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March 2026 Town and Parish Newsletter

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To promote and support the health and wellbeing of all people in Suffolk



To strengthen our local economy



To provide value for money for the Suffolk taxpayer



To protect and enhance our environment



Contents

Page 4- **'Lollipops Aren't Just For Children' campaign hits the road**

A new Suffolk campaign aiming to raise motorist awareness around crossing patrols gets underway.

Page 5 - **97.8% of pupils receive a place at one of their preferred Secondary Schools on National Offer Day**

This year parents and carers of 97.8% of children were offered a place on National Offer Day at one of their three preferred schools and 92.9% were offered a place at their first preference school.

Page 6 - **Suffolk Archives Awarded National Accreditation**

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

Page 7 - **'Ignorant and Selfish': High Court threatens prison for serial Suffolk waste offender**

A Suffolk resident has been given six months by the High Court to clear his land of waste, or face time in jail, following successful action by Suffolk County Council.

Page 8 - **Opinion: Why school crossing patrol officers are so important**

By Councillor Chris Chambers, Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy

Page 9 - **New safety improvements for pedestrians and cyclists between Ipswich Hospital and The Waterfront**

Works are scheduled to start in April and will see improved junctions, pedestrian crossings and traffic calming measures.

Page 11 - **Suffolk Parents urged to get children vaccinated amid national measles resurgence**

Parents and carers in Suffolk are being urged to ensure their children are fully vaccinated against measles, mumps, rubella, and chickenpox, following a resurgence of measles cases nationally over the past two years.

Page 12 - **Two new crossings approved for key Haverhill route**

Suffolk County Council is to install new crossings to improve safety on the Railway Walk.

Page 13 - **'Keep It Simple, Keep It Safe': Suffolk Promotes Safer Sleeping Week**

Parents and carers are urged to follow the latest advice this Safe Sleeping Week (9-13 March) to keep babies sleeping safely and to avoid potentially unsafe products.

Page 14 - **This No Smoking Day, campaign urges smokers to protect their health and their homes**

Feel Good Suffolk and Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) are joining forces this No Smoking Day (11 March 2026), to highlight the dangers of smoking, not only to health, but also to safety in the home.

Page 15 - **Suffolk Business Board reports major first year impact on growth, investment and skills**

The Suffolk Business Board has published its first Annual Review, showing a year of clear and measurable progress for Suffolk's economy.

Page 17 - **New Waterfront walk showcases Ipswich attractions**

The Ipswich Waterfront Walk passes under the Orwell Bridge and forms part of the King Charles III coastal path.

Page 18 - **HGV weight restriction to be introduced in north Ipswich residential areas**

A traffic regulation order will prevent HGVs from using residential roads as short cuts.

Page 19 - **£3.9 million investment proposal to protect and enhance Public Rights of Way**

The council's Cabinet is to consider a plan to fund replacement or refurbishment of more than 700 structures across the county.

Page 20 - **New Ipswich recycling centre to break ground, which will provide smoother, safer visits**

Suffolk County Council is due to begin work on a new recycling centre in Ipswich, just off Hadleigh Road.

Page 21 - **Government decision on energy projects could threaten Suffolk communities**

Local communities could suffer at the hands of large energy infrastructure projects, as the UK government looks to push schemes through more quickly and take away powers from local authorities.

Page 22 - **Suffolk skills boost for engineering and construction**

East Coast College and Suffolk New College will be enhancing their training facilities for civil engineering and construction, thanks to funding from Sizewell C, managed by Suffolk County Council.

Page 24 - **Innovative EV charging for Suffolk's conservation areas**

Suffolk County Council will provide over 1,000 electric vehicle public chargepoints to residents in conservation areas across the county.

Page 26 - **Government announces outcome of local government reorganisation in Suffolk**

The government has announced its decision on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Suffolk in 2028, opting for three unitary authorities.

Page 27 - **Suffolk County Council highlights support available for survivors of sexual harm**

In light of recent national media coverage relating to sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking cases, Suffolk County Council is highlighting the support available to residents who may be affected.

Page 28 - **Suffolk road schemes included in Government's five year investment plan**

The Department for Transport has announced schemes in Suffolk will feature in the next five year plan for trunk roads in England.

Page 29 - **East of England launches plans to lead UK in Nuclear Operations and Maintenance**

A national Nuclear Centre of Excellence has been proposed for Suffolk, to maximise the opportunities of the nuclear energy sector for the East of England. This proposal is included in the launch of a new 'Nuclear Prospectus' by GENERATE.

Page 31 - **County council continues to highlight issues with Sea Link energy project**

The examination of National Grid's Sea Link project continues, with Suffolk County Council addressing serious concerns about access routes, the converter station, and for residents in Whitearch Park residential home near Benhall.

'Lollipops Aren't Just For Children' campaign hits the road

A new road safety campaign urging drivers across Suffolk to stop when instructed and help keep everybody safe on busy roads is being launched.

The 'Lollipops Aren't Just For Children' campaign begins on Monday March 2 and reminds motorists of their legal obligation to comply with the stop signs displayed by more than 55 school crossing patrols across the county.

It has been launched after incidents involving crossing patrol officers being abused, and following the trial of a small number of body-worn cameras which has resulted in successful prosecutions their use will now be rolled out across the county.

Incidents include:

- An officer in Cliff Lane, Ipswich, was verbally abused by a teenage cyclist on two consecutive afternoons after she politely asked him to dismount from his bike and walk in front of her so she could keep traffic stopped to allow him to cross
- An officer in St Margarets Road, Lowestoft, was verbally abused by a man who then spat on the footpath towards her
- An officer working outside Felixstowe school on Maidstone Road had stopped traffic to allow children and parents to cross the road safely when a hurled abuse at a couple in a small red car in front and the officer

Under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 motorists must stop when signalled by a school crossing patrol or risk a fine up to £1,000 and incur three penalty points.

In more serious cases a driving ban can also be incurred.

The Highway Code also states that when the patrol steps into the road with the stop sign upright, drivers must stop to let pedestrians cross safely.



Although mostly associated with helping children cross the road safely, school crossing patrol officers have the legal authority to stop traffic for any pedestrian, not just pupils travelling to and from school.

The six-week awareness campaign will run across Suffolk and includes:

- Advertising on the back of buses around Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft
- Radio advertisements on Heart Suffolk
- Video content featuring crossing patrol officers sharing why they value their role in keeping communities safe
- Targeted social media advertising

Councillor Chris Chambers, Suffolk County Council Cabinet member for Transport Strategy, said: “We’ve launched ‘Lollipops Aren’t Just For Children’ to remind drivers to slow down, be patient and show respect at patrol points.

“While most drivers follow the rules, some continue to ignore stop signals and verbally abuse crossing patrol officers, people - including children – using the crossing, and other motorists who are doing what they are supposed to.

“This sort of behaviour is completely unacceptable and by launching this awareness campaign to remind people of their responsibilities, together we can help make Suffolk’s roads safer for everyone.”

The campaign supports Suffolk County Council’s wider road safety and active travel strategy which encourages residents to walk, wheel or cycle for local journeys or as part of a longer one.

