Suffolk County Council - Member Update

For Moulton Parish Council – 19 July 2026

Cllr Adrian Whittle, FCIPD
Suffolk County Council | Newmarket & Red Lodge Division
Deputy Cabinet Member for Efficiency

West Suffolk District Council | Newmarket East Ward
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1. RAF Barnham

The Leader of Suffolk County Council (SCC) met with the Leader of Barnham Parish Council immediately following the Government's announcement of plans to accommodate up to 1,250 asylum seekers at RAF Barnham.

Suffolk County Council has pledged its full support to Barnham Parish Council in opposing the proposal. Under the Government's plans, those housed at the site would be permitted to leave RAF Barnham and access the local area, including walking through the village of Barnham and travelling by public transport to nearby towns such as Thetford and Bury St Edmunds

I have joined local residents in expressing concern about the proposal and recently took part in a peaceful protest walk from Thetford to RAF Barnham (12 July 2026). The march formed part of wider community opposition to the Government's plans and was conducted peacefully.

In my view, the Government should not be placing large numbers of people who have entered the UK illegally, or whose immigration status remains unresolved, into small rural communities without proper consultation and without fully considering the impact on local services, infrastructure and community cohesion.

Suffolk County Council will continue to work closely with local representatives and residents to ensure that the concerns of the community are fully represented.

2. Local Government Reorganisation

Suffolk County Council has engaged King’s Counsel for expert legal advice on the Government’s proposed Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) for Suffolk, which would replace the current two-tier structure with three unitary authorities.

SCC leaders have challenged the plans as a "costly and chaotic reorganisation on the basis of a flawed process." In early June the Council issued a pre-action letter arguing the decision exceeds the Secretary of State's powers and fails to follow proper statutory process. Ministers were given until mid-June to respond before considering judicial review.

We will continue to protect Suffolk residents and taxpayers from unnecessary upheaval that weakens local accountability.

3. **New Administration: Ending Virtue Signalling and Resetting Priorities**
   Since Reform UK took control of Suffolk County Council in May 2026, we have hit the ground running to refocus the authority on core services, impartial governance, sound finances, and real value for money for residents.

   As Deputy Cabinet Member for Efficiency, I am working with officers and Cabinet colleagues to deliver the £21 million in savings this financial year. Our goal is a leaner, more effective Council that prioritises frontline delivery over bureaucracy and ideological projects.

4. **Revised Flag-Flying Policy** (28 May 2026)
   The new Reform administration has introduced a simplified, neutral policy on flags flown from County Council buildings — ending the previous administration's virtue signalling.

   Approved flags:
   - The Union Flag
   - The England Flag (St George's Cross)
   - The Suffolk Flag
   - Flags required under national protocol (e.g., Armed Forces Day, Remembrance)

   Reason: Residents were rightly fed up with public buildings being used for political or ideological gestures. This policy restores neutrality, unity, and common sense across Suffolk.

5. **Cabinet letter to the Chief Constable** (11 June 2026).

   Following the horrific death of Henry Nowak, the SCC Cabinet wrote to the Chief Constable of Suffolk Constabulary on 11 June 2026.

   The letter seeks assurance that:
   - DEI and CRT-influenced training is not impairing officers' ability to act decisively to protect the public

- Training remains impartial, evidence-based, and focused on operational effectiveness
- No ideological content is creating hesitation or confusion about officers' lawful powers

Reason: Public safety must come first. Officers need to be trained to protect life and enforce the law without ideological interference that undermines judgment. I fully support the Cabinet's action and will continue pressing for clarity on behalf of residents and parish councils.

6. **Suffolk County Council rescinded Climate emergency declaration** | (16 July 2025)

   We have not abandoned our responsibility to the environment. What we have dropped is the alarmist slogan. The Council is continuing to protect Suffolk's countryside, tackle flooding, support biodiversity, reduce waste and deliver genuine stewardship of our natural resources.

   Instead of gestures and declarations, we are now carrying out a rigorous review of every net zero and climate programme.

   Our focus is clear: real results on the ground, legal compliance, and value for money for taxpayers.

   As Councillor Morgan Brobyn put it, this was never a choice between caring for the environment or not caring. It was a choice between keeping a slogan and delivering measurable benefits for Suffolk residents.

   We remain firmly committed to:

   • Protecting Suffolk's natural beauty and resources

   • Practical flood prevention and resilience

   • Enhancing biodiversity and habitats

   • Reducing waste where it makes a real difference

   • Keeping only the programmes that work and scrapping those that don't.

   This is not a retreat. It is a rejection of performative politics in favour of serious, evidence-based action. Slogans don't stop flooding and paper targets don't create habitats. What matters is practical delivery that actually improves Suffolk for future generations.

7. **Priorities for the coming quarter**

   Core services first: Work is underway to redirect resources to core frontline services

Financial discipline: Achieving £21m savings through efficiency and waste reduction — not service cuts to residents

I will continue to send regular, straightforward updates to the Moulton Parish Council.

SCC's new administration is focused on practical results, transparent government, and delivering competent, neutral, common-sense leadership that puts Suffolk residents first — ending years of virtue signalling and bureaucracy.

Please feel free to contact me with any local issues or feedback.

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