

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – JULY 2025



Cllr Stephen Burroughes - Framlingham Division

• **DEMENTIA MARKETPLACE 2025**

On Wednesday 25th June 2025, Care Development East, in partnership with Suffolk County Council and the Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board (SNEE ICB), hosted the third annual Dementia Marketplace—a free, one-day event offering practical advice, support, and information for anyone affected by dementia. Held from 10:00am to 3:30pm at [Trinity Park Conference & Events Centre, Ipswich](#).

Dementia is the UK's biggest health and social care challenge—and it's growing. One in three people born in the UK today will develop dementia in their lifetime. By 2040, 1.4 million people are expected to be living with the condition. Early diagnosis is key—it unlocks treatment, support, and care that can make a real difference.

What the conference consisted of:

- Marketplace – Information and advice from over 40 dementia-related services and support groups
- Expert Speaker Sessions – Short, accessible talks throughout the day
- Innovation Room – New for 2025, exploring a range of equipment and digital care technology to help keep people as safe and independent for as long as possible. It will also include the launch of Reverie a new cutting-edge Virtual Reality (VR) app designed with and for people with dementia featuring customised Suffolk film content
- Supervised Activities Room – A safe space for people with dementia while carers explore the event

Opening at 10:00am with a short welcome from:

- Gareth Everton, Executive Director for Adult Social Care
- Eugene Staunton, Deputy Director, SNEE ICB

• **SUFFOLK LIBRARIES TO BECOME 'SUFFOLK COMMUNITY LIBRARIES' FROM 1 JUNE**

The service will continue to operate as usual, with no changes for library users and all 45 libraries will remain open. This ensures the council can continue delivering library services in a sustainable way, strengthening the role libraries play across Suffolk's communities.

Suffolk County Council extends its sincere thanks to everyone involved in the transition and looks forward to this new chapter for library services in Suffolk.

For more information, please visit www.suffolkcommunitylibraries.co.uk

• **POPULAR OUTDOOR FESTIVAL RETURNS THIS AUGUST TO CELEBRATE THE BRECKS**

55 events, many of which will be free, will take place over the fortnight, recognising the work of the Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers Landscape Partnership Scheme.

The festival will launch on 9 August at an event in Brandon Country Park, with opportunities to meet a range of local groups and organisations working with nature in the Brecks, as well as activities, storytelling and the chance to start your very own seasonal sketchbook.

Other festival events will include guided walks, creative activities, outdoor yoga, family activities and trails, outdoor swimming, fishing and more:

- **Explore the River Thet:** Explore Thetford from a different point of view and try canoeing or stand-up paddle boarding with support and guidance from a trained and knowledgeable instructor.
13, 16, 20 August, Thetford
- **Mildenhall Drovers Challenge Walk:** An exclusive route through a classic Brecks landscape of river, sandy droves and pine lines. How many droves can you walk down in one day?
23 August, West Row
- **Thursday Social Off-Road Cycle Ride:** A social bike ride to explore the landscape of Brandon Country Park and Thetford Forest. All abilities welcome, difficulty and distance determined by riders on the day.
14, 21 August, Brandon Country Park
- **The Nine Stiles Walk & Steel Band Performance:** A walk in the heart of the Brecks with no stiles! Follow part of the historic 'beating of the bounds' route and end with music from steel band Panache!

The Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers Landscape Partnership Scheme began in 2020, following a five-year grant of £1.97 million from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Using the money raised by the National Lottery players, the project has been creating positive and lasting change for people and communities in and around The Brecks.

A small partnership delivery team hosted by Suffolk County Council has facilitated successful management of the project, bringing together more than 60 local, regional and national groups, as well as many volunteers - all with a central vision and plan.

The Brecks is an invaluable part of the UK's landscape, covering nearly 400 square miles:

- Over 40% of the landscape is covered by conservation areas
- Nearly 13,000 species have been recorded in the area
- 28% of the UK's rarest species are found there
- It contains Thetford Forest and Kings Forest, making the largest lowland forest in the UK
- It is home to eight registered parks and gardens, 157 scheduled monuments and over 1,000 listed buildings

The festival runs from 9 to 24 August 2025, the full programme of events can be found at www.brecks.org

- **WHAT A WIN FOR WASTE AT THE SUFFOLK SHOW!**

The tent brought together waste contractors across Suffolk, such as Biffa who manage and run the Materials Recycling Facility where all Suffolk's household recycling goes.

