, Local Government Reorganisation and NSIPs, said:

"Today was the first of a number of representations that the county council will make during the Examination process – our position is that we still have substantive concerns, and object to Sea Link.

"Despite our best efforts, engagement on this project with National Grid has been both difficult and disappointing. As a result, many issues are not properly addressed or resolved. "We have repeatedly raised a variety of concerns, from significant local impacts such as those on the Grade II listed Hurts Hall and Grade II St John the Baptist Church, to much wider fundamental issues about the timing of this project alongside other nationally significant infrastructure projects in our county.

"The concerns of the county council and of the communities that we represent, have been too readily dismissed. This has been a serious disappointment for officers and councillors alike, especially after effective engagement with National Grid on other projects.

"Now we have the opportunity to present our detailed concerns and mitigations, directly to the Planning Inspectorate, and will do so for the good of Suffolk and its residents."

The Examination stage is expected to take up to six months.

Councillors Rout's speech can be read in full below:

My name is Councillor Richard Rout and I am Cabinet Member for Devolution, Local Government Reform and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects at Suffolk County Council.

I'd like to thank you for providing this opportunity for me to address you in person about the SEA link project.

Before setting out some key issues I would like to take the opportunity to reflect on the development of this project, and the Council's engagement with it.

I think it would be fair to say, that from my point of view, the process has not been satisfactory, despite the fact that the Council is engaging with National Grid Electricity Transmission on two other projects, Bramford to Twinstead, and Norwich to Tilbury. As I said at our Cabinet meeting on 13 May 2025 to consider the Council's Relevant Representations, the response to engagement from key members of National Grid's SEA Link project team has too often been dismissive and high-handed.

This unhelpful and, at times, intransigent, approach, both in relation to the concerns of the Council and of the communities that it represents, has been a serious disappointment for officers and councillors alike, especially after effective engagement with Grid on other projects.



Following the Cabinet meeting there was an in-person meeting between the Council Leader and a National Grid Board Director, and some progress has been made, however, substantive concerns remain.

Overall, engagement on this project has been both difficult and disappointing, as a result many issues are not properly addressed or resolved, that I believe could have been, if the applicant had taken a more constructive approach.

So, while the full and comprehensive details of the Council's concerns are set out elsewhere, I will take this opportunity to highlight a selection of the key issues:

- Access arrangements for the converter station site remain unsatisfactory
- The ability of the Benhall Road bridge, over the railway, to support delivery of the project remains at best questionable and unresolved
- Likewise, the use of a permanent bridge over the River Fromus to allow access to the site for construction
- Operation of the converter station is wholly disproportionate, and unnecessarily damaging to the environment
- Landscape, and heritage assets, notably the Grade II Listed Hurts Hall and Grade II* Listed St John the Baptist Church in Saxmundham.

Both the harm of the proposed access arrangements, and the engineering viability of those arrangements, mean that Suffolk County Council maintains its position that an alternative access route which integrates with the consented Sizewell Link Road would be a significantly more robust alternative both for this project, and any future projects, than what is being proposed by the applicant.

The design of the converter station and its integration with the surrounding landscape, as currently presented, lacks ambition, respect, or care, for the local environment and communities.

Initial consultation on the design of the converter hall offered a range of innovative possibilities, which were not subsequently progressed in the submitted application. If the innovative design on offer at consultation was not offered without any realistic assessment of how it could be delivered in practice, I suggest this implies an inappropriately casual approach on the part of the applicant.

This impression is only reinforced by the fact that the applicant failed to publish the feedback of the Design Review Panel, so as to demonstrate transparency of process or to contribute to building public confidence in the project.

In terms of working hours, the council believes seven days a week and on Public Holidays is unacceptable due to the lack of respite for local residents from the impacts associated with construction activities, including disruption to local roads and public rights of way (PRoW) used for recreational activities at a time when they are most frequently used.



Disappointingly, regarding the potential delivery of the substation in Friston under the Sea Link DCO, the Applicant has not committed to undertake construction under the working hours agreed under the SPR consent which does not include Public Holiday and Sunday working.

We also have strong concerns over the cumulative impacts of the scheme, its relationship and timing with other projects and the consequent impact on socio-economics, tourism, and the environment, need to be effectively assessed.

The Council disagrees with the applicant's assessment that the local labour force is of low sensitivity, as there are existing skills shortages that are exacerbated by consented and constructing projects, including Sizewell C.

Likewise, the applicant needs to undertake an effective and robust cumulative assessment of the impacts of traffic from overlapping NSIP projects on the Suffolk coast, rather than presuming that these other consented projects have already fully mitigated their harm. Finally, the impacts of the scheme on the Suffolk and Essex Coast and Heaths National Landscape must be dealt with effectively, but not only that; the applicant must ensure that the Secretary of State can meet the duty to "seek to further the purposes of the designation", when making the decision on this proposal. This issue also remains unresolved.

