

 @SuffolkTories

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July 2025 Town and Parish Newsletter

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To strengthen our local economy



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Suffolk's once-in-a-generation, state-of-the-art fire control room goes live

Delivered in just 18 months, a short timeframe for a project of this scale, the initiative involved building a brand-new contact centre from the ground up, recruiting and training an entirely new team, and implementing bespoke configurations tailored to all the communities in Suffolk.

The new control room, powered by cutting-edge technology from Motorola Solutions, now serves as a future-ready, cloud-enabled hub for managing critical 999 emergency calls across the county.

The decision to invest in a new control room for the county was made in 2023, following recognition that the previous system was no longer fit for purpose. The legacy system's increasing fragility meant the fire service could no longer depend on or guarantee the resilience that Suffolk's communities deserve.

The new control room includes several helpful new features that will support Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service in responding to emergencies more effectively:

- Better preparation for major incidents – The system helps the team respond more quickly and manage operations more smoothly during large-scale emergencies, like floods and wildfires, which are becoming increasingly common in the UK.
- Remote access – Staff can now securely log in to the control system from any location, making it easier to set up mobile command centres or offer support remotely when needed.
- Improved call and data handling – A new system stores and organises control room voice recordings more securely, keeping all key information in one place and linking it to the right incidents.
- Stronger regional teamwork – The control room is part of a wider hub with Hertfordshire and Norfolk fire services, allowing the teams to support each other and share the load during busy periods, such as when multiple 999 calls are received simultaneously.

Councillor Steve Wiles, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Public Protection, who unveiled a commemorative plaque at a ceremony attended by fire service colleagues, senior council officers and emergency services partners, said:

"This is an incredible achievement - it demonstrates our commitment to innovation and protecting Suffolk's residents with the very best emergency response services.

"Delivering this in just 18 months is a testament to what's possible when teams collaborate with a clear vision and shared purpose."

Jon Lacey, Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service's Chief Fire Officer, said:



“This project is about making sure every call for help is answered with speed, precision, and care. Bringing services back into the county was a decisive move to put Suffolk’s residents and public value at the heart of emergency response.

“The new control room features advanced dispatch technology, upgraded communications systems, and enhanced data sharing capabilities – ensuring faster, smarter coordination during emergencies.

“I’m immensely proud of everyone who played a part in delivering this project successfully.”

Fergus Mayne, U.K. and Ireland country manager at Motorola Solutions, said:

“Demand on the fire and rescue service has evolved over the years. Our cloud-hosted Guardian Suite of computer-aided dispatch and integrated communication control system software benefits the three fire and rescue services by bringing all communications together into a robust and efficient environment, supporting faster, more coordinated emergency responses.”

Alex Norris, Minister for Fire, said:

“This new control room marks a major step forward for fire and rescue in Suffolk, improving the effectiveness and co-ordination of emergency responses across the county.

“I want to thank everyone involved for their hard work and dedication in delivering this project. It is a clear example of how investment and innovation in our fire services can lead to meaningful improvements in public safety.”

Council secures funding for sustainable libraries and schools

They will see low-carbon heat pumps installed, replacing aging fossil fuel boilers to reduce maintenance costs and significantly lower emissions.

Suffolk County Council recently secured £675,000 from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, delivered by Salix, for these improvements. The scheme is run by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

“These improvements are not only reducing carbon emissions and cutting running costs, but they’re also creating better, more resilient and comfortable spaces for staff and residents to enjoy.”

Councillor Philip Faircloth-Mutton, Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet Member for Environment, Communities and Equality

In November 2021, the county council committed to invest £12.8 million to decarbonise buildings across its estate. Libraries have been a priority for this work, seeing upgrades to



reduce energy use, cut carbon emissions, and ensure these much-loved community spaces are fit for the future.

Community Libraries across Suffolk have seen the installation of solar panels, enhanced heating and lighting controls, and improved insulation. A recent project to upgrade the lighting at Bury St Edmunds library has been positively received and has already reduced electricity usage.

Councillor Philip Faircloth-Mutton, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Environment, Communities and Equality, said:

"Suffolk Community Libraries are the beating heart of many parts of Suffolk, and I'm proud that they are now also champions of sustainability.