School crossing patrol officers play a vital role in enabling safer streets and supporting active travel for residents across Suffolk.

97.8% of pupils receive a place at one of their preferred Secondary Schools on National Offer Day

Suffolk County Council received 7,742 applications from parents and carers indicating which secondary school they would prefer their child to transfer to in September 2026.

Families who applied online can log in to the online service from today to see the school their child has been offered. They will also receive an email to confirm this offer unless they have indicated that they do not wish to. Letters will be sent to parents who made a paper application by second class post today (2 March 2026).

Councillor Andrew Reid, Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet Member for Education and SEND said: “It is great to see that once again the majority of families have been offered a place at one of their preferred secondary schools.”



“We do understand that not all families will have received a place at their preferred school. If a parent or carer’s preference for a Suffolk school has been refused, their child’s name will automatically be added to the waiting list for that school. Parents and carers will also be advised how to lodge an appeal should they wish to do so.”

Published criteria were used to decide which children had priority for school places to ensure that the process was fair and clear.

Once school places have been confirmed, parents and carers need to consider how their child will get to and from school. If their child is eligible for Suffolk County Council funded school travel, they will receive an email by Thursday 2 April 2026 with details of how to opt-in and when.

Further information on secondary school admissions can be found at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions.

Suffolk Archives Awarded National Accreditation

John Sheridan, Chief Digital and Information Officer for The National Archives presented the award to Cllr Nadia Cenci, Cabinet Member for Communities and Judith Berry, Head of Suffolk Archives and The Hold.

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.

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.”

John Sheridan, Chief Digital and Information Officer for The National Archives said; "Congratulations for your vision, commitment and determination that has allowed you to create this phenomenal facility. Archives matter. The records they hold tell us about where we've come from, they anchor us at a time of sometimes bewildering change.

"The three things that stood out for me was this is a living archive that's bringing new collections into its custody. You've created partnerships to digitise records and make them



more widely available, to transmit records through time and through generations of technological change.

"Thirdly, this is an archive that knows that it needs to be used by its communities, whether it's through public engagement, outreach, or education. For you to reach and impact so many is an enormous credit to you all. This truly is an archive service that Suffolk can be proud of."

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.

'Ignorant and Selfish': High Court threatens prison for serial Suffolk waste offender

Mr Paul Arthur Fenton, 60, of The Street in Ipswich, has been served an injunction (dated 19 February 2026) concerning land at Flowton Pit and Brooke Farm in Flowton.

Mr Fenton has been using these sites for many years to illegally store waste. He must now lawfully clear all waste materials within six months of the order. He must also not allow the land to be used for waste storage in the future.

"Mr Fenton's ignorant and selfish behaviour will not be tolerated. Suffolk County Council will not back down in bringing him to justice and we will continue to stand up for those living in the area."

Councillor Chris Chambers, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy, Planning and Waste

Disobeying the order may hold Mr Fenton in contempt of court which may result in him being imprisoned, fined or having his assets seized.
Suffolk County Council was also awarded its costs.

Councillor Chris Chambers, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy, Planning and Waste, said:

"I hope that the penny finally drops for Mr Fenton, and he now listens to the High Court, with the prospect of a prison sentence hanging over his head.

"His disregard for anyone else has caused upset in the local community, who have had to put up with this illegal dumping site for years. His actions will also have caused untold damage to the local environment, which must now stop.

"His ignorant and selfish behaviour will not be tolerated. Suffolk County Council will not back down in bringing him to justice and we will continue to stand up for those living in the area."



Mr Fenton has been successfully prosecuted on four previous occasions by Suffolk County Council in 2001, 2007, 2010, 2012. He was also subject to a previous High Court interim injunction in 2024. However he has never complied with any of the rulings to clear the land of waste.

At the latest hearing on 19 February 2026, Mr Fenton did attend the beginning of the seven hour proceedings at the High Court, but left halfway through.

Opinion: Why school crossing patrol officers are so important

It is a sight that we all see and take for granted - a school crossing patrol officer stepping calmly into the road, holding up that familiar round sign and children cross a busy road in safety.

Most motorists happily play their part, but not all – which is why Suffolk County Council’s new campaign, *Lollipops Aren’t Just For Children*, is so important.

From Monday March 2, we are reminding drivers across the county that when a patrol officer steps into the road and raises that sign, it is not a suggestion. It is the law. We have seen incidents that are as disappointing as they are alarming.

In Ipswich, an officer was verbally abused by a teenage cyclist on two consecutive afternoons after she politely asked him to dismount and walk his bike across so she could safely hold traffic. In Lowestoft, a man not only shouted abuse but spat on the footpath towards a patrol officer. Outside a school on Maidstone Road in Felixstowe, an officer who had stopped traffic to allow families to cross was subjected to abuse alongside a couple in a small red car who were simply complying with the law.

This sort of behaviour is as ludicrous as it is unacceptable. No-one should have to face this sort of behaviour while just doing their job.

Legally, under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, motorists who fail to stop can face a fine of up to £1,000 and three penalty points while in more serious cases, a driving ban is possible.

The Highway Code is equally clear: drivers must stop and allow pedestrians to cross safely. These officers – more than 55 of them across Suffolk – are there in all weathers to protect children, parents, grandparents and, crucially, any pedestrian who needs to cross safely. That is something many people forget: their powers are not limited to pupils travelling to and from school. They can stop traffic for anyone.

After trialling a small number of body-worn cameras we are now rolling them out across the county.



Over the next six weeks, you will see and hear the campaign – on the backs of buses in Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds, and Lowestoft, on Heart Suffolk radio, and across social media. You can also watch videos on the [Suffolk County Council YouTube page](#) of crossing patrol officers themselves explaining why they value their role.

But this campaign is about more than enforcement. It is about respect and patience, recognising that a few seconds spent waiting at a raised stop sign are a small price to pay for someone else's safety.

It also connects directly to our wider ambition for Suffolk: to make it easier and safer for people to walk, wheel and cycle.

We are investing in that wider vision through schemes such as Active Travel Woodbridge, improvements along Princes Street and Nacton Road in Ipswich, the Elmswell to Woolpit connection, and Quietways routes including Barnby to Carlton Colville and Onehouse to Woolpit. Each project is about giving residents genuine choice in how they travel.

We are also building on the success of our active travel social prescribing pilot in Ipswich and Lowestoft by rolling out free walking and cycling activities across Suffolk.

That includes guided walks for beginners, family-friendly cycle sessions, bike confidence training, and opportunities for those returning to cycling after years away from the saddle. For some, it is about physical health. For others, it is about mental wellbeing or tackling isolation. For many, it is about rediscovering their local area at a human pace.

As spring arrives, there is no better time to step outside and consider leaving the car at home for shorter trips. Choosing to walk, wheel or cycle is not about forcing change; it is about offering options.

But those options only work if people feel safe, which is why this campaign matters so much.

When drivers slow down, stop and show respect, they are not just obeying the law – they are helping to build the safer, more active Suffolk we all want to see.

New safety improvements for pedestrians and cyclists between Ipswich Hospital and The Waterfront

Better pedestrian crossings and road junctions are on their way to a key route in Ipswich thanks to a package of improvements to be installed by Suffolk County Council.