For all these reasons, and others set out in detail elsewhere, Suffolk County Council is of the view that development consent should not be granted and continues to object to the scheme.

New Armed Forces Covenant for Suffolk

As Britain prepares to honour its war dead in Remembrance Week a new pledge to support our serving and former personnel has been signed by Suffolk County Council.

The council is a signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant, a formal pledge by the nation to ensure that members of the military community—those who serve or have served, and their families—are treated fairly and with respect.

Launched in 2012, the original Covenant pledge focused on integration and shared armed forces community/civil society joint benefit projects.

It also set out the conditions to deliver the covenant locally such as the creation of an Armed Forces Covenant Partnership Board and the appointment of a politically independent Armed Forces Commissioner for Suffolk.

The new Covenant better reflects the engagement, learning, legislation, and delivery that has taken place since the original pledge signed by most local authorities, including Suffolk, since 2012.



It was signed Councillor Matthew Hicks, the leader of Suffolk County Council, supported by council chairman Councillor Jessica Fleming and Suffolk Armed Forces Commissioner Andrew Smith.

Councillor Hicks said: “Through Remembrance we rightly honour all those who gave their lives in conflict.

“However, it is also important that we recognise the unique contribution of those in our community who are serving now or who have served, which we do through the covenant. I am delighted to sign this new pledge.”

Councillor Fleming said: “Suffolk has a long and proud military heritage and continues to be home to serving personnel, veterans, reservists, and their families.

“As a council it is important that we recognise their dedication and sacrifice, and we are committed to ensuring they are not disadvantaged in accessing services, support, and opportunities.”

Councillor Mick Fraser, who is Suffolk County Council’s Armed Forces Champion, added: “It is important that we honour our Armed Forces community not only in words but through meaningful action.

“The Covenant helps ensure they feel valued, supported, and fully included in the life of the county.”

Andrew Smith, a Royal Air Force veteran who is currently Colonel Cadets for East Anglia and the chairman of the Suffolk branch of the armed forces charity SSAFA, said: “In recent years operations like Iraq and Afghanistan have highlighted issues like poor housing, mental health care, and medical support for veterans.

“The Covenant is a way to help address these concerns and I am delighted that Suffolk Council County Council continues to pledge its support.”

Council fears Sunnica is to become a ‘Trojan horse’ for new large infrastructure projects

Sunnica Ltd is a joint venture between Tribus Clean Energy and PS Renewables. They are hoping to extend the provision in their agreed planning permission, to secure 'future value-adding flexibility', as stated in their letter to government:

“To provide the Scheme with sufficient future value-adding flexibility in relation to adjacent land that may be subject to planning applications in conjunction with the Scheme.”



These changes would enable them to integrate future proposed developments that come forward, by allowing local planning applications to overlap with the entire boundaries of the Sunnica scheme.

It means that new, vast projects such as data centres could cover many hectares of land, on top of that covered by the already-agreed solar panels, battery storage and associated infrastructure.

A consultation on these proposed changes will begin in due course. However, while the proposal sets out a limited number of consultees, it is very important to recognise that any relevant party will be able to respond.

"It appears to me that the Sunnica solar farm is a Trojan horse - a devious way of introducing even more infrastructure into our county which is lucrative only for the developer and landowners while our communities and landscape pay a heavy price."

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Devolution, Local Government Reorganisation and NSIPs

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Devolution, Local Government Reorganisation and NSIPs, said:

"I stand by my previous comments that Sunnica is the poorest infrastructure application that I have ever dealt with.

"In a similar vein, we now learn that they want to move the goalposts on their application, to allow them to sweep through even more potential developments associated with the scheme. For example, this could be large data centres, potentially covering even more land.

"It appears to me that the Sunnica solar farm is a Trojan horse - a devious way of introducing even more infrastructure into our county which is lucrative only for the developer and landowners while our communities and landscape pay a heavy price.

"The approach Sunnica is taking shows complete contempt for local residents and communities.

"I strongly encourage all parishes, organisations, and individuals, who believe they may be affected by the proposed changes to respond to the consultation, when it commences."

17 November 2025: Since the publication of this news story, Sunnica Ltd has announced that it does not intend to proceed with the change concerning the 'future value-adding flexibility'. The consultation will solely focus on the amended Order Limits surrounding Burwell substation.



Investing in Creativity: Suffolk's Culture Project Fund Supports Young Artists at Gainsborough's House

Among the many projects supported in the fund's first year is Gainsborough's House in Sudbury, where new initiatives are helping young people find confidence, community, and creative opportunity through art.