"These improvements are not only reducing carbon emissions and cutting running costs, but they're also creating better, more resilient and comfortable spaces for staff and residents to enjoy.

"Libraries are at the forefront of the county council's ambitious programme to reduce our energy consumption, deliver value for money, as well showcasing the council's commitment to more sustainable community spaces.

"This forward-thinking approach has also helped us to unlock further development opportunities. In several instances, our initial investment has enabled access to additional grant funding, driving further improvements to building fabric and interior spaces."

The county council's success in securing the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding also extends beyond libraries.

An additional £215,000 was awarded from the from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to install heat pumps at Barningham and Hadleigh Beaumont Primary Schools, supporting long-term energy efficiency and helping reduce the maintenance burden for school leaders.

These projects will provide valuable insights as Suffolk County Council continues to work with schools across the region to deliver sustainable energy solutions.

Ian Rodger, Director of Public Sector Decarbonisation for Salix, said:

"We're delighted to work with Suffolk County Council as it makes great strides to ensure its public buildings are future-proofed.

"We are keen that the council can reduce its carbon footprint, reduce running costs as well creating more comfortable places in which to live, work and enjoy."

For more information on the Council's decarbonisation programme, visit [Climate action - Suffolk County Council](#).



OPINION: Ipswich Northern Route – the inconvenient truth for Ipswich’s MP

It was, of course, inevitable that the traffic disruption caused by the vital roadworks on the Orwell Bridge, being carried out by National Highways, would bring the Ipswich Northern Route (INR) back into the glare of local news.

Last week, Jack Abbott, MP for Ipswich, demanded Suffolk County Council reopen the debate about creating a Northern Relief Road around the town. He claimed it was “bypass or bust” and accused the council of indecision — suggesting this is the reason Ipswich faces the transport problems it does today.

Neither statement is true, of course. And neither does anything to help the people of Ipswich with the very real transport issues they face.

Far from being indecisive, Suffolk County Council, under the current administration, is the only local authority that has ever had the political will to seriously investigate the project. We took controversial but necessary steps to move the conversation forward. That included:

- A 10-week public consultation
- 11 engagement sessions across local villages and towns
- A detailed Strategic Outline Business Case exploring multiple route options, environmental impacts, and a full analysis of benefits and risks.

The idea that the council avoided this issue, or was indecisive, is frankly nonsense.

The reason the INR did not proceed is simple: local district councils, who hold responsibility for housing, flatly rejected the additional 15,000 homes that would have been required, over and above those already in their local plans, to secure vital government backing. Without that commitment, there was no financial case and no route to government funding. There was also no support from the Member of Parliament at the time, who vociferously opposed any Northern Route through his constituency. And there was, understandably, a loud protest from people living in the area north of Ipswich, whose homes and communities would have been directly impacted by the building of the road.

There was no universal political support for the scheme then, and nothing tells me that has changed in the last six years. Unless, of course, Cllr Topping from East Suffolk Council and Cllr Mellen from Mid Suffolk are now enthusiastically backing the idea of increasing their housing targets and approving a new dual carriageway through their districts. Somehow, I doubt it.

Jack is now running a petition in favour of the INR, but I suspect it will tell us nothing we didn’t already know. We already had clear support from Ipswich residents back in 2018/19. We had backing from the then-MP, Sandy Martin. What Jack seems to believe is that his petition will be so monumentally compelling it will undo all the reasons the INR couldn’t go ahead last time — and somehow make the huge sums of government money magically appear in our coffers to pay for it. It hasn’t — and it won’t.



All this does is raise the hopes of Ipswich residents with a solution that cannot progress — while causing renewed anxiety for residents north of Ipswich that the scheme is back on the table.

Jack is also wrong to claim it is “bypass or bust” for Ipswich. There are plenty of other transport priorities that deserve attention. We need a grown-up conversation about transport in our county town — one that doesn’t stake everything on one scheme like the INR.