Work on the programme of schemes between Ipswich Hospital and The Waterfront is scheduled to start next month.

The works are being funded by Active Travel England and will enhance safety, and accessibility and aims to encourage more people to walk, cycle and wheel.



The project includes upgrades to existing infrastructure and improvements at busy junctions.

A public consultation was held in summer 2024 to gather feedback from residents, stakeholders and partners.

That feedback was used to help shape the designs of the improvements and reflect local priorities while continuing to meet the scheme's core objectives.

Councillor Chris Chambers, Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy, said: "Improving the route between Ipswich Hospital and the Waterfront strengthens connections between two key destinations used daily by residents, workers, and visitors.

"Encouraging more people to walk, wheel or cycle for short trips supports better physical and mental health, helps reduce congestion and improves air quality.

"This scheme will also support local businesses, particularly along Foxhall Road, by creating safer, more attractive streets that can increase footfall and local spending."

Construction is scheduled between April and August 2026 with timelines designed to minimise disruption.

The route follows Back Hamlet, Grove Lane, Foxhall Road, Wellesley Road, Marlborough Road, Cauldwell Hall Road, Freehold Road and Newbury Road.

Works are planned to take place at:

- **Cauldwell Hall Road**
Following requests for an improved crossing, a parallel crossing – a zebra crossing with a dedicated cycle lane – is to be installed
- **St John's Road**
The junction will be tightened to help slow vehicle speeds and improve safety, directly responding to concerns about driver behaviour
- **Freehold Road**
Westbound cyclists will be able to either use the crossing or enter the route via a new dropped kerb south of Freehold Road
- **Grove Lane**
A signalised crossing will be installed on the southern side of Finbars Walk, and a new two-way cycle track will be introduced on the west side of the road. Works will be coordinated with planned footway maintenance on Grove Lane and Foxhall Road.
- **Foxhall Road**
In addition to speed humps and traffic calming measures, a new 20mph speed limit will be introduced from Grove Lane to Foxhall Road. Improvements outside local



shops will be delivered using Active Travel funding and Ipswich Borough Council Towns Fund investment.

Suffolk County Council is co-ordinating works with Cadent's planned gas main replacements to reduce repeated road closures.

During the Grove Lane works, additional road and footway maintenance will also be carried out to maximise efficiency.

Suffolk Parents urged to get children vaccinated amid national measles resurgence

England has seen a return of measles outbreaks linked to falling vaccination uptake, and the UK recently lost its World Health Organization measles elimination status.

Vaccination rates remain below the 95% coverage needed to prevent outbreaks, with almost one in five children starting primary school not fully protected against serious diseases. Measles is one of the most infectious diseases in the world and can lead to complications including pneumonia, meningitis, and brain inflammation.

Health leaders are urging parents to get their children vaccinated in Suffolk to ensure the county maintains high levels of vaccination to protect local communities and prevent similar outbreaks.

Stuart Keeble, Director of Public Health at Suffolk County Council, said;
"We have seen the impact nationally when vaccination rates fall. Suffolk has good uptake compared to some areas, but we cannot be complacent.

"Vaccination remains the simplest and most effective way to protect children from serious illness. We're urging parents and carers to make sure their children are vaccinated and fully protected."

Since 1 January 2026, the NHS has introduced the MMRV vaccine, which protects against measles, mumps, rubella and chickenpox. It replaces the previous MMR vaccine by adding protection against chickenpox and helps ensure children are protected before starting nursery or school.

MMRV has been safely used in other countries for many years. Anyone eligible who has not yet received both doses of MMR or MMRV is encouraged to come forward to ensure they are fully protected.

For children born on or after 1 January 2025, MMRV is offered at:

- 12 months - first dose
- 18 months - second dose



Two doses provide strong protection and help safeguard vulnerable groups, including babies too young to be vaccinated and those with weakened immune systems. The NHS childhood immunisation programme prevents around 5,000 deaths every year in England. All childhood vaccinations are free on the NHS.

Dr Frankie Swords, executive medical director, NHS Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board, said:

“Vaccination is one of the important things we can do to protect the health of our children and those around them, which is why I urge parents and carers to ensure their children are up to date with their doses.

“Vaccinations are proven to be safe and effective and help prevent serious illness. Have a look at <https://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/> for more information or talk to one of your GP practice team.”

Parents and carers will usually be contacted by their GP practice when their child is due a routine vaccination. If your child has missed a vaccine and is over 18 months they can be caught up at any time. If you believe your child is due or has missed a vaccine, contact your GP practice to book an appointment.”

If you are unsure what vaccinations your child has already received, check the NHS app, their Red Book or speak to your GP practice.

Two new crossings approved for key Haverhill route

Suffolk County Council has approved plans to progress two new crossing schemes in Haverhill, improving safety and accessibility for people walking, wheeling and cycling.

The proposals focus on key crossing points along the Railway Walk — an important traffic-free route used by residents travelling across the town, including pupils travelling to and from school.

With the growth of Haverhill in recent years, use of the Railway Walk has increased significantly.

However, several road crossings along the route have been identified by residents as feeling difficult or unsafe.

Following engagement with local councillors and a review of traffic conditions, the County Council will now move forward to detailed design on improved crossings at:

- **Howe Road** – A new parallel crossing is proposed. This type of zebra crossing allows pedestrians and cyclists to cross safely. The location is particularly important for families and pupils accessing The New Cangle Primary School.

- **Suffolk Regiment Way** – A signalised toucan crossing is proposed. Given the traffic volumes and vehicle speeds on this road, traffic signals will provide a controlled crossing point for people walking and cycling.

The schemes have now received approval to progress to detailed design.

Construction dates will be confirmed once the designs are finalised and subject to the usual statutory processes.

Funding for the crossings will come from the County Council's Local Transport Grant, supporting delivery of the Local Transport Plan (2025), which prioritises safer and more sustainable travel options across Suffolk.

Councillor Chris Chambers, Suffolk County Council Cabinet member for Transport Strategy, said: "I am delighted that these works are to take place and I congratulate Haverhill councillor Joe Mason for his hard work in them doing so.

"Encouraging more people to walk, wheel or cycle for short trips supports better physical and mental health, helps reduce congestion and improves air quality, which is why this sort of investment in infrastructure is so important."

Suffolk County Council will continue working with local councillors and residents to explore further improvements for walking, wheeling and cycling in Haverhill, focusing on the town's priority routes and safety concerns.

'Keep It Simple, Keep It Safe': Suffolk Promotes Safer Sleeping Week

Suffolk's public health and trading standards teams are working together to promote top tips for safe sleeping and to recommend nursery and sleeping products that meet strict safety standards.

Cases of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) are thankfully rare, but health leads are highlighting important advice to reassure parents and carers with the confidence to provide the safest possible sleeping environment.

The key message from *The Lullaby Trust* for Safe Sleeping Week is 'keep it simple, keep it safe', encouraging parents and carers to only have a maximum of two items in a child's cot:

1. a firm, flat waterproof mattress, and;
2. lightweight bedding.

