

September 2025 Parish Report

East Suffolk Council GLI Group – Councillor Update

Case for Change: plans to revolutionise Suffolk council services

Plans to revolutionise council services in Suffolk – delivering real improvements for local communities, saving at least £34m a year, and reinvesting £20m of that money annually into council services have been published.

The Three Councils for Suffolk Case for Change, with analysis from Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), an additional £67.5m could also be unlocked each year through localising Adult and Children’s services – improving care for vulnerable children and adults and reducing cost through focusing on prevention and early help.

The proposal will deliver councils that are “big enough to deliver, local enough to care” – reflecting public desire to keep services and democracy close to where they live.

The councils will now debate and finalise the proposal to meet the Government’s deadline of 26 September.

The proposal meets the Government’s criteria that unitaries must have a “clear rationale”, be “sensible economic areas” and have “sensible geographies”.

It also provides simplicity for residents with all services that are currently the responsibility of county, borough and district councils subsequently delivered by just “one local unitary authority where you live.”

The proposed three new council areas will be for Central and Eastern Suffolk, Western Suffolk, and Ipswich and Southern Suffolk. These are working names at this stage.

Key elements of the proposal include:

Delivering value for money – cutting six current councils to three. They will pay for themselves within five years and unlock £34 million in annual savings, while allowing reinvestment of £20 million. Independent analysis shows that adopting an agile, locally driven approach to social care, with a strong emphasis on prevention and early intervention, could unlock opportunities worth a further £67.5 million per year.

Putting residents and communities first - services delivered by local councils that know their communities – ensuring decision making and democracy are in the hands of local people and organisations. They will enable the voluntary and community sector, which is a lifeline for residents, to thrive through better engagement and fairer funding.

Equalising Council Tax – Modelling shows Council Tax can be equalised within each new council area within one year of the new councils forming. Under this model no household would see a greater increase in their 2028/29 council tax than under the current system.

Allowing for joint working - enabling councils to continue to work together across Suffolk where there is commonality of service, through shared service arrangements for additional efficiency.

Better focus on local need - recognising that Suffolk is a diverse county with very different needs, geography and history. Three unitaries based in three distinct areas will provide the clearest opportunity to prioritise and focus on these needs, opportunities and challenges, more than a remote single authority which would have to balance competing priorities.

Improving services for you - providing services tailored to meet local needs rather than one size fits all. This also recognises that many services described as ‘countywide’ are, in practice, delivered through locally organised teams to better meet community needs.

Strong local democracy - ensuring decision makers are close to those who must live with the decisions made, that they have the capacity to deal effectively with the workload and are able to respond to local concerns. Under the proposals for three unitaries, each with between 60 and 66 councillors, individual councillors will focus on and represent around 4,000 residents. Local Government Boundary Commission for England guidance says no one council should have more than 99 councillors. If this guidance is applied to one council for the whole of Suffolk a councillor would represent around 8,000 people. The ability to effectively represent people in a ward will also be much better under a three unitary model than a countywide authority as population grows to more than a million by 2045. The proposals will also empower and build on our strong relationship with town and parish councils.

Driving innovation and getting the essential services right – better supporting transformation, flexibility to react to local circumstances and driving prevention agendas in public services while delivering high quality services.

Ensuring a louder voice to champion Suffolk – the new Norfolk and Suffolk mayor will have a large area to cover. Three unitaries will provide better support and local representation to aid decision-making and ensure delivery of priorities.

The proposal has been built on public and partner engagement, including public events, face-to-face engagement with stakeholders, meetings, workshops and briefings.

They have also been shaped by the views of over 2,200 respondents to an online survey where more than one-third of respondents ranked “being local” as their top priority for future councils – something that could not be achieved by a one size fits all approach.

Three new councils would also build on the work of Suffolk’s district and borough councils which have already achieved £330 million in savings in the last 10 years, through transformation, driving value for money and income generation.

Joint quote from the Suffolk district and borough Leaders:

“The people of Suffolk have made it clear: they want their council and councillors to be rooted in their communities, local, responsive, and focused on delivering value for money. Our Case for Change to Three Councils for Suffolk sets out a vision for three local unitary councils, delivering exactly that.

“By bringing all services under one roof in each area, the proposal strikes a balance between strong leadership and genuine local delivery. It ensures that Suffolk’s towns, villages, urban

centres, and coastlines - and the communities and businesses within them - receive the attention and support they deserve.

“These new councils would take on all responsibilities currently held by county, district, and borough councils, simplifying governance and ensuring services are delivered by a single, accountable body in each area.

“Crucially, parish and town councils will continue to play a vital role in representing their communities. Our proposal aims to strengthen their voice, ensuring they are fully engaged in decision-making and empowered to support residents more effectively.