We need to look at:

- The long-term vision for the A14 and A12 corridor: upgrades to key junctions and meeting the demands created by nationally significant power generation to the northeast of the town
- The Orwell Bridge: it has a limited shelf life — we need to find a solution
- The growing port of Felixstowe: what road and rail capacity will be needed to support national cargo logistics?
- Sustainable travel within Ipswich: how do we enable more sustainable shorter journeys without relying on new roads?
- And, of course, how best to relieve the strain on Ipswich when the Orwell Bridge is closed

In an effort to move these discussions forward, I am today writing an open letter to the Secretary of State for Transport, inviting them to meet with me, senior transport officers, and Jack Abbott as soon as possible to discuss the future transport needs of Suffolk and Ipswich. We also need to receive the funding that has been promised again and again for transport schemes which still haven’t materialised.

Schemes like:

- The Ely and Haughley rail junction improvements — allowing more freight to shift from road to rail, easing pressure on the A14
- The A12 Major Road Network scheme — delivering much-needed improvements around Woodbridge and between the A12 and A14

Both have been approved. Neither has seen the funding arrive.

It’s not lost on me that as we go through local government reorganisation, and the abolition of our county, district and borough councils, Ipswich Borough Council now wants to recreate a fragmented governance model under its “Greater Ipswich Authority” idea. But such a scenario won’t lead to progress for Ipswich in my view — only more political gameplaying between competing neighbouring authorities resulting in less outcomes and more costs. We’d be left, once again, with one wanting to build the INR and another being asked to take the housing.

Suffolk County Council wants to see a single authority for Suffolk — one that makes smarter, simpler and better decisions for the entire county, including Ipswich — I hope Jack will now support this vision too.



You can [read the open letter to Heidi Alexander MP](#), the Secretary of State for Transport.

OPINION: Improving Suffolk's roads - an update on the summer surface dressing programme

As summer sets in, Suffolk Highways is pleased to announce the successful completion of the first phase of its 2025 surface dressing programme – a vital tool in maintaining and extending the life of our county's roads.

Surface dressing is a cost-effective and efficient method of road maintenance that prolongs the life of existing road surfaces, helping to avoid more disruptive and costly repairs in the future.

The process involves spraying a layer of hot bitumen onto the road, followed by a layer of stone chippings. These chippings are then rolled into the surface to create a new, textured layer that improves skid resistance and seals the road against water ingress – a major cause of potholes and structural damage over time.

This method enables us to treat a large area quickly and economically. We can typically complete the process within a day, although the road may require a short period of reduced speed limits while the surface beds in.

Since the first phase began in mid-May, we have completed more than 62,000 metres of surface dressing across 50 sites in Suffolk. This is a testament to the hard work of our teams and supply chain partners, many of whom have worked through the night or in high temperatures to keep the programme on track.

One of the most common concerns following surface dressing is the presence of loose chippings. These are a normal and expected part of the process. Although the majority are embedded during rolling, some remain loose and are gradually pressed into the surface by passing traffic.

To ensure safety and protect vehicles, temporary speed limits – usually 20mph – are introduced immediately after dressing. We urge all drivers to adhere to these limits, not only for their own safety but also to prevent vehicle damage and allow the surface to settle properly.

We have also recently trialled the use of Lockchip on one of our surface dressing sites. Lockchip is a surface seal coating applied to newly dressed roads. As the name suggests, it 'locks in' the chippings and seals the surface, reducing the likelihood of chipping loss – particularly beneficial on high-speed and high-traffic routes.

Lockchip also enables us to apply road markings within a few days, rather than the typical weeks-long wait associated with traditional surface dressing.



We are currently assessing the results of the trial but hope to implement this innovation more widely in Suffolk and potentially use it during phase two of the surface dressing programme. Details of the second phase are now available at www.suffolk.gov.uk/surface-dressing,

should you wish to find out where we'll be visiting next.

Although the first phase is now complete, June also marked the start of a major infrastructure improvement project in Suffolk, with essential repairs beginning on the Orwell Bridge.

The works – being carried out by National Highways, who maintain the A14 – are scheduled to continue through August. Over the next couple of months, crews will carry out vital repairs to ensure the long-term safety of the structure, which is used by thousands of motorists daily.

While we all recognise the importance of these works, the inevitable congestion from the contraflow system and reduced speed limits has understandably caused frustration.