Other advice to reduce the risk of SIDS includes:

- the safest place for babies to sleep is in a cot or Moses basket in the same room as their parents/carers

- babies should sleep on their backs, placed on a firm, flat mattress with no toys or other excess items around
- maintain a comfortable room temperature – between 16°C and 20°C is ideal
- keep your baby's sleep environment smoke-free and never share a bed if you have consumed alcohol or drugs.

Over the last year, Suffolk's trading standards imports team have detained over 1150 unsafe baby sleeping products that have come through the Port of Felixstowe. The products failed testing, presenting risks such as choking, suffocation overheating and entrapment. Trading Standards is calling on parents and carers to be vigilant when purchasing baby sleep products, particularly avoiding so-called 'baby nests' or 'baby pillows' which could pose serious risks to the health and well-being of your child and, in worst cases, death.

Parents are asked not to use any of these products for at least the first 12 months and not to place these items in a cot or crib. Retailers are advised of their obligation under product safety law to only place safe products on the market and not to promote these items for children under the age of 12 months.

Cllr Steve Wiles, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Public protection said:

"This is important advice to reassure all parents and carers of very young children that they are providing the best possible environment for safe sleeping.

"These are simple steps to protect babies and provide peace of mind for parents and carers, and to emphasise the role that businesses play in selling items responsibly."

For further information, visit the Lullaby Trust website at www.lullabytrust.org.uk

Suffolk Trading Standards is also available for guidance on product safety at www.suffolk.gov.uk/tradingstandards.

This No Smoking Day, campaign urges smokers to protect their health and their homes

The joint campaign encourages Suffolk residents to consider quitting, while raising awareness of the increased risk of accidental fires caused by smoking materials such as cigarettes and matches.

Smoking remains one of the leading causes of fatal house fires in the UK. Fires started by smoking materials are more likely to result in serious injury or death than other types of home fires. Cigarettes are designed to stay lit, meaning they can easily ignite furniture, bedding or other flammable items if dropped or left unattended.

By combining stop smoking support with vital fire safety messaging, Feel Good Suffolk and SFRS are working together to help residents protect both their wellbeing and their homes.



Feel Good Suffolk offers free, personalised stop smoking support to people across the county. Those who use expert help are up to three times more likely to quit successfully, with access to trained advisors and free stop smoking products, including nicotine replacement therapies (NRT) and vape starter kits for up to 12 weeks.

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

“Stopping smoking is one of the best things you can do for your health, but it is also a major step towards keeping your home and family safe. This partnership between Feel Good Suffolk and Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service highlights both the wellbeing and fire safety risks linked to smoking in the home. By quitting, residents are protecting their future in more ways than one.”

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service provide practical advice for anyone who smokes, including steps to reduce the risk of fire at home. More information can be found at: www.suffolk.gov.uk/smoking-safety

Across Suffolk today, there are free drop-in sessions and stalls at markets to mark national No Smoking Day including Ipswich Cornhill, Red Gables in Stowmarket and Bury St Edmunds Cornhill. For more details visit www.feelgoodsuffolk.co.uk/stop-smoking-2/nosmokingday If you smoke and live in Suffolk, now is a great time to think about stopping. Feel Good Suffolk is here to support you with free, friendly and personalised help.

Self-refer today at: <https://feelgoodsuffolk.co.uk/make-a-referral/>

Suffolk Business Board reports major first year impact on growth, investment and skills

The Suffolk Business Board — the partnership of local business leaders and public-sector partners operating under the Suffolk Economy brand — has published its first [Annual Review](#), showing a year of clear and measurable progress for Suffolk’s economy.

Established by Suffolk County Council to bring together the county’s business community, education providers and public-sector partners, the Business Board leads work to support local companies, grow skills and attract new investment.

Its first year has delivered practical benefits for businesses and residents across Suffolk, with strong results in business support, innovation, clean energy, inward investment and skills.

Highlights from the first year include:

- £386k in Suffolk Economy Grants helped businesses adopt new technologies, raise productivity and create jobs — and unlocked £1.69m in private investment, a 1:4.4 match
- Innovation Grant Mentoring provided tailored support to 562 businesses and leveraged £3.1m in R&D investment from just £477k of public funding

- 36 early-stage tech founders supported through the Future Tech programme
- 73 high-growth businesses supported through the North Star programme
- Nearly 4,000 learning aims delivered to over 2,200 adults, with achievement rates rising to 87%
- More than 1,000 young people supported through Thrive, with over 400 moving into jobs, training, education or independent living.

The Review places this work in the context of Suffolk's wider economic performance:

- 9.2% growth in Suffolk's economy, with GVA rising from £21.0bn to £23.0bn
- 9.1% drop in carbon emissions, exceeding the pace required to meet long-term targets
- 3,200 more people joined Suffolk's workforce in 2023–24, outperforming the national average
- 8,100 more residents qualified to Level 3+ in one year, a significant step towards Suffolk's 2045 skills ambitions.

The Review also highlights Suffolk's nationally significant role in the UK's clean energy transition, alongside continued growth in advanced manufacturing, digital, agrifood and life sciences.

Cllr Richard Smith MVO, Suffolk County Council's deputy leader and cabinet member for finance, economic development and skills, said:

"This first year shows just how much can be achieved when business leaders and the public sector work closely together. The Suffolk Business Board and the Suffolk Economy team have helped hundreds of local businesses try new ideas and grow, and thousands of people have gained skills that will help them progress. We're also seeing encouraging signs across the wider economy – stronger growth, lower carbon emissions and more people in work. I want to thank everyone involved for their commitment and hard work. The Board has built strong foundations, and I wish it every success as this work continues."

Councillor Richard Smith MVO

Mark Pendlington, Chair of the Suffolk Business Board, said:

"2025 has been a year of progress and achievement as the public and private sectors have put energy, ideas and innovation at the heart of our dynamic plan to build a strong and sustainable economy. Across Suffolk, leaders in business, education, local authorities, the voluntary sector and in local communities have collaborated to drive clean, sustainable growth, boost skills and job opportunities, and strengthen trade and investment. We are a county full of ability to compete and win in UK and global markets and many local businesses are already leading by example. Collaboration and resilience are key as we continue to work together to build momentum, especially in uncertain times. On behalf of the Board, I would like to extend warmest thanks to all those who have contributed to driving progress this year, and we look forward to building even greater momentum with you in the year ahead."

Mark Pendlington, Chair of the Suffolk Business Board



The Review will be presented to Suffolk County Council's Cabinet on Tuesday 24th March.

New Waterfront walk showcases Ipswich attractions

Walkers enjoying the King Charles III England Coast Path now have a new route to take them round Ipswich.

The Ipswich Waterfront Walk passes under The Orwell Bridge and promotes the borough for people following the path (ECP) plus provides a link to it for residents.

In Suffolk, the route of the ECP between Felixstowe and Shotley opened in 2025.

Around England the ECP follows estuaries to the first river crossing, and between Felixstowe and Shotley that first crossing is the Orwell Bridge.

The Ipswich Waterfront Walk is 5.5 miles and passes through Orwell Country Park, Pipers Vale, Landseer Park, and Holywells Park to Ipswich's historic Waterfront.

From the Waterfront the route continues beside New Cut, follows the Wherstead Road to Bourne Bridge, and re-connects with the ECP by Suffolk Food Hall at Wherstead.

The ECP is marked by two 'gateways.' The east side gateway is immediately south of Pipers Vale below the Orwell Bridge, while on the west side it is just north of the Suffolk Food Hall, also underneath the Orwell Bridge.

Gateways feature a bench containing a QR code promoting walks across Suffolk, and a wooden finger post made by woodwork students at St Joseph's College in Ipswich and which sign local destinations in distance and walking times.

The benches were made by Dean Manning of Cuckoo Hill Workshop in Bures, who used locally sourced oak.

The gateways will also feature an interpretation panel depicting the route, plus historic and tourism information and links to National Landscape's website and Suffolk County Council's Discover Suffolk website, both of which promote access to the countryside for all.

The walk has been developed by Suffolk County Council's Green Access team working in partnership with:

- National Landscapes – funding partner accessing DEFRA Access For All fund
- Ipswich Borough Council – the landowner at the east side gateway
- Greenways – Ipswich Borough Council's parks division
- St Joseph's School, Ipswich – routed the new finger post signs
- Suffolk Food Hall – landowner at west side gateway
- Hazell & Jefferies Ltd – landowner at the west side gateway

- All About Ipswich – the business to consumer brand for Ipswich Town Centre run by Ipswich Central, the business improvement district.
- Suffolk County Council Public Health team – chairs the Orwell Bridge Partnership group
- National Highways – managers of the Orwell Bridge

Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council Cabinet member for Ipswich and Operational Highways, said: “The new walk is a fantastic addition to the King Charles III England Coast Path, giving walkers a richer and more engaging way to experience the landscape in and around Ipswich.

“By offering an alternative to crossing the Orwell Bridge the route not only enhances safety and accessibility but also invites visitors to explore some of our most treasured green spaces plus the historic Waterfront.

“This route supports public health and active travel and highlights the best of what Ipswich and the surrounding landscape have to offer.”

HGV weight restriction to be introduced in north Ipswich residential areas

Residents across north Ipswich are set to benefit from new measures against lorries using streets as shortcuts under a Suffolk County Council scheme.

The council is to introduce a traffic regulation order for a 7.5-tonne weight restriction on heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) using residential roads to the north of the A1214.

The A1214 runs across north Ipswich. It connects the A14 to the west of the borough at Copdock and via the A1156 at Whitton, and the A12 to the east at Martlesham.

The move will extend the same protections already in place across many streets south of the A1214, helping ensure consistency for neighbourhoods.

Currently, residential areas north of the A1214 are outside the existing HGV restriction zone. As freight traffic continues to increase, these streets have become increasingly vulnerable to larger vehicles using them as cut-through routes.

The new weight restriction will prevent inappropriate through-traffic while maintaining access for essential deliveries and services.

The restriction would apply to residential streets north of the Colchester Road and Valley Road corridor, including:

- Chelsworth Avenue and Bromswell Road
- Lower Road and Church Road in Westerfield
- Westerfield Lane linking Tuddenham to Westerfield

- 
- Sidegate Lane, Humber Doucy Lane and the Renfrew Road housing estate
 - The Street in Rushmere village, and Rushmere Road, Ipswich

Roads located within the Colchester Road and Valley Road corridor already operate under a 7.5-tonne restriction, as do streets within the Crofts and Dales neighbourhood off Norwich Road.

The new order would help close the remaining gaps so that all residential communities in Ipswich receive the same level of protection.

Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council Cabinet for Ipswich and Operational Highways, said: “It is important that HGV traffic is able to move as freely as possible, but it needs to be on appropriate roads away from residential areas.

“Henley Road, Westerfield Road and Tuddenham Road would remain available to HGVs, ensuring that freight traffic can continue to travel efficiently.”

The scheme will be funded by the Local Transport Plan.

Work will now begin on detailed design and programming for the scheme for implementation later this year.

£3.9 million investment proposal to protect and enhance Public Rights of Way

Suffolk County Council plans to invest nearly £4 million to improve and protect the public rights of way network.

The network, which provides more than 3,500 miles of off-road access for walking, cycling and horse riding, is supported by 3,770 structures including bridges, boardwalks, revetments and signposts.

A report to be considered by Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet on Tuesday March 24 said the £3.9 million investment will enable replacement or refurbishment of 735 priority structures, with a particular focus on bridges and boardwalks in central and coastal areas.

It follows a comprehensive condition survey where the council has identified a programme of improvements to replace or refurbish ageing structures.

The report says that over the next five years, 1,800 structures will need to be replaced or undergo major refurbishment.

Of these, 735 structures have been prioritised for 2026/27 and 2027/28 due to their known condition.



The structures are spread across the county, with the largest impact in the central and coastal area of Suffolk.

These are predominantly bridges but there are also a number of boardwalks on key coastal and estuary routes.

The cost of this two-year programme is £3.9 million in total - £2.05 million in 2026/27 and £1.85 million in 27/28.

The current budget for infrastructure maintenance is £225,000 a year, but since this figure was set in 2020/21 costs have risen by more than 50% for materials and contractors' installation fees, as well as changes in specifications.

The proposed programme builds on recent successful projects delivered through additional capital funding, including major works at the Bailey Bridge between Walberswick and Southwold, Fen Bridge at East Bergholt and Hempyard Bridge in Ixworth.

The council's investment plan comes at a time of significantly increased public use of the network.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, customer reports have risen by more than 50%, with 3,411 reports received in 2025 alone.

By investing now, the Council aims to reduce the risk of route closures, avoid rising revenue costs and ensure the network continues to provide high-quality access for residents and visitors.

Temporary closures—required when structures become unsafe—cost around £1,200 each time and place pressure on the revenue budget, which also funds the county's annual grass-cutting programme.

The planned capital investment will help prevent these costs and protect essential maintenance services.

It will also help to meet the council's objectives for health and wellbeing, strengthening the local economy and providing value for taxpayers' money.

The full report can be read on the [Suffolk County Council website](#).

New Ipswich recycling centre to break ground, which will provide smoother, safer visits

The modern, purpose-built facility will be a major upgrade on the existing recycling centre at Portman's Walk, approximately three times bigger and able to take significantly more bookings.



“The centre’s new home on the Hadleigh Road Industrial Estate, will be a significant improvement for recycling for the town and the surrounding area.”

Councillor Chris Chambers, Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy, Planning and Waste

Suffolk County Council has recently acquired planning permission, an environmental permit and ownership of the land – the former Ipswich Borough Council depot on Whittle Road. The majority of the existing structures at the site will be demolished, which is due to begin in early summer 2026.

Features of Ipswich’s new recycling centre will include:

- A raised platform giving visitors an elevated position from which to safely dispose of waste – removing the need for steps
- A one-way system and easy-to-use layout, allowing customers to access clearly marked recycling bays
- No need to close the facility to replace full containers
- Improved accessibility and increased capacity for recycling and donating items for reuse
- Greater separation between public vehicles and larger vehicles
- Queuing capacity within the site and better access from the public highway compared to the current Portman’s Walk site
- The new site will be 3 times bigger than the Portman’s Walk site

The project sees Suffolk County Council and FCC Environment continue to work together – Ipswich’s new site will be operated by FCC Environment, which manages all of Suffolk’s 11 recycling centres.