The £500,000 Culture Project Fund, launched by Suffolk County Council in 2024, aims to strengthen the county's cultural life by supporting projects that increase access to creativity for people of all ages and backgrounds. Gainsborough's House has used this support to deliver two major programmes: Pulling Prints and the National Saturday Club.

Pulling Prints, launched this September, is a free printmaking programme for young adults aged 18–25 who are not currently in formal arts education. Participants are gaining hands-on experience in the Gainsborough's House Print Workshop, guided by practising artists and supported by cultural partners including the Mill Tye Gallery. Over six months, the group is learning new printmaking techniques, developing personal and professional skills, and preparing for a final public exhibition to showcase their work.

Alongside this, the National Saturday Club continues to provide free weekly art workshops for 13–16-year-olds from Sudbury and surrounding areas. Young people explore creative processes, experiment with materials, and gain confidence through mentorship from professional artists. The club also offers opportunities beyond Suffolk, including national exhibitions and masterclasses with leading creative professionals.

Both programmes demonstrate how the Culture Project Fund is empowering communities through creativity, particularly those who might not otherwise have access to cultural opportunities.

Councillor Nadia Cenci, Cabinet Member for Communities at Suffolk County Council, said:

"It's fantastic to see the real difference that our Culture Project Fund is making. Pulling Prints is giving young people the confidence, skills and support they need to explore their creativity and take the next step in their artistic journeys. This is exactly what the fund was designed to do, to ensure that everyone in Suffolk, no matter their background, can take part in and benefit from the arts."

Calvin Winner, Executive Director at Gainsborough's House, said:

"We are extremely grateful to Suffolk County Council for supporting our programmes and working in partnership to open doors for young people who may not otherwise have access to creative opportunities. Gainsborough's House is an artist's home, a place where creativity lives and grows. Through partnerships and shared vision, we can help young people to become the artists and cultural makers of tomorrow, right here in Suffolk."



The success of these projects reflects the Culture Project Fund's wider mission to ensure that arts and culture are accessible to all, fostering wellbeing, confidence, and inclusion through creative engagement.

Applications for the 2026 Culture Project Fund are now open, with grants available for projects large and small. Community groups, museums, arts organisations, and freelancers are all encouraged to apply.

Find out more and apply at: www.suffolk.gov.uk/cultureprojectfund

Leading from the Front: Football Club Boss Gets Checked to Inspire Fans

NHS Health Checks aim to detect early signs of conditions such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, kidney disease, and dementia. Undertaken by a trained healthcare professional from Suffolk GP Federation they are open to people between the ages of 40 and 74 years that are registered with a Suffolk GP practice, haven't had a check in the last 5 years and don't have a pre-diagnosed condition.

It takes just 20–30 minutes and can help people take proactive steps to improve their health and reduce future risks.

Mark Ashton said:

"It's about setting an example, if we want our community to stay match fit, we've got to lead the way.

"Having a check is a great way to get an assessment of your overall health, identifying and addressing any problems that might be lurking round the corner. It's quick, easy, and could make all the difference. My message is, if I can do it, so can you."

Councillor Steve Wiles, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Protection at Suffolk County Council said

"It's fantastic to see our local football leaders stepping up and showing that health really matters. It shows that looking after your health is something we can all get behind.

"These checks are quick, free, and could make a real difference. If you're eligible, don't put it off, book yours today and give yourself the best chance of staying well."

Dr Ruth Bushaway, Medical Director at Suffolk GP Federation said

"We're here to make it easy and welcoming. It's not about judgement; our confidential service is about giving people the tools to look after themselves. Your health is your greatest asset - don't wait for extra time to protect it."



For more information or to book your free NHS Health Check, which are available throughout Suffolk at GP practices, pharmacies and community venues, visit www.suffolkfed.org.uk/healthcare-services/nhs-health-checks

Suffolk County Council continues to drive electric vehicle progress

The county council continues to be one of the country's leading local authorities for electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure, under its Plug In Suffolk project.

Plug in Suffolk has grown considerably in recent years to provide more EV charging solutions to more Suffolk residents.

The council has long recognised the importance of this, not only to support the ever-growing number of Suffolk drivers who are switching to EVs, but also to benefit the county's visitors and the tourism economy.

“We have been pioneers in Suffolk, and are putting national funding to good use to find solutions to help our residents make the important transition to EVs.”

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Devolution, Local Government Reorganisation and NSIPs

The county council's latest EV charging solution is a trial of cross-pavement gullies. It is working with around 30 residents who do not have off-street parking to easily charge. The trial has seen each homeowner have a gully installed across the pavement, allowing them to safely run a cable from their house, through the gully, to their car.