Although this project is being managed by National Highways, as it is their asset, Suffolk Highways remains committed to minimising disruption where possible. This includes postponing non-essential repairs in the surrounding area, working closely with National Highways, and ensuring any unavoidable local works are scheduled outside of peak hours whenever possible.

We understand that no one enjoys roadworks – especially when they coincide with other major projects – but these improvements are essential to keep Suffolk moving safely and efficiently.

Thank you for your continued patience and cooperation during this period of roadworks. Your support is helping to deliver long-term benefits for communities, businesses and commuters across Suffolk.

Districts and borough must be honest with residents over their 3-councils proposal

- Call for Suffolk's five district and borough councils to come clean over their reorganisation proposals
- Details needed so public can make informed decisions
- Delay risks failure to properly assess proposals before sharing with Government

A key piece of information, which is currently missing, is the proposed boundaries of the three council areas they wish to create – leaving communities in the dark over what this could mean for them. It also prevents necessary scrutiny of the proposals before they are submitted to the Government. In contrast Suffolk County Council announced its proposal for single council covering the whole of Suffolk in March 2025 – and is now engaging with residents and stakeholders.



The call comes as West Suffolk Council has published a motion which supports a three council model but stops well short of giving further details to residents.

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for devolution, local government reorganisation and NSIPs, said:

"There is absolutely no detail of any value in this announcement from West Suffolk Council. There's not even a suggestion of where they believe the boundaries of the new councils should be.

"This detail is important not only for the public, who rightly want to know where their town or village is within the districts' proposals, but also for us as we model the service implications for some of Suffolk's most vulnerable residents if the government chooses to break Suffolk up. Are they suggesting Felixstowe is in with east Suffolk or Ipswich? Where is Hadleigh, Woodbridge or the Shotley peninsula? We just don't know, and by not coming clean they're keeping the public in the dark and putting service users at potential risk.

"Either the district and borough councils don't know where their new councils would be, can't agree where they should be, or do know but are too scared to share the details with the public because they know it will cause outcry.

"We are certain that the idea that three councils will save taxpayers money and not have to cut services to balance the books is a fairytale. It is abundantly clear that splitting Suffolk in three will cost money, not save it – in fact taxpayers will be worse off than under the current system.

"The district and borough councils' cobbled-together patchwork proposal means three councils, three sets of salaries and the same old story for Suffolk. It's simply the wrong way to go and I suspect they know it but are too dogmatic to admit it.

"Having just one new council for Suffolk, delivering all local and countywide services, will save the most money to reinvest in services or keep council tax as low as possible. Residents and local organisations are already helping to ensure local voices and understanding will be central to a One Suffolk approach.

"To suggest that three councils could achieve all of this is simply make believe."
Residents are being encouraged to have their say on the future of councils and public services in Suffolk by completing Suffolk County Council's survey.

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 or in hard copy.



New routes announced with Local Authority Bus Grant funding

As with the previous Bus Service Improvement Plan grants covering 2023-25, these routes have all been suggested by the community through the council's "scheme on a page" initiative.

"I'm delighted to announce these new and improved routes for Suffolk. These changes represent the biggest positive change to bus services across the County since 1998 and along with our previous route improvements, show our commitment to supporting local communities and the bus industry."

Cllr Chris Chambers, Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy, Planning and Waste

Cllr Chambers continues: "These routes were suggested by the community and we hope to see these services grow passenger numbers over the coming months and years."

"I would like to thank all Councillors, Parish and Town councils and bus companies who came forward to suggest these improvements."

The majority of the services are expected to start in late August or early September, however in the case of Mulleys routes covering Marham Park (M77) and Thurston (M40), these began on 7th July, replacing services withdrawn by other operators. This is to minimise disruption for the local community, following the recent cancellation of the Marham Park Flyer.

Cllr Chambers continues: "We have been working extensively, over many months, with local providers and the community to find solutions for those affected by the cancellation of the Marham Park Flyer service. The Local Authority Bus Grant for 2025/26, which was the council received from the Department for Transport on 1 June has enabled us to offer a replacement for this much-loved route.

