

County Councillor Report



Report for Parish Councils, April 2026

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Devolution - On 25th March 2026 the Government confirmed that Suffolk's current two-tier system will be replaced by three new unitary authorities covering the areas of western Suffolk, central & eastern Suffolk and Ipswich & southern Suffolk. The full Written Ministerial Statement is here:

[Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament.](#)

The three unitary councils include East, West and Ipswich to include Hadleigh, Caple St Mary, Copdock, Sproughton, and Felixstowe. Similarly, plans to sub-divide Norfolk include three unitaries. This approach seems to overlook the importance of cost and service consistency especially in the areas of social care, education, highways and flood management; an additional factor is that multiple councils may fragment (and weaken) the County unit rendering it easier for a Mayoral authority to exert powers over local interests. Further steps in the Local Government Reorganization process include making a Structural Change Order for agreement this coming summer which would in effect dissolve the County (and other Councils) later in 2026; unitary elections are scheduled for May 2027, and Mayoral elections in 2028 along with new councils. New 'combined' unitary election boundaries should include approximately 2,500 people.

Signage and Markings on Summer Road – following a site visit the County Council proposed new road markings and improved signage around the Sports Centre. These are illustrated in figures accompanying this report. The new markings were paid for by the Parish Council on 23rd March and are on order, they should be completed within 14 weeks of instruction by SCC.

Buses – verbal update at meeting.

"Simpler" (Better) Recycling – Commencing in June 2026 government mandated changes come into effect regarding collection and disposal of household and business wastes. Currently District and Borough councils collect waste (black bins), co-mingled/ mixed recyclable materials (except glass), and garden waste from households. The County Council is the disposal authority and manages the Material Recovery Facility (MRF) in Blakenham where most dry recyclables go for separation and repurposing. Black bin contents go to the Energy from Waste Facility (EFW), some rubble goes to Masons Landfill in Blakenham. In practice, both District and County councils act cooperatively through the Suffolk Waste Partnership to manage the County's non-hazardous waste streams.

The changes imply substantial costs such as modifying the MRF to take glass, contracting for a new food waste processing facility in Suffolk (Bio Capital in Southwold), and finding new markets. Local glass collection will continue for a trial period alongside kerbside collection in Mid Suffolk.

Retirement of Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk Lady Clare Countess of Euston - Lady Clare retires on April 15th after 12 years in this role. She will be succeeded by Mark Pendlington. The Lord Lieutenant plays a civic or ceremonial role in the County as the representative of the reigning monarch at important events such as citizenship, religious services and the national honours and awards. Lady Clare attended Full Council on the 19th March and gave her Thought for the Day.

NSIP Planning Update - the UK government intends to push energy related schemes through without delay and remove some powers from local authorities, and has established an in-house unit at the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) to discharge Development Consent Order (DCO) requirements, which is currently the responsibility of local authorities. The government will extend this approach to all electricity network and energy projects, not limited to nuclear. SCC is concerned that this will put communities at risk of being subject to ill-considered projects which do not take into account local factors. Refer to: [Building our nuclear nation: government response to the Nuclear Regulatory Review 2025 \(accessible webpage\)](#) - GOV.UK

National Grid Pylon Scheme – National Grid (NG) has adjusted some routes in Palgrave, Mellis and Gislegham following public consultation but proposals for undergrounding in the Waveney Valley have been rejected. The Application for a Development Consent Order was submitted in January. As part of the Examination by the Planning Inspectorate, open floor hearings have taken place across Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex since February, the Examination will continue through August. SCC representatives gave evidence on Tuesday 10 February at Ipswich Town Football Club. Transcripts are available on the Planning Inspectorate's website : [Norwich to Tilbury - Project information](#) The week commencing 27th April is reserved for further Hearings and Site Inspections, if scheduled. The Examination is due to end on 10th August unless extended. Contact the project team which will ask the Examining Authority if you wish to participate or comment further, or to request a site meeting: email NorwichToTilbury@planninginspectorate.gov.uk with your request

The County Council's position is to oppose the overground option with preference for off shore or undergrounding, along with scrapping the 2030 target for completion which has been put forward as the main reason for NG's preference for overgrounding.

Information is available on – nationalgrid.com/norwich-to-tilbury

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