The success of the project will be assessed in early 2026, to see if it can be rolled out further. Early indications are that it has proved popular.

Homeowner, John Taylor from Ipswich, said:

“I've been an EV driver for 10 years and was used to relying on a mix of workplace chargers, public chargepoints in council car parks and at supermarkets.

“Having the charge gully has been transformational, allowing me to charge off my solar panels and cheap renewable grid electricity, saving me over £500 a year! – I'm proof that it is possible for average and low earners to go electric.”

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Devolution, Local Government Reorganisation and NSIPs, said:

“It was a real pleasure to meet John and see what a success the charging gully has been. For him, it has been revolutionary, and just as importantly it has not been a hazard for those using the pavement.



“That’s exactly what we’ve been achieving with Plug In Suffolk - solutions to EV charging for those that want to move away from petrol and diesel cars, but don’t have off-street parking to simply install their own charger by their driveway.

“I’m proud that the county council has been leading the way in EV progress for many years, and will continue to do so.”

Following the site visit to the cross-pavement charging installation, the minister was invited to Suffolk County Council, for a meeting to discuss the council’s experience of EV funding, and its wider support for the EV transition.

On the ministerial visit, Councillor Richard Rout said:

“It was good to sit down with the minister, in Suffolk, and discuss the opportunities and challenges that the county council faces with EV infrastructure.

“We have been pioneers in Suffolk, and are putting national funding to good use to find solutions to help our residents make the important transition to EVs.

“However rumours that the Chancellor’s upcoming Budget plans might include a pay-per-mile EV tax do concern me and I raised this with the minister.

“To my mind, this would undo a lot of the good work that has been done to date, punish existing EV owners who have been sold the vehicles on the basis they save money, and create yet another barrier to ownership. It would be a retrograde step.”

The Plug In Suffolk project began nearly seven years ago, as the UK’s first ‘fully open’ public fast charging network for electric vehicles, meaning drivers simply pay by contactless payment with no need to register their details. Around 100 of these chargepoints were installed in largely rural locations, such as community centres.

Following a successful bid in March 2024 to the government’s Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund, the county council was awarded £5.3 million to install on-street chargepoints.

It was the first local authority in England to both award their LEVI main funding tender, and subsequently sign a contract with an operator, *Believ*, who are providing a further £16 million of funding, meaning Suffolk will see 6,000 chargepoints installed.

After close work with district and borough councils, communities, *Believ*, and from a survey to residents last year, the first of these on-street installations is beginning this month (November 2025).

Find out more about [Plug in Suffolk](#) on the Suffolk County Council website.



OPINION: How Local Culture projects are Bringing Suffolk Together

It's a real pleasure to be writing my first column as Suffolk County Council's new Cabinet Member for Communities and to be able to share some good news.

Our £500,000 Culture Project Fund is open again for its second year. The fund supports arts and museum projects of all sizes across Suffolk, helping creativity to thrive in our towns and villages.

As someone who has always been passionate about theatre, I've seen how powerful the arts can be in bringing people together. Whether it's a local play, an exhibition, or a creative workshop, these projects can make a real difference to people's confidence, wellbeing, and sense of belonging.

In its first year, the Culture Project Fund supported a wide range of projects, and it's been brilliant to see what has been achieved. In Stowmarket, Jubilant brought together schools, artists and young performers in a youth-led celebration of local creativity. In Sudbury, Gainsborough's House launched Pulling Prints, a free printmaking course for 18- to 25-year-olds. Over six months, participants are developing new skills, working with professional artists and preparing to exhibit their work at the Mill Tye Gallery.

But this fund isn't just about young people, it's for everyone. We've supported projects that reach adults from all backgrounds and communities. Future Female Society in Ipswich is running a podcast series with refugee women, giving them space to share their stories and connect with others. Eastern Angles is creating a new touring play exploring the teaching of sign language, while The HAL Company in Bury St Edmunds is developing a theatre piece with people who have experienced life after prison.

These projects show how culture can help people build confidence, learn new skills and feel part of something bigger. They also show how creative activity contributes to other important goals improving wellbeing, strengthening local economies and supporting inclusion across Suffolk.

Applications for the second year of the fund are now open, with grants available for projects large and small. Whether you're part of a community group, a museum, a local arts organisation or a creative freelancer, we'd love to hear your ideas.

By investing in culture, we're investing in Suffolk's communities. These projects remind us that creativity isn't just about performance or exhibitions it's about people coming together, learning from one another and celebrating what makes this county such a great place to live.

For more information or to apply, visit www.suffolk.gov.uk/cultureprojectfund.