"To reduce the gap in services around Marham Park, we worked with the Traffic Commissioner to ensure a shorter notice period than usually required for the new route to begin and I am pleased that this new route has now started.

"We have an excellent track record of supporting communities and operators to maintain routes when circumstances like these present themselves, and this is another example of that."

Alongside the 2.8m revenue for delivering new or enhanced services, the county council also [previously announced £5.2m of capital funding from the DfT](https://www.suffolkonboard.com/news/2024/06/bus-service-improvement-plan-where-should-the-money-be-spent/) for new and improved bus stops, bus stations, bus priority measures or vehicle upgrades. Members of the community can suggest bus stop improvement projects for consideration at: <https://www.suffolkonboard.com/news/2024/06/bus-service-improvement-plan-where-should-the-money-be-spent/>

The website also shows details of all services funded through previous grants. The new funding is going to:

Ipswich Buses	1	Waitrose - Greenwich - Town Centre	Addition of Sunday service
Ipswich Buses	3E	Town Centre - University of Suffolk - Nacton Road - Greenwich	Addition of Sunday evening service
Ipswich Buses	92	Ipswich - Holbrook - Brantham - Manningtree	Planned reduction in service withdrawn, new peak AM journey from Brantham to Manningtree
Ipswich Buses	93	Ipswich - Capel St Mary - East Bergholt - Colchester	Nothing new - planned reduction in service withdrawn.
Ipswich Buses	4	Town Centre - Broke Hall - Bixley	Increased peak-hour frequency
Ipswich Buses	5	Town Centre - Foxhall Road - Ipswich Hospital	Increased Mon-Fri frequency
Ipswich Buses	7, 16	Ipswich Town Centre – Dale Hall – Castle Hill – Anglia Retail Park and Ipswich Town Centre – Belstead Road – Halifax	Increased peak-hour frequency, additional trips (part-funded by Henley Gate s106)
Ipswich Buses	15/15A	Town Centre - Station - Maidenhall - Pinewood - Chantry	Increased frequency
Chambers	90, 91	Ipswich - Hadleigh - Sudbury	New Sunday service plus additional Mon-Sat journeys
Chambers	784	Sudbury - Nayland - Colchester	New Sunday and evening journeys. Daytime Mon-Sat services retimed to give regular frequency for Stoke By Nayland and Leavenheath. To be linked with 753 for through travel to/from Bury St Edmunds
Chambers	Sudbury Town Service	New Sudbury town service	TBC - will include Tesco, Clermont Ave bus gate, Health Centre - possibly Great Cornard
Chambers	375	Sudbury - Alpheton - Shimpling - Bury St Edmunds	Upgrade from Weds only to run Mon-Sat, route change to cover West Suffolk Hospital
Mulleys	M40	Thurston - Great Barton - Bury St Edmunds	New hourly service
Mulleys	M77	Marham Park - Westley Estate - Bury Town Centre	Extension of existing town service to run earlier and later plus covering Marham Park.
BorderBus	521	Aldeburgh - Thorpeness - Saxmundham - Halesworth	Increased Saturday frequency and extended to Beccles
Dan's Coach Travel	DB1	Stowmarket - Bury St Edmunds	Addition of Saturday service

The Voluntary Network	TBC	Exning - Studlands Estate - Newmarket Town Centre - Railway Station	New Mon - Sat service
The Voluntary Network	TBC	Newmarket - Dullingham - Thurlows - Haverhill	New Mon-Fri service converting current demand responsive option to scheduled route. Also provides peak journey on new town service above.
The Voluntary Network	TBC	Brandon Town service, route TBC	New three day per weeks service linking estates, town centre, country park and High Lodge
Simonds	TBC	Gislingham - Diss	New Friday shopping service
Fareline	TBC	Gislingham - Stowmarket	New Thursday shopping service
Hadleigh Community Transport	461, 462	Hadleigh - Whatfield - Bildeston - Stowmarket	Increase to daily operation and add more journeys
TBC	482	Framlingham - Stradbroke - Eye - Diss	New Mon-Sat service
First	800	Ipswich Park & Ride	Revised route in Ipswich taking in University of Suffolk and Ipswich Hospital (Garrett Anderson Centre rather than Woodbridge Road). Some journeys extended to Adastral Park. 1 journey per hour extended to Rendlesham via Martlesham, Woodbridge and Melton.
First	70	Orford – Sutton Heath – Melton – Woodbridge – Grundisburgh – Ipswich.	Additional journeys from Sutton Heath to Melton and Woodbridge with connections onwards to Ipswich.
First	106	Lowestoft town service	Resumption of service to Gunton area withdrawn in 2019.