Chris Ellis, Operations Director, Waste and Recycling Division, FCC Environment said:

“We look forward to following up the successes of the newer sites at Foxhall Road and in Haverhill. Being able to operate a facility which is purpose-built for both residents and our teams, makes for a more efficient and safer operation for everyone involved.”

Further information on recycling in Suffolk can be found at www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk

Government decision on energy projects could threaten Suffolk communities

Government is planning to overhaul the nuclear system to speed up building, strengthen national and energy security, cut costs, and not get “bogged down in processes”, as described by the Prime Minister.

[In response to a report by the Nuclear Regulatory Taskforce](#), government has accepted a recommendation to establish an in-house unit at the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), to discharge Development Consent Order (DCO) requirements.



This is currently the responsibility of local authorities, who are best-placed to consider the impacts on local communities and local environment.

“At a time when government is looking to increase the speed of delivery and reduce complexity of these projects, I fail to see how this recommendation will speed up process.”

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

Taking this further, government is also minded to extend that approach beyond nuclear projects and electricity network projects, to all energy projects.

Suffolk County Council is concerned that this will in fact add layers of bureaucracy, slow down the process and put communities at risk of being ill-considered as projects are built.

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

“Local communities rely on their local authorities to hold National Grid, and other energy developers, to account – something which Suffolk County Council has, and continues to do effectively. We can ensure that they are robustly protected when this critical national priority infrastructure is being built.

“Does DESNZ have the capacity and skills to deliver this work for multiple projects across the country? Or will it, as seems more likely, place additional burdens on local authorities to support this new layer of bureaucracy, with the cost falling on local taxpayers?”

“At a time when government is looking to increase the speed of delivery and reduce complexity of these projects, I fail to see how this recommendation will speed up process.”

This means that projects directly affecting Suffolk like Norwich to Tilbury pylons, Sea Link and LionLink risk causing more harm to local communities and environment, when decisions and powers to discharge will fall to DESNZ, rather than experienced local authorities.

Suffolk skills boost for engineering and construction

Both colleges have submitted successful bids to the Asset Skills Enhancement and Capability (ASEC) Fund, a £7.8 million pot provided by Sizewell C, with the projects supported by East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council.

The aim of the ASEC Fund is to enhance the supply of skills related to Sizewell C, regional needs and aspirations. This means expanding, enhancing and developing local skills provision, such as apprenticeships, across the region’s education sector.



Suffolk and the East of England are home to a significant pipeline of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects across transport, offshore wind and power infrastructure, alongside major planned investment in onshore renewables and EV charging networks.

“This will train and educate students to support the Sizewell C project but will also have a significant and lasting benefit for the county’s civil engineering.”

Councillor Richard Smith MVO, Suffolk County Council’s Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Economic Development and Skills

Many of these projects require the same civil engineering, construction, and technical skills as Sizewell C. The fund is therefore designed to ensure that local people can access the training needed to support this growing cluster of nationally important projects, both during construction and beyond.

Councillor Richard Smith MVO, Suffolk County Council’s Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Economic Development and Skills, said:

“This funding is enabling long-term development of local skills in Suffolk. This will train and educate students to support the Sizewell C project but will also have a significant and lasting benefit for the county’s civil engineering.

“These two local institutions are well-placed to deliver projects and will increase in the number of courses delivered and students completing those courses.”

Councillor Caroline Topping, Leader of East Suffolk Council and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Regeneration, said:

“This funding will help improve skills and is about enabling our communities to thrive, both now and in the future. By investing in local skills and training, we are helping to create lasting opportunities for residents and supporting the long-term resilience of our economy.

“Strengthening our local training provision will help create clear pathways into skilled employment and support communities across the district.

East Coast College will establish the Lound Civil Campus, a dynamic training hub in collaboration with regional employers, for new entrants, career changers and existing workers seeking to up-skill.

Paul Padda, Principal and Chief Executive at East Coast College, said:

“We are delighted and grateful to have collaborated with Sizewell C, East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council to secure funding for the further development of our civil engineering campus in Lound. This investment will enable us to expand our work with employers and deliver vital skills training linked to major infrastructure projects across sectors including plant operations, groundwork, formwork, water, rail, and housebuilding.

“The enhanced curriculum will create outstanding opportunities for people in our communities to gain new skills and progress into well-paid, long-term careers, supporting economic growth and prosperity for generations to come.”



Suffolk New College will expand its offer with more high-quality training and education, in areas such as groundworks, civil engineering, technical higher educational skills needs, and driver training.

Emma Taylor, Director of Business Development and Major Projects at Suffolk New College, said:

“Suffolk New College is delighted to receive this funding, which will support us in our mission to ensure that local people and businesses have the greatest possible opportunity to secure jobs in this important sector at a time of unprecedented opportunity.

“Therefore, we are very grateful to Sizewell C, East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council for their support via the ASEC Fund.”

Chris Young, Head of Sizewell C’s Employment Affairs Unit, said:

“We’re delighted to be able to provide this important funding to both colleges. It will not only help build the skilled workforce we need for the future but will also create high quality careers. It’s another example of how we’ll leave a lasting legacy for communities across Suffolk for generations to come.”

Sizewell C recently signed separate Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with both colleges, outlining plans to work together on several exciting new projects.

For Suffolk New College, this includes delivering College on the Coast, a new permanent post-16 education facility on the outskirts of Leiston.

Sizewell C has also supported the establishment of a thriving on campus employability hub at East Coast College and recently welcomed its first full cohort of work experience students from Lowestoft to site.

This is a joint news release on behalf of East Suffolk Council, Sizewell C and Suffolk County Council.

Innovative EV charging for Suffolk’s conservation areas

Partnering with supplier, Urban Fox, the units are specially designed to blend into the historic streetscapes of such sensitive areas, which are subject to planning considerations.

This means that those living in conservation areas won’t be at a disadvantage, with thousands of other chargepoints being installed across the county on streets and in community spaces.

“This is 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.”

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



As part of its Plug In Suffolk programme, the county council was awarded £5.3 million to install 6,000 on-street and community chargepoints following a successful bid to the government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund, the county council.

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

"We're excited to be working with Urban Fox, to ensure that those living in conservation areas can access EV charging, alongside those living in more urban settings.

"For many years, the county council's Plug In Suffolk programme has recognised the importance of offering a variety of EV charging solutions, particularly to those who are unable to charge easily at home.

"This is 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."

Urban Fox who are providing substantial private investment, will work closely with Suffolk County Council and local stakeholders to ensure charge points are installed in the most appropriate locations, reflecting community needs and minimising disruption during deployment.

Oli Freeling-Wilkinson, CEO of Urban Fox, said:

"This is another important step forward for Urban Fox as we continue to support local authorities in delivering accessible, future-ready EV infrastructure. Suffolk's commitment to innovation and community-focused deployment aligns perfectly with our approach.

"By deploying our retractable 'UEone' chargepoints, we're able to provide a solution that not only meets the growing demand for EV charging but does so in a way that respects the local historic environment and improves the experience for residents. We're excited to be working with Suffolk County Council to help accelerate the transition to cleaner transport." The chargepoints will be suitable for long-stay or overnight charging and drivers will benefit from an overnight off-peak tariff, and a dedicated resident's tariff which features discounted charging at all times.

Unlike traditional chargepoints, Urban Fox will supply chargers that are fully retractable and sit flush with the pavement when not in use.

Aviation, Maritime and Decarbonisation Minister, Keir Mather, said:

"We're backing Suffolk County Council with £5.3m to roll out thousands of new EV chargers, including some using innovative design solutions, so people living in conservation areas can benefit from public charging without disturbing the historical character of UK heritage towns.



“Just last year we announced a further £600 million to accelerate charger rollout across the UK, and our Electric Car Grant has now helped over 75,000 drivers purchase a new EV, saving them up to £3,750 and breaking down barriers to EV ownership.”

Find out more about [Plug in Suffolk](#).

Government announces outcome of local government reorganisation in Suffolk

The government has announced its decision on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Suffolk in 2028, opting for three unitary authorities – despite clear evidence that this is not the best outcome for Suffolk.

This is a major milestone in the future of local government in the county and reshapes how councils are structured and how services are delivered across the county.

Each of the three new unitary councils will cover their own new geographical area: West Suffolk, East Suffolk, and South Suffolk and Ipswich.

Cllr Matthew Hicks, Leader of Suffolk County Council, said:

“I am astounded that the government has made the decision to divide our great county through the creation of three independent authorities based on random geographies. LGR provided a huge opportunity to improve the services our residents rely on, and I strongly believe that a single authority was the only way to do this.

“Dividing our county into three new areas carries huge risks to service provision for vulnerable people and long-term financial resilience. Throughout the process we have been clear that a single authority for the whole county would not only be the most financially resilient, saving £40 million a year, but it would also be the best option for improving service delivery.

“I strongly believe the three council case for change lacked significant supporting evidence and delivery plans, making the Government’s decision even more ludicrous. Senior leaders from across Suffolk highlighted their concerns with the plan, however, their views appear to have been ignored.”

Cllr Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet Member for Devolution, Local Government Reform and NSIPs, said:

“This decision threatens the future financial stability of local government in Suffolk, and I fear the net result will be substantial cuts to local services. The One Suffolk proposal clearly outlined how one council is the only financially viable option, offering the best opportunity to improve local services.

“Splitting up key county-wide services that vulnerable residents rely on, such as adult social care and children’s services, is an enormous risk. Not only will it put those most in need at



risk, Government opting for three new councils means Suffolk will be £145 million worse off in the first 5 years and £13 million worse off every year thereafter.

“We’ve been sold the fairytale that smaller councils must be more local, however three new councils will mean three sets of senior staff, three sets of back-office services and three times the bureaucracy. I stand by the fact that a single council for Suffolk is the smartest, simplest and best option for our county and think a significant opportunity has been missed but I’ve come to expect little else from this hopeless Government.”

The creation of three unitary authorities for Suffolk will mean the abolition of all Suffolk’s councils:

- Suffolk County Council
- East Suffolk Council
- West Suffolk Council
- Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils
- Ipswich Borough Council

While detailed boundaries are still being finalised, the creation of three unitary councils, West Suffolk, East Suffolk, and South Suffolk and Ipswich, means that from May 2028 the new councils will replace the following:

- **West Suffolk:** West Suffolk Council, as well as parts of Babergh and Mid Suffolk Council
- **East Suffolk:** East Suffolk Council, as well as parts of Mid Suffolk Council
- **South Suffolk and Ipswich:** Ipswich Borough Council as well as parts of Babergh Council, and East Suffolk Council

Elections for the new shadow authorities will take place in May 2027, with the new councils formally taking over responsibilities from May 2028. This transition period will enable detailed work for reorganisation to take place, and services will be delivered as usual throughout the process.

Additionally, each new authority would be responsible for the delivery of the services previously undertaken by the County Council in their specific area. The new councils would have responsibility for delivering services including waste collection, planning, adult social care, children’s services, highways and more.

Suffolk County Council highlights support available for survivors of sexual harm

Councillor Nadia Cenci, Cabinet Member for Communities, said:

“I would like to thank Councillor Ruth Leach for contributing to this important issue at full council. Periods of intense media coverage around sexual abuse and exploitation can be incredibly difficult for survivors and may bring painful experiences back to the surface.



“At times like this, it’s important that people know they are not alone and that support is available. Specialist services provide confidential, trauma-informed help for those who may be seeking support for the first time, returning to services they have used before, or supporting someone who has chosen to share their experiences.

“Tackling violence and abuse has long been a priority for the council, including through our partnership work to end violence against women and girls. While women and girls are disproportionately affected, we recognise that people of all genders can experience sexual violence and exploitation, and everyone should feel able to access support. Locally, organisations such as Survivors in Transition provide vital support, and we encourage anyone who feels ready to seek help to reach out.”

Information about support services available locally can be found at: <https://suffolksurvivorpathway.co.uk/>

Suffolk road schemes included in Government’s five year investment plan

Suffolk County Council has welcomed the government’s announcement today of its next five-year Road Investment Strategy (RIS) which features four key projects in the county.

The RIS is the Department for Transport’s investment plan for operating, maintaining, renewing and enhancing the strategic trunk road network in England.

Known as RIS3, it runs from April 2026 to March 2031 and in Suffolk sees:

A12 improvements at Woodbridge – a recommitment by the government to funding its share during this period of the £63 million scheme to upgrade the A12 between the Seven Hills junction with the A14 and the Woods Lane junction, subject to Suffolk County Council submitting the Final Business Case, anticipated for later this year.

A140 - A1120 Earl Stonham junction improvements – this has been classed as a scheme ‘recommended to continue’, where the government accepts work on developing improvements should go ahead during this period. However, this is subject to affordability, value for money and deliverability assessments.

The junction is an historic staggered crossroads where queuing traffic causes congestion. The improvement scheme would realign the eastern A1120 arm, providing more space for vehicles to queue and avoiding vehicle conflicts by simplifying the junction. Two other schemes in Suffolk have been earmarked for progression.

They are improvements to the **A11 Fiveways junction near Mildenhall** and the **A12/A14 Copdock interchange**.

These will see the government and National Highways continue to develop but not deliver them during the RIS3 period.



Both schemes remain uncommitted and with no guaranteed funding, but it does mean they have a better chance of being included in the next RIS after 2031.

Both Copdock interchange- a key junction serving freight traffic bound to and from the Port of Felixstowe – and the A11 junction have suffered from problems of congestion and design flaws.

Councillor Chris Chambers, Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy said: “I welcome the inclusion of the A12 and the A140 Earl Stonham junction in RIS3.

“Their presence reflects both the strategic importance of our region’s transport corridors and the strength of the case we have consistently made for investment, and their progression will help unlock growth, improve safety, and support the resilience of key routes that our communities and businesses rely on every day.

Similarly, while I would have preferred Copdock interchange and Fiveways junction to be in RIS3 I am pleased they have been identified for continued development within the RIS4 pipeline, ensuring that essential design, assessment, and statutory work can progress, keeping them firmly on the agenda for the next investment period.”

Full details of the scheme can be found on the [Department for Transport](#) website.

East of England launches plans to lead UK in Nuclear Operations and Maintenance

[GENERATE](#) is a partnership of regional business and political leaders established to showcase and profile the significant inward investment and supply chain growth opportunities arising from energy projects and generation across Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex.

The Nuclear Prospectus proposes to develop of a nuclear operations and maintenance (O&M) Centre of Excellence. This would place the East of England as a leader in existing and future nuclear generation technologies across the UK and Europe.

“This can be a unique opportunity for Ipswich, Suffolk, and the wider region. It is vital to ensure that the tangible economic benefits associated with the construction of a major project are sustained into the operational phase.”

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

The East of England’s nuclear projects will generate 4.4GW of low-carbon baseload electricity, enough to meet the needs of 8.5 million UK homes.

Nuclear projects across the UK requires world-class operational, maintenance, and life-extension capabilities. A Centre of Excellence, located in Suffolk, can serve as the national hub for outage coordination, innovation, skills, and export development, centred around the county’s three operational reactors.



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

"GENERATE wants to make sure that the East of England's nuclear capabilities and ambitions are heard in Westminster whilst highlighting the potential for inward investment and growth."

"This can be a unique opportunity for Ipswich, Suffolk, and the wider region. It is vital to ensure that the tangible economic benefits associated with the construction of a major project are sustained into the operational phase, historically this has not always been the case."

As an example of the potential, the three reactors across the sites at Sizewell B and C will require partial refuelling every 18 months, resulting in an outage of one reactor every six months. Currently each outage at Sizewell B brings up to 1,000 additional staff and specialist contractors to the region.

Unique opportunities such as this can enable the development of local skills and new investment by the businesses that are key to the maintenance of the UK's operational nuclear provision.

Robert Gunn, Station Director of EDF's Sizewell B power station, said:

"As one of the country's biggest power producers, and an employer of almost 1,000 people on our site, we know just how important consistent operation and high quality maintenance is to sustain vital plants like ours.

"Creation of this facility will be another positive step for the regional skills base. As the area becomes the nation's nuclear cornerstone, a centre like this will ensure more skilled jobs coming from this industry and into this region. And that is something we will all benefit from."

Nigel Cann, Sizewell C's Chief Executive Officer, said:

"Sizewell C is a natural catalyst for positive investment in Suffolk and the wider region. We are proud to work collaboratively with local partners to grow the skills needed to build, operate and maintain the power station.

"By creating new training pathways and long term career opportunities, we aim to strengthen the county's economic future and ensure that the benefits of Sizewell C are felt by communities for generations to come."

Beyond energy security, a thriving nuclear sector can fuel prosperity, create jobs, investment, and long-term opportunities for communities across the East of England.

- [Generate Nuclear Prospectus \(DRAFT\)](#)



County council continues to highlight issues with Sea Link energy project

At the first opening hearing in November 2025, the county council maintained its long-standing position that development consent should not be granted, and it continues to object to the Sea Link proposals.

At this latest hearing, the county council outlined where improvements need to be made, and where details remain lacking with the National Grid's proposals:

- Fundamental flaws remain with Benhall Bridge, including impacts on heritage, landscape, and the local community
- Significant concern for the safety and wellbeing of Whitearch Park home residents, especially around maintaining access during construction
- No expansion of the Order Limits at the converter station site to allow for improved mitigation planting and a public right of way
- The access route is not suitable and the county council has submitted details of an alternative access route for the project, arguing it offers greater long term robustness and fewer adverse impacts

"It is regrettable that the issues raised by both the county council and local communities have not been given the attention they deserve. Through the examination process, we will continue to put our evidence directly to the Planning Inspectorate for the benefit of Suffolk residents."

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

"We recognise that the applicant has made some modifications to their submission, but it still falls far short of what we would expect – particularly to protect local residents, highways infrastructure and the landscape.

"Our fundamental concerns about the Benhall Bridge, the crossing over the River Fromus and National Grid's flawed transport strategy all remain. There is clearly a better access route to the site and we made this case to the examining authority,

"It is regrettable that the issues raised by both the county council and local communities have not been given the attention they deserve. Through the examination process, we will continue to put our evidence directly to the Planning Inspectorate for the benefit of Suffolk residents."

The Examination stage began in November and is expected to take up to six months.

Councillor Richard Rout's full speech:

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 proposed change requests for the project.

The applicant has proposed modifications in relation to the red line at the Benhall Road over rail bridge. As requested by the Examining Authority, the county council has provided further details regarding its alternative approach to the project's access route found in REP4-149 and REP5-179. These submissions set out the Council's rationale for this proposal and its benefits relative to the considerable adverse impacts and risks associated with the applicant's proposal for access to the site.

The only real change to the application caused by the inclusion of the Benhall Bridge in the red line boundary is that the process of acquiring the necessary consents to use the bridge becomes simpler for the applicant. Indeed, the proposed modifications put forward do little more than serve to underline the inherent weaknesses and flaws of the proposed development. The impacts of the scheme on heritage and landscape remain and as the examination has progressed, the impacts of the access proposals on the local community have become even more apparent.

The Council is particularly concerned regarding the well-being and safety of the residents Whitearch Park in Benhall. The Council is pleased that the Applicant has now recognised the importance of access for the Whitearch residents, as shown by commitments to taxis for residents who do not have access to a vehicle in the latest version of the Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments REP5-116.

However, the Council is concerned with the lack of detail regarding how these commitments will work in practice. Detail has not been provided demonstrating that access for Whitearch residents can be maintained whilst a mini-bridge is installed over the Benhall Bridge. The council considers greater detail regarding the logistics of the taxi service should be provided in a control document, to be agreed post-consent, with the Council.

It is noted that the applicant has provided a response to the preliminary alternative access proposal set out by the Council in REP5-125. Suffolk County Council will respond to this at the next deadline.

However, in the interim, I will just say, the county council recognises that its alternative access proposal is not without issues, but considers that on balance, the benefits of this alternative access scheme, outweigh those issues, and that the scheme offers in the long-term strategic benefits. Therefore, notwithstanding the longer journey time, the alternative scheme of access is substantially more robust than that being proposed by the applicant.

In the Council's consultation response and relevant representation on the Change Request [REP3A-031], strongly recommended that further expansion of the Order Limits is needed at the Converter Station site to increase the provision of mitigation planting and allow for a Public Right of Way. However, this has not happened.

Rather, the small changes only serve to demonstrate the contrast with the LionLink project, which set out a comprehensive preliminary approach to the design of the site in their recent



consultation, an approach that had been developed in response to detailed feedback from the community.

Finally, turning to the modifications to the scheme at the Friston Substation site, whilst these are welcome improvement in terms of alignment between projects, the Council has submitted to the examination in REP5-181 a table setting out how the DCO wording needs further amendment to ensure that the benefits of the safeguards secured by the existing Scottish Power Renewables consent are fully transposed into the Sea Link DCO.

We've worked with Friston Parish Council on this issue, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Parish Council and Mr Michael Mahoney, in particular, for working constructively with the Council on this issue.