Suez contributed, the company who manage and run the Suffolk Energy from Waste plant where all Suffolk's black bag waste is sent, to be used to generate electricity for 40,000 homes.

Also exhibiting were FCC Environment who manage and run the county's 11 recycling centres and The Benjamin Foundation who run our re-use shops in Bury and Foxhall.

On display were the new recycling bins that will be introduced across Suffolk next year to allow collection glass and tetrapak, along with food waste. Visitors also had the opportunity to speak with Master Composter and

Repair Cafe volunteers, learn about Food Savvy (a campaign to reduce the amount of food they throw away), and take part in crafting using recycled materials.

- **NEW STRATEGY LAUNCHED TO TACKLE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SUFFOLK**

While Suffolk remains a safe county in which to live, work, and visit, the reality is that Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence continue to affect too many people. These crimes are often driven by harmful attitudes and gender-based stereotypes that disproportionately impact women and girls. However, the strategy recognises that anyone, regardless of gender identity, can be a victim and that support must be inclusive and far-reaching.

The new Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy places the experiences of victims and survivors at its heart. Shaped through extensive engagement with victim-survivors, support services, and frontline professionals, the strategy sets a clear and ambitious vision:

For everyone in Suffolk to play their part in preventing and identifying Violence Against Women and Girls, creating the safety we all deserve.

To achieve this vision, the strategy is built around four key ambitions:

- Stop the abuse before it starts
- Support every survivor
- Hold abusers accountable
- Build a united front

In March 2025, the Suffolk Safer and Stronger Communities Board formally endorsed the strategy, marking an important milestone in the county's coordinated response to Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

Help is available, whether you are currently experiencing abuse, have recently left an abusive relationship, or are concerned about someone you know, you are not alone. A wide range of local, specialist support services is available [Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls \(VAWG\) | Suffolk Constabulary](#)

For more information, and to read the full strategy, visit: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/Suffolk-VAWG-Strategy-2025-28.pdf>

- **COUNCIL REORGANISATION AFFECTS US ALL - SO HAVE YOUR SAY TODAY**

A new survey giving residents the opportunity to shape the future of councils and public services in Suffolk has been launched. It's part of the Government plan to reshape and streamline councils in Suffolk to save money, reduce confusion and improve public services for residents.

The survey only takes about 10 minutes to complete, and can be done online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/devolution, by emailing devolution@suffolk.gov.uk or by calling 0345 603 1842 where a member of Suffolk County Council's customer services team can help residents to complete the survey. People can also visit any of Suffolk's 45 libraries to complete the survey online.

It asks questions about local democracy – such as how you raise issues that need addressing, local decision making – such as how you might want to get involved and about the specifics of council reorganisation itself.

The survey is open for eight weeks – until 4 August 2025.

The survey will play a part in helping Suffolk County Council to develop a comprehensive business plan that looks at the best way to organise councils and deliver public services in Suffolk – so that the Government has all the information it needs to decide which proposal(s) to put out to public consultation. From best practice elsewhere in the country to the costs of various options currently on the table, no stone is being left unturned. Whilst a final proposal is still to be developed, Suffolk County Council believes that a new single

local council is the smartest, simplest, and best option for the whole of Suffolk which will deliver the biggest savings and most sustainable service improvements.

The council argues that any alternatives will have to work hard to justify the risks of breaking up critical services like social care, creating new council boundaries and smaller population sizes. Early analysis by financial consultants PwC suggests that establishing a single new local council could cost around £19 million but that this could be repaid quickest through the significant financial savings achieved by having one council.

Alternatively, the cost of breaking Suffolk into two or even three – as proposed by Suffolk’s district and borough councils - would cost £7 million to £13 million more and, in the case of three new councils, that investment would never be repaid as there would be no savings to be found.

- **FRESH PLAUDITS FOR GULL WING BRIDGE AT AWARDS CEREMONY**

Congratulations to all involved with Suffolk's iconic Gull Wing bridge in Lowestoft, which has been recognised once again at a prestigious national awards ceremony. It was 'Highly Commended' at the Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation (CIHT) awards held at the Royal Lancaster Hotel in London in front of an audience of 450 industry professionals.

The bridge had been nominated in the CIHT Infrastructure Award, which recognises exceptional engineering solutions that have delivered creative and resilient infrastructure.

However the bridge was pipped to top spot by Belfast Grand Central Station. The Herring bridge in Great Yarmouth was 'Commended' in the same category.