Response to government announcement on road schemes

In response to the [Government announcement on road and rail schemes in England](#), which includes statement below has been issued by **Councillor Chris Chambers, Suffolk County Council Cabinet member for Transport Strategy**.

“The improvements to the A12 that have been announced are not new, they are simply a rehash of previous funding pledges,” he said.



"I have called for talks with the government and others about what can be done to improve the Suffolk transport network, such as improving the Copdock interchange and the Ely/Haughley rail junction improvements, a measure that would take a huge amount of freight off the roads in Suffolk and free up badly-needed capacity.

"The government announcement demonstrates that when it comes to investing in Suffolk and wider East Anglia it is not listening."

On July 1 Councillor Chambers issued an open letter to the Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander MP calling for talks about the need for strategic investment in Suffolk's transport infrastructure.

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

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service acts early to manage hot weather

The plan aims to maintain an effective and efficient emergency response during the period of hotter weather and will remain in place until a decision is made - through ongoing multi-agency discussions - that the additional measures are no longer required.

It includes safeguarding the welfare of wholetime and on-call crews and working collaboratively with other emergency services, Suffolk County Council, and Ipswich Borough Council to ensure a coordinated approach to planning and prevention.

As part of its wider preparations, SFRS is also collaborating with farmers across the county who are trialling specialist couplings designed to enhance emergency access to on-farm water supplies during wildfires and other rural incidents. The trial aims to enhance firefighting capacity and reduce response times across Suffolk's countryside.

Commenting on the measures being taken, **Jon Lacey, Chief Fire Officer at Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service said:** "We are thoroughly prepared to handle any challenges, drawing on our extensive experience from the extreme heat events of 2022, when we effectively managed high demand of our resources. Our robust plans ensure we're ready for any scenario, and we're confident in our ability to keep the public safe.

"We also encourage everyone to play their part by acting responsibly to prevent wildfires and staying cautious around water to avoid accidental drownings. By taking simple precautions now, we can all work together to prevent serious incidents."

Prevention and public support

Members of the public are urged to avoid using disposable barbecues or lighting campfires in rural or open areas. They should never discard cigarettes or glass bottles on dry grass or in wooded areas. Additionally, extreme caution is advised around water - especially rivers, lakes, and the coast - since cold water shock can be fatal, even in warm weather.



Business owners are reminded to review their Fire Risk Assessments and Business Continuity Plans, which take account of extreme weather.

Mr Lacey added: “Should anyone encounter a fire or inland water emergency; do not put yourself at risk – please call 999 immediately and ask for the fire service.”

Councillor Steve Wiles, Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet Member for Public Protection, said:

“The steps Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service is taking as part of its Extreme Heat Business Continuity Plan are a great example of forward-thinking public safety planning.

“From ensuring firefighter welfare to working with farmers to improve water access during wildfires, the Service is putting in place practical, joined-up measures that will make a real difference. The couplings trial is an innovative example of what can be achieved through local collaboration, and I fully support its potential to strengthen our resilience in rural areas.”

Suffolk’s Roman history to be unearthed with support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund

Romans Unearthed will offer groundbreaking research on Suffolk’s Roman villas, revealing untold stories from nearly 2,000 years ago of how the Romans shaped Suffolk’s landscape following the Boudican rebellion in AD60.

Suffolk has at least 65 villa sites in the county, only four of which have been extensively excavated in the 20th century, including by Basil Brown. Very few have been investigated to modern standards. *Romans Unearthed* will include excavations and surveys on key villa sites which have yet to be fully examined.

The county council has received initial support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund for a one-year development phase, made possible thanks to National Lottery players.

Development funding of £169,830 has been awarded by the Heritage Fund to help SCCAS progress their plans over the next year, which will enable them to apply for a full National Lottery grant at a later date.