Have your say on plans for key Ipswich town centre route

Suffolk County Council is asking residents, businesses and local groups for their views on proposals for a new cycle path along a key Ipswich town centre route.

The cycle path would be in Princes Street and would provide a continuous, high-quality route supporting active travel from Ipswich railway station to the town centre.

The council wants Princes Street to become safer, more accessible and more enjoyable for everyone to walk, wheel and cycle while ensuring those who need to travel by car can still do so easily and directly.

It has now launched a public consultation to refine and finalise the proposals, which are being funded by Active Travel England.

They are:

- A new segregated two-way cycle path along the east side of Princes Street (between the Chancery Road / Grafton Way junction and Civic Drive).
- Update to priority crossings for pedestrians across Portman Road, Chalon Street, and Friars Bridge Road.

An [online survey](#) is now underway and runs until Monday December 22.

An unmanned public display will also be available at Endeavour House in Ipswich until December 22 (10am–4pm).

Councillor Chris Chambers, Suffolk County Council Cabinet member for Sustainable Transport, said: “If you live or work in Ipswich please let us know what you think.

“We want to hear from the community not only on the proposals but what else we can do to improve the route from Ipswich railway station into the town centre to make sure that it works for everyone.

“People’s feedback is important as it helps us address local challenges and design a space that supports how they live, travel and move through where they live and work.”

This project forms part of Suffolk’s wider Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) to deliver safer, greener routes across the county.

For more details go to the [Princes Street Active Travel website](#).



One Suffolk plan gains county-wide backing as Government launches consultation

It comes as the Government launches a [consultation on the future of local councils in Suffolk](#), which is likely to see either one or as many as three councils tasked with delivering services for the next 50 years.

Millions of pounds of taxpayers' money is at stake, as is the sustainability and delivery of critical public services like social care, highways and housing.

Suffolk businessman, Richard Brame, said:

"I would like to see one unitary council that is better connected but better connected with business too. So, when we are looking to have a discussion about property, broadband or rates, we know where to go. Nobody does at the moment and frequently it's more than one place.

"If this was a business, there would be no question. Would you have three CFOs, or would you have one? Would you have three HR departments, or would you have one?"

"From a business perspective, from a strategic perspective, one unitary is a really obvious route to go down."

Pete Waters, executive director of Visit East Anglia, said:

"Visitors do not recognise current district authority geographies, they go where they want in Suffolk. Visitors do recognise counties. LGR offers the opportunity for Visit East of England (VEE) to market locations based on their draw for visitors, rather than arbitrary council boundaries.

"Working with one county unitary would give VEE the opportunity to contribute to the bigger strategic picture for Suffolk's visitor economy, rather than focus on arbitrary boundaries."

Nick Hulme, chief executive of East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust, said:

"The fragmentation that would result from dividing governance and service provision across three councils poses potential risks to patient care continuity and system efficiency.

"A multicouncil model would likely perpetuate the postcode lottery we already contend with - where patients face unequal access to services depending on their location.

"A single unitary council would provide a unified governance structure, enabling consistent policy, streamlined decision-making, and more effective joint planning across the region."

Prema Fairburn-Dorai, Suffolk Care Association chairperson, said:



“Although it is not the ideal solution to the social care crisis, the majority of our members are in favour of a One Suffolk model as it will in the long run cause less disruption and will afford continuity of services to vulnerable individuals in Suffolk.”

David Barker MBE, Suffolk farmer, said:

“It will make life so much easier for farmers to have a consistent approach from one council. We have one farm at Westhorpe and one at Great Ashfield, and under the three tier proposal they would be in different areas – which really wouldn’t make a lot of sense.

“I’ve also been involved with the local access forum, and we work with one Suffolk County Council across the whole of Suffolk. That makes so much more sense than having three different councils with three different local access forums.

“The One Suffolk business case demonstrates that a single unitary for Suffolk is the only financially viable option. In the first five years, it will see savings of £78.2 million, while three councils would cost a £145.3 million more than the current two-tier system.

"Additionally, one council would save £39.4 million a year from year six, whereas three would cost £13.1 million more than the current model. The business case is built on rigorous financial analysis of Suffolk-based data conducted by global advisory firm Grant Thornton, rather than using generic national modelling as used in the three-council model."

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council’s cabinet member for devolution, local government reform and NSIPs, said:

“The time has come for everyone in Suffolk to let the government know their views on the future of local councils. Do we want a local authority that is smarter, simpler and better - leading to better outcomes for residents and businesses? Or a factional group of councils that would pit different areas against each other and be in financial peril from day one?

“Detailed analysis has shown that One Suffolk would save £39.4 million each year, meaning town and parish councils can be empowered to do more if they want, our highways services can be revitalised and a new deal for market towns backed by a £40 million capital investment fund can be launched. This is all possible without any loss of local identity or understanding. It will only strengthen it.