The 'Highly Commended' certificate was presented to Andrew Cook, Executive Director for Growth, Highways and Infrastructure at SCC, and Gull Wing bridge project director Simin Bretherton, along with colleagues from bridge designers Arup. The bridge is the world’s largest rolling bascule bridge operated by hydraulic cylinders. It spans Lake Lothing and opened to the public on September 7, 2024, being officially opened by Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal on November 19.

Costing around £146 million the bridge, delivered by Suffolk County Council with Farrans Construction as the main contractor, has significantly reduced congestion and improved connectivity between the northern and southern parts of the town.

Spanning 345 meters in total, the bridge features a main bascule span that is 39.5 meters long, 22 meters wide, and 35 meters tall. When raised, it offers a 12-meter clearance above high tide, accommodating marine vessels up to 32 meters wide.

- **SUFFOLK CHALLENGES GOVERNMENT ON PLANNING REFORM AT A NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE CONFERENCE**

The Council and other speakers raised concerns that proposed changes to the NSIP regime were not suitably robust to manage the significant changes which NSIPs can bring to host communities, particularly with the proposed replacement of a statutory duty for pre-submission consultation with statutory guidance.

Delegates from across the country attended the Conference to hear speakers from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), legal experts, and industry leaders discussing the emerging

Planning and Infrastructure Bill, effective communication with project promoters, and the importance of local impact reports. The conference further cements Suffolk County Council’s recognised role as a Centre of Excellence for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) for its expertise when engaging with projects, such as Sizewell C, the Gull Wing, National Grid upgrades, solar farms and offshore wind farms.

The conference was sponsored by Cornerstone Barristers, Howes Percival, National Infrastructure Planning Association and Sharpe Pritchard. Following the success of this year's conference, it will take place again in June 2026.

• **£8M FUNDING FOR BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS**

The funding from the Department of Transport's Local Authority Bus Grant can be used to create new bus services or enhance existing routes. Following on from previous grants from the Department for Transport to improve bus services, totalling £3.7m of revenue funding between 2023 and 2025, the new grant which has been allocated for 2025/26 comprises of:

- £2,805,076 revenue for delivering new or enhanced services.
- £5,229,805 capital for new and improved bus stops, bus stations, bus priority measures or vehicle upgrades.

This money will enable Suffolk County Council to invest up to £5 million in capital projects to increase bus priority on congested streets, make improvements to bus stops and gain a better understanding of the journeys people are taking, paving the way for more innovative fare offers in the future. The council also plans to upgrade the current Real Time Passenger Information system, giving live updates on when buses will arrive at stops across the county. The remaining £2.8 million will be spent supporting the existing services on the county's bus network and working with bus companies to finalise a number of route improvements and new services, set to launch later this year.

The previous funding has created and enhanced more than 15 routes across the county, through the council's Bus Service Improvement Programme (BSIP). These included the first Sunday and evening service between Sudbury and Bury St Edmunds for more than 20 years and direct links from Haverhill and Mildenhall to the West Suffolk Hospital. Successful bids will be contacted with new and enhanced services coming online later this year.

A full list of enhanced and new services funded with the previous BSIP funding can be found at: [Bus Service Improvement Plan - Suffolkonboard](#) including videos from services who received BSIP round 1 funding.

Details of successful bids for the latest round of funding will be posted on Suffolk On Board.

• **LOCAL BUSINESSES CELEBRATED FOR CARBON REDUCTION ACHIEVEMENTS**

The Carbon Charter was set up in 2010 by Suffolk County Council and the Environment Agency. Since then, over 500 businesses of all sizes have received Carbon Charter awards for taking on climate action, by reducing their carbon emissions, supporting their local community and developing green spaces.

This year's event was hosted by long-standing Carbon Charter members, Home Farm Nacton. They use the latest farming technologies, robots and AI to produce organic vegetables, Red Tractor certified and LEAF marque crops. Attendees enjoyed speakers from CNH Tractors, Groundwork East and Home Farm Nacton, as well as a tour of the farm and seeing its droid robots in action. Carbon Charter Awards were presented to:

Suffolk Chamber of Commerce
Shepherd Engineering
Kelling Heath Holiday Park
Woodhill Park

Local businesses at any stage of their carbon reduction journey can benefit from the work of the Carbon Charter, whether they are not sure where to start, or are looking to take their efforts to the next level.

For more information on the Carbon Charter, visit www.carboncharter.org

• IMPROVEMENTS IDENTIFIED TO BOOST WALKING AND CYCLING THANKS TO ACTIVE TRAVEL

Improvements to boost walking and cycling and improve road safety in two parts of Suffolk are taking shape following consultations with the public. Designs to encourage walking, cycling, and wheeling are being progressed for West Felixstowe and on the road between the villages of Copdock and Capel St Mary.

Following two public consultations, which took place in 2023 and 2024, the schemes are now being refined to take into account the feedback received. They are part of a package of schemes across Suffolk that the council is working on following funding from Active Travel England. The scheme for West Felixstowe covers the area around three schools - SET Felix primary school, Grange Community primary school and The Bridge school.

Following feedback from residents and students from Felixstowe High School, Suffolk County Council is now reviewing the designs to:

- Retain existing levels of on-street parking within the neighbourhood
- See if shared-use paths for pedestrian and cyclists are appropriate or if there is an alternative solution to provide safe space for cycling
- Consider how to improve traffic flows along the northern section of Maidstone Road
- Ensure the design of the junction of Maidstone Road and the High Road allows people to cross
- Ensure spaces outside SET Felix and Grange primary schools create a safe environment for families accessing them
- Consider if there are sufficient safe crossing points for pedestrians
- Consider where 20mph limits might be appropriate to make it safer for pedestrians and cyclists and adding in design features to support this
- Decide on how to prioritise different elements of the scheme for delivery

The council will now review the designs before moving on to fully detailed plans ready for construction, which it is hoped will begin during 2025. More details are available on [the Suffolk County Council website](#).

The scheme for Copdock and Capel St Mary is along a 3.5 mile route between Whights Corner on London Road in Copdock and finishing at the junction of The Street and Cedar's Lane in Capel St Mary.

Based on feedback from the consultation, Suffolk County Council is now reviewing the designs to:

- Give the easiest possible access to Copdock village hall and best location of the proposed crossing
- Ensure residents on London Road can access their driveways without compromising the safety and convenience of people walking and cycling
- Ensure there is sufficient room for HGVs to turn in and out of London Road
- Consider extending the designs past Whight's Corner to link up to the existing cycle route to the Ipswich Park and Ride Service at Copdock
- Consider how to encourage reduced speeds on London Road
- Consider the design of the existing zebra crossing outside Capel St Mary primary school

Work is now underway to identify funding sources for this scheme. More details on the plan can be found at the [Suffolk County Council website](#).

• SET SAIL ON A JOURNEY THROUGH SUFFOLK'S MARITIME PAST WITH SUFFOLK ARCHIVES

Running from 27 June to 27 September at The Hold in Ipswich, the exhibition explores Suffolk's deep connections to the sea from smuggling and sea rescues to shipbuilding, coastal communities, and historic ports. This free exhibition features fascinating contributions from local museums and organisations including the Felixstowe and Offshore Radio Group, Ipswich School, East Anglian Traditional Arts Centre, Lowestoft Maritime Museum, and the RNLI Archives. It is supported by Associated British Ports.

To accompany the exhibition, Suffolk Archives has launched a packed programme of talks, walks, workshops, and family events offering something for curious minds of all ages. Young explorers can dive into storytelling adventures with The Yarnsmith of Norwich, Grethe Jensen, and Hannah Brailsford, who will bring to life tales of sea monsters, pirates, treasure and more. Families can also drop anchor at Let's Get Crafty workshops taking place at The Hold in Ipswich and at venues across the county including Newmarket's National Horse Racing Museum, Haverhill Library, Stowmarket Library, Lowestoft Library, Eye Library, and Moyses Hall in Bury St Edmunds. These creative sessions are a fun and engaging way to explore maritime myths and legends.

Also on tour is Following the Fish, a travelling exhibition telling the powerful and often overlooked story of the Scotch Girls, women who followed the herring fleets from Scotland to Suffolk and Norfolk. A collaboration with High Life Highland's Archive Service, Tasglann nan Eilean, and the Norfolk Record Office, and supported by the Lloyd's Register Foundation, the exhibition visits towns where their story once unfolded. So, whether you're a seasoned history buff or just looking for a fun family day out, chart a course to Suffolk Archives this summer where there's something for everyone to discover. For more information and event listings, visit www.suffolkarchives.co.uk.

CLlr Stephen Burroughes

*County Councillor for the Framlingham Division
Suffolk County Council*