Councillor Philip Faircloth-Mutton, Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet Member for Environment, Communities and Equality, said:

“This is an incredibly exciting project that will investigate and protect Roman villas in Suffolk and give us further insight into life in the county over 2,000 years ago.

“Nearly all Roman villas in Suffolk are undesignated and at risk of damage by agriculture and heritage crime, meaning their history could be lost forever.



“Romans Unearthed will be an important archaeological adventure, and with support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, it will provide so much to local people in Suffolk.

“It will actively involve volunteers, specifically providing training for people who do not have opportunities to engage in archaeology such as school children, young carers, children in care or leaving care, and mental health charities, all of whom will contribute to meaningful research on Roman history in Suffolk.”

University College London, Institute of Archaeology (UCL) is a leading project partner.

Dr Stuart Brookes, Associate Professor and Fieldwork Tutor at UCL, said:

“We’re thrilled to be working with Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service to develop a new partnership model that will integrate community volunteers with our university excavation sites. Together, we hope to understand more about Roman rule in Suffolk and the role of villas as important places.

“Suffolk’s Roman history is distinctive - the villas were high-status countryside residences alongside a network of contemporary roads and small towns.”

Funding will also go towards enhancing and digitising the archaeological archives held by Suffolk County Council, relating to 20th century excavations of Roman villas, including site diaries and plans by Basil Brown who excavated the largest villa so far in Suffolk at Castle Hill, Ipswich in 1948-50.

The project plans will develop over the next year until October 2026 with this initial support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund with the prospect of achieving the full grant support in the future to put the plans into action.

OPINION: Our Youth Justice Plan puts children at the heart of what we do

Last week Suffolk’s Youth Justice Board presented its Youth Justice plan for 2025/26 to Suffolk County Council. I’m pleased to say that following a debate, which included the importance of considering the victims of crime as well as the need to help young people avoid a vicious cycle of criminality, was endorsed by the council.

As with any good plan – children are at the heart of this strategy.

I’m a firm believer that our youth justice system, along with making our communities safer and protecting the public, must treat children as children and see the whole child, including any barriers they face. Our focus is on creating better outcomes for children, which ultimately helps to make our communities safer and helps children to thrive.

And of course, this is not something one organisation can do alone, it takes a whole partnership effort, right across Suffolk. Suffolk’s Youth Justice Board includes



representatives from Suffolk Constabulary; Suffolk Probation Service; NHS Suffolk and North-East Essex and NHS Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Boards, and Suffolk County Council. These existing partnerships work well in Suffolk, and I think they offer clear evidence of the benefits of one council for Suffolk. would be difficult to replicate on an area basis, if Suffolk was broken up geographically through Local Government Reorganisation.

In bringing together our Youth Justice Plan for the forthcoming year, we have consulted with staff, children, and volunteers about what is important to them, to make sure their voices are heard in all that we do.

I also think it important to reflect on some of the successes we have seen in the last year.

We have seen fewer children entering the formal youth justice system for the first time, following Suffolk Constabulary and Suffolk Youth Justice Service jointly implementing an Action Plan to reduce the number of children who become First Time Entrants. A Multi Agency Out of Court Decision Making Panel meets weekly, using the expertise of the panel members to ensure appropriate decisions are made to support children, provide access to effective support for desistance, and consider the victim's views and safety. We've seen a notable decrease in the second half of last year, which gives us an early indication that this approach is working well, and we expect to see the rate continue to come down.

Last year's plan had a strong focus on Restorative approaches. This is when The Youth Justice service works with victims of youth crime to find out how they think the harm caused to them can best be put right. The service then supports the young person involved to understand how their own behaviours impact on others and to re-engage with their community and society by repairing harm and restoring relationships.

Progress in implementing the plan has included creation of a directory of support services for victims, hosting a service day dedicated to working with victims and restorative approaches and Risk Meetings to ensure that the victims' perspectives are adequately represented.

The county has also seen fewer children detained in police custody overnight and a reduction in community and custodial orders compared to the previous year.