“Our figures also show that this will not only drive millions in savings and investment but will be the best way to deliver locally tailored services and better outcomes. It enables councils to transform and, like similar other unitary authorities in the UK, find more targeted ways to improve the delivery of vital services like social care, housing and much needed infrastructure. Three Councils for Suffolk delivers in a way that a one size fits all solution cannot. We look forward to the debates and moving the proposal forward to build more responsive, resilient and inclusive Suffolk Councils that work for everyone.”

threecouncilsforsuffolk.org

Event focused on supporting mental wellbeing to return

East Suffolk Council’s ‘Well Minds Event’ is returning in 2026, following the success of the inaugural event in 2025.

The event is aimed at spreading awareness of mental health issues and the support available locally.

Lowestoft Sixth Form College will host the event on Tuesday 17 February 2026 from 9:00–14:00, with several workshop facilitators already confirmed to be in attendance.

As well as stalls from local groups, there will be a range of workshops educating attendees on areas of mental health, including youth mental health services, neurodiversity and building compassionate communities.

Two key speakers, Trevor Stevens and Hollie Middleton, will also talk about their lived experience with mental health.

Both statutory and voluntary organisations working to support mental health in the north of East Suffolk are invited to attend. Organisations are also invited to be a part of the event by booking a stall. This provides a fantastic opportunity to showcase work, connect with other organisations and contribute to a meaningful cause. You can confirm your attendance or book a stall at: tinyurl.com/rcvduh9t

GLI Cllr Sarah Whitelock, East Suffolk’s cabinet member with responsibility for Communities, Culture, Leisure and Tourism said:

“We are so pleased to see this event return for another year. Improving the mental health outcomes of residents is one of this administration’s priorities. Good mental wellbeing is key to building strong communities and achieving positive life outcomes, and this event offers the tools to achieve this.

“We encourage organisations to come together to raise awareness, share resources and spark positive change by attending the Well Minds Event.”

The event has been organised in partnership with Lowestoft Sixth Form College and is funded through the East Suffolk Community Partnership Board.

Funding available to support farmland birds in East Suffolk

Landowners and managers within East Suffolk are being invited to apply for funding to help protect vulnerable bird species living within the district's farmed landscapes.

The East Suffolk Farmland Bird Support Fund (FBSF) which is being delivered by East Suffolk Council has been established to reduce the impact of the Sizewell C project on farmland birds.

A total of around £300,000 in funding is set to be awarded, with grants of between £5,000 and £15,000 to help landowners and users to deliver projects that will create, restore, and enhance habitats for birds that use farmland for cover, nesting and to find food.

Examples of how the funding could be spent include:

- Planting wildflowers along field edges, creating meadows, and leaving areas of rough grass
- Planting native hedges, trees, and shrubs, and enhancing existing hedges
- Making ponds and introducing marginal planting
- Providing places for birds to nest
- Giving extra food to farmland birds during the winter

GLI Councillor Tom Daly, East Suffolk's cabinet member for Energy and Climate Change, said: “The Suffolk coast has a rich biodiversity with many important and rare bird species such as Yellowhammers, Turtle Doves and Stone-curlews, which rely on farmland to survive.

“We want to work with farmers, gamekeepers and landowners to help protect and encourage bird species to thrive, with priority given to projects from areas most affected by the Sizewell C project.

“We recognise the vital role farmers and landowners fulfil in conservation, so we want to collaborate to help protect and encourage bird species to thrive. Priority will be given to projects from areas most affected by the Sizewell C project, but we're inviting applicants to think creatively about how this funding can be used.

“What would be of particular benefit would be the establishment of permanent unsprayed field margins or the developing wildlife corridors, as they make use of uncultivated land to support biodiversity.”

Landowners or managers with land used for farming or next to farmland can apply, or if the land has been identified to be within a 'Natural Environment Improvement Area', though projects outside this area may also be considered.

Those interested in applying for the funding will need to submit an expression of interest form which will outline their proposal, with the council providing guidance where required before being invited to submit a full application. Funding will be distributed on a first come first served basis until all the money has been awarded.

Find out more at: tinyurl.com/4mdm4xyc

For further information, contact: farmlandbirds@eastsuffolk.gov.uk

Ease the Squeeze on Cost of Living

Are you, or someone you know, worried about the increasing cost of living? We understand the pressures faced by many people today and we are working closely with key partners to ensure support is available to help ease the squeeze for households in East Suffolk.

To make it as easy as possible for you to access the services and support available, locally and nationally, we have gathered information about them in one place:

www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/community/squeeze/

For the most up to date information regarding East Suffolk Council, please visit:

www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk

View the Well Minds East Suffolk booklet: tinyurl.com/9xhka624