“The alternative three-council idea is based on an unrealistic proposal and built on promises that have failed elsewhere. It would put at risk those most in need and, after five years, leave Suffolk £145.3 million in the red. Simply put, it is a reckless use of public money.

“Thousands have already engaged with us and helped shape the One Suffolk proposal. I urge everyone to have their say in the public consultation."

In addition to financial resilience, the One Suffolk plan spells out how the proposed unitary council creates key benefits for the county, including:

- Harmonising Council Tax to the lowest level across Suffolk in year one. Based on current levels, this would result in Band D properties seeing a reduction of £245 in Ipswich, £17 in East Suffolk, £29 in West Suffolk, £19 in Babergh and a freeze in Mid Suffolk.
- A new deal for market towns, including Ipswich, backed by a £40 million capital investment fund, and a review of car parking charges and markets conducted in consultation with traders, businesses and representative bodies.
- Empowering communities by offering powers and funding to town and parish councils where these councils express a desire for additional responsibilities. Creating a new town council for Ipswich to enhance democratic representation.
- Building a strong, flourishing, and resilient local economy that serves all residents, businesses, and communities.
- A stronger voice for Suffolk through effective collaboration with the new mayor, focusing on clear investment priorities that maximise benefits.

One Suffolk is one of two proposals being consulted on by the government. The alternative, from Suffolk's districts and borough councils, would see Suffolk split into three arbitrary council areas, putting key services such as social care at serious risk and costing millions to set up.

The three unitary proposal relies on business cases produced elsewhere in the country that have since proved undeliverable. It does not address the enormous risks and costs associated with splitting up critical services such as social care and children's services and poses clear risks to the most vulnerable people in Suffolk.

Not only would three councils cost significantly more than a single unitary for Suffolk - it would also cost more than the current two-tier system. By creating three new areas across Suffolk, essential county-wide services like adult social care and children's services must be disaggregated - resulting in higher costs and a postcode lottery for the county's most vulnerable residents.

The public [consultation on the future of local councils in Suffolk](#) will be live until **11 January 2026**. After the consultation period, Government ministers will be making their final decision on how to proceed with LGR in Suffolk in early 2026.

Seasoned political journalist backs One Suffolk

A political journalist with over 40 years' experience scrutinising and reporting on councils in Suffolk has backed the plan to scrap the county's six councils and replace them with one authority delivering all local and county wide services.

Suffolk-born Paul Geater, who currently presents a current affairs radio talk show on Suffolk Sound but previously spent decades as a political correspondent for the East Anglian Daily Times and Ipswich Star, said:



“I started off by thinking the three councils option was probably going to be the best [but], the more I have heard, the more I have looked into this, the more convinced I have been that the One Suffolk option is the only real sensible choice for the government.

“I am highly sceptical about the financial claims both sides have made about this. [But] I am much more sceptical about the claims from the three councils, I just don’t see how their proposals can achieve the kind of savings the government is talking about.

“It comes down to a few things. First of all, Suffolk has an identity and has had an identity for more than a millennium. I don’t think I come from Ipswich and South Suffolk, Suffolk has its own identity. I was born and brought up in the East of Suffolk... I lived for a time and worked for a time in Bury St Edmunds in West Suffolk. It is all Suffolk to me and I think that identity is very important.

“When you look at how the proposed splitting is being done, frankly the three Suffolk people seem to be using a kind of geographical gymnastics to try to equalise figures in all kinds of places and it really does develop something of a dog’s breakfast of a map. Stowmarket has absolutely nothing to do with Lowestoft, it looks to either Ipswich or Bury St Edmunds and yet the idea is that local government should be run for Stowmarket from Lowestoft. It doesn’t make any sense. It just looks to be as if you’re building in duplication.

“I have filled in my consultation form and said that as a reporter who spent 40 years covering local government in this county that my feeling is the only solution for Suffolk is to have one council for the county.”

Keep Suffolk Smiling: New Video Shines a Light on Children’s Oral Health and School Toothbrushing Programme

Watch the video here: www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/healthy-you/children-and-young-people/childrens-dental-health

Tooth decay remains one of the most common childhood diseases and a leading cause of hospital admissions among young children, yet it is almost entirely preventable. Establishing good brushing routines at home, with parents supporting children to brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, is one of the most effective ways to protect their teeth. Alongside this, Suffolk is taking further steps through community engagement, early education and local partnerships to help with toothbrushing.

This includes the supervised toothbrushing programme, which helps children learn how to brush their teeth properly, safely and consistently. It’s proven to reduce tooth decay, particularly in areas where oral health inequalities are greatest. Since 2017, Suffolk County Council has been delivering daily brushing sessions using fluoride toothpaste, helping children develop strong oral hygiene habits that last a lifetime.



Local settings already taking part have seen encouraging results. Staff report that children enjoy brushing together, parents notice improved routines at home, and teachers find the programme easy to manage once it becomes part of the daily schedule.

Councillor Steve Wiles, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Protection, said:

“Building good oral health starts at home, with parents helping children to develop healthy brushing habits from an early age.

“Our supervised toothbrushing programme builds on this by giving every child the chance to learn and practise those skills at school, setting them up for a lifetime of good health. I would encourage all schools and early years settings to get involved.”

Faye Turner, Assistant Headteacher at Ranelagh Road Primary School said;

“We have taken part in the supervised toothbrushing for the past few years. We do this with our children from nursery through to Year 2. This has helped ensure children understand the importance of good oral health and this is now just part of their daily routine in school.

“We also share key messages with parents such as ideas for healthy snacks, the importance of fluoride and we encourage them to access a dentist. We feel that we are playing our part in the children developing good habits which will hopefully prevent tooth decay and the need for medical interventions.”

Support is available through training, resources, and practical guidance.

To find out more or register your interest in Keep Suffolk Smiling at childrenandfamilies@suffolk.gov.uk.

Since 1995, Public Health Suffolk has worked alongside partners to help families across the county look after their children’s teeth. Thirty years on, Keep Suffolk Smiling continues to grow, tackling health inequalities and supporting thousands of children to develop healthy smiles for life.

New Year Active Travel improvements for Sudbury

Work is to start in the New Year on a new walking, wheeling, and cycling route in Sudbury to help people to get around safely and sustainably.

The scheme in Melford Road will see the replacement of existing zebra crossings with parallel crossings, and installation of a shared-use off-road pedestrian and cycle facility, with cycle priority across side roads.

Works are scheduled to begin in mid-January 2026 and are expected to be complete by the end of March 2026.



To minimise disruption to the local community work will be undertaken in three phases.

- **Phase One:** This will require the **closure of the A131 northbound**, including Beaconsfield Road, and is expected to be around 25 days in duration.
- **Phase Two:** This will require the **closure of the A131 southbound**, including York Road. This phase will also take around 25 days.
- **Phase Three:** There will be a **full overnight closure of the A131 in both directions**, including Beaconsfield Road and York Road, to undertake resurfacing and install road markings. This closure is scheduled to be in place for three nights.

The exact dates of the scheme are still to be confirmed and will be communicated before works start, along with the duration of the closures and suggested diversion routes.

Councillor Chris Chambers, Suffolk County Council Cabinet member for Transport Strategy, acknowledged that people would have concerns about the impact on traffic of the works, but the effects would be short term.

“This scheme will create a new walking, wheeling and cycling route in Sudbury to help people to travel safely and sustainably,” he said.

“We are working to make it easier for residents and businesses in our towns to get around without having to rely on private vehicles.

“Reducing congestion frees up road space and creates a better environment for everyone. “Thank you to everyone in advance for your patience and understanding while we deliver this Active Travel Scheme to make it easier to walk, cycle and wheel around Sudbury.”

The project forms part of Suffolk’s wider Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) to deliver safer, greener routes across the county.

Discover Suffolk through ‘Wonderlust by Bus’

“Wonderlust by Bus” is a new map, featuring many popular tourist locations across the county, helping visitors to plan their journeys through passenger transport and active travel options.

A play on the word Wanderlust, meaning a desire to travel, “Wonderlust by Bus” showcases all of the Wonders that can be seen when travelling across Suffolk.

The map features bus route and timetable information via SuffolkOnBoard and directs people to Good Journey, for walking and cycling routes, a cycling journey planner and discounts on entry to Good Journey destinations such as cafés and gift shops, for visitors who have travelled using sustainable transport.

The interactive map can be viewed online at: www.wonderlustbybus.co.uk



Residents and visitors to Suffolk can also pick up a copy of the map from more than 900 locations across the county, including libraries, local shops, rail stations, hotels and leisure centres.

The map is also displayed in the reception of the council's head office, Endeavour House, via a 2-metre x 3-metre mural on the wall.

"I'm delighted to launch the "Wonderlust by Bus" map, which we hope will make it even easier for people to plan their journeys and discover some of the most exciting and inspiring locations Suffolk has to offer. Through Suffolk on Board and Good Journey, "Wonderlust by Bus" highlights discounts, route information, and active travel options, making travel across the county simpler, and more sustainable."

Cllr Chris Chambers, Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy, Planning and Waste

The map has been designed by Steamboat Creative, led by Reb Capper, a Felixstowe-based design studio with a deep passion for illustration and cartography - using beautifully crafted visuals to highlight key information and uncover the "wee wonders" across Suffolk and beyond.

Reb Capper, said: "When Suffolk County Council discovered Steamboat's work through the *Suffolk Map of Mystery*, it felt like pure kismet: a shared belief that creating something bespoke, intricate, and fun could help bring SuffolkOnBoard - and all the places it connects - to life.

"The resulting maps and supporting website are not only useful, they also celebrate the rich variety of experiences Suffolk has to offer. The map demonstrates that by exploring some of these destinations by simply hopping on a bus, the journey itself can become part of the sight-seeing adventure. It's an experience people can enjoy both on their phones and as a beautifully crafted physical map. It's something to open, explore, and return to time and again.

"We hope to keep adding more marvels and helpful nuggets along the way - from practical service information to hidden gems, as we continue expanding SuffolkOnBoard's very own mini-universe across the county."

As part of the *Wonderlust by Bus* project, Ascender Creative — the marketing partner for the Enhanced Bus Partnership — worked closely with Suffolkonboard and Steamboat Creative to deliver the project's online experience. This collaboration includes the development of all functionality behind the **wonderlustbybus.co.uk** website.

Ascender Creative and Suffolkonboard plan to expand and enhance the "Wonderlust by Bus" platform, with eight additional Suffolk locations set to launch soon.



Way To Go volunteers recognised for service

The hard work and dedication of two volunteers in promoting walking and cycling have been recognised by the Way to Go active travel team at Suffolk County Council.

Chris Windross from Lowestoft and Ian Panting from Ipswich were presented with certificates and £100 Go Outdoors vouchers at a recent celebration event held by the project team.

The awards came as part of third anniversary celebrations for the Walking and Cycling for Wellbeing project.

The project offers free walking and cycling groups in Ipswich and Lowestoft, helping residents improve physical and mental health.

From relaxed “cuppa and a stroll” sessions to moderate and advanced walking and cycling groups, there is something for everyone and, so far, 668 residents have taken part in the programme.

Ian joined the Christchurch Park walking group in Ipswich in March 2024 and began volunteering later that year in September.

“Our dog had died and my wife and I missed our daily walks – it was a lonely time,” he said. “We heard about the weekly walks and decided to join. I started volunteering because I am always happy to help but, in the process, we’ve made some really good new friends.”

Chris also started volunteering last year, joining the Tuesday morning Carlton Marshes walking group in Lowestoft.

Having recently moved to the town from the south coast, Chris enjoys the social contact the role has given him.

“The biggest benefit is that it has really opened my eyes to what is on my doorstep. I have discovered amazing new places I would never have known existed,” he said.

Lorraine Baker, Project Lead at Suffolk County Council, said: “Chris and Ian have been reliable and supportive volunteers, always arriving with a smile whatever the weather. “They are such a great asset to the teams and we are very grateful for all their hard work and commitment.”

Councillor Chris Chambers, Suffolk County Council Cabinet member for Transport Strategy, said: “Volunteers like Chris and Ian are the bedrock of schemes like this.

“Their communities in Ipswich and Lowestoft have benefitted from their hard work and their awards are richly deserved. Well done!”



The cycling and walking groups are set to continue for another year, running until summer 2026.

More details can be found at the [Way To Go website](#), email thewaytogosuffolk@suffolk.gov.uk or telephone 01473 260060.

Suffolk Archives Awarded National Accreditation

Accreditation is the UK quality standard which recognises good performance in all areas of archive service delivery. Accredited Archive Services ensure the long-term collection, preservation and accessibility of our archive heritage.

Receiving it shows that Suffolk Archives, based at The Hold in Ipswich, has met clearly defined national standards relating to management and resourcing; the care of its unique collections and what the service offers to its entire range of users.

The Archive Service Accreditation Panel said Suffolk Archives was:

“A well-managed service, which runs an effective archive and local studies service from modern premises, including a commendable engagement programme.

“There is a strong understanding of the communities served, and a genuine appetite for co-creation and engagement with new groups. The public facilities at Ipswich are modern and of excellent quality.”

Cllr Nadia Cenci, Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet Member for Communities, said:

“We are absolutely delighted to receive Archive Service Accreditation. This achievement is a testament to the dedication and expertise of our Suffolk Archives team, who work tirelessly to preserve, celebrate and share our county’s rich history. We are incredibly proud of the outstanding service they provide to our communities, and this recognition reflects the high standards, passion and commitment that underpins the service.”

Suffolk Archives is the home to more than 900 years of local history. It collects, cares for, and shares the county’s stories through records that reflect Suffolk people’s lives, work, and heritage.