Suffolk received a visit from the National Youth Justice Board in Autumn last year, following a reduction in the number of serious violence offences committed by children. The National Youth Justice Board highlighted this good practice in Suffolk, as result of local, effective partnership work.

Looking to the future, Suffolk's Youth Justice Plan for 2025/2026 outlines the service's four strategic priorities, which are to:

- Reduce the number of children entering the youth justice system
- Reduce reoffending by children in the youth justice system
- Reduce the use of youth detention and improve resettlement outcomes
- Improve safety, wellbeing, and outcomes for children in or on the edges of the youth justice system



It is vitally important that we include the voices of children in all that we do – we want to be making decisions with young people, not for them.

The Youth Justice Management Board has introduced a regular slot for children to attend their meetings and present their views and experiences. This ensures that insights from lived experience continue to inform and influence practice across Suffolk Youth Justice Service.

The service has also planned several activities to develop child-first practices in Suffolk for 2025-26, including the establishment of a Youth Advisory Board to facilitate consultation and co-production with children. This will include the development of activities during the school holidays and children identifying suitable reparation projects that support building pro-social identity.

Suffolk Youth Justice Service is also embarking on a new arts-based project. This initiative will provide children with opportunities to explore creative outlets and display their artistic talents and creativity. This project will not only help them develop their skills but also boost their confidence and sense of accomplishment.

This project has already seen positive outcomes, and some amazing artwork has been created by our young people.

Exploring Joseph Conrad's Lowestoft Story Through Creative Partnership

The innovative project, *If Conrad Had TikTok*, explores Conrad's early experiences in Suffolk through a blend of creative storytelling and historical research. Funded through the *Arrivals: Celebrating Migration to Suffolk* initiative, the project reflects on Conrad's arrival in Lowestoft in 1878, his first step on British soil and highlights themes of migration, identity, and community.

The project draws on The Voice cCloud's 2023 research initiative *Joseph Conrad – The Life of a Lowestoft Immigrant*, offering an imaginative and accessible way to engage new audiences with Suffolk's rich migration history.

Councillor Philip Faircloth-Mutton, Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member for Environment, Communities and Equality said:

"We are delighted to be working with The Voice cCloud on this creative and thought-provoking project. It's a fantastic example of how collaboration can bring heritage to life, helping people connect with Suffolk's diverse history in meaningful and accessible ways." Richard Simpson, Director of The Voice cCloud, said:

"Working with Suffolk Archives has been key to bringing this project to life, helping us combine real historical research with creative storytelling. *If Conrad Had TikTok* is about bringing the past into the present in a way that feels immediate and personal.



“We wanted to imagine how someone like him might have shared his story if he’d had the tools we use today - social media, video, and a platform to speak directly to others. It’s a fresh way to explore timeless themes like starting over, identity, resilience, community, acceptance, and belonging; helping people see history through a more personal and relatable lens.”

The project forms part of the *Arrivals* programme, which was recently named Community Engagement Programme of the Year at the Museums + Heritage Awards.

The videos will be hosted on the Suffolk Archives website under the Arrivals Community page later in the year.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service calls for urgent fire extinguisher checks in non-domestic and higher-risk premises

A ban on fire extinguishers containing perfluorooctanoic acids (PFOAs) came into effect on 4 July 2025, under updated Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation, and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) and Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) legislation.

These changes aim to reduce harm to both human health and the environment from so-called “forever chemicals”.

PFOA is of particular concern due to its non-biodegradable nature, toxicity, and tendency for bioaccumulation – where small amounts build up over time in living organisms, particularly those low in the food chain.

The most affected products are Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF) extinguishers, especially those manufactured or refilled before 2016.

As the ban is now in force, those responsible should by now have checked whether their extinguishers are compliant. If you have not yet taken action, SFRS is encouraging you to do so without delay.

Gary Smart, Head of Protection at SFRS, said: “While many will have already made the necessary changes, we know that some may still be unsure about whether their current extinguishers are affected but we’re here to help.

“If you’re responsible for fire safety in your premises and haven’t yet checked, we strongly urge you to do so. Ensuring your fire equipment is safe and compliant isn’t just a legal obligation — it’s a vital part of protecting your staff, your premises and the environment.”

Foam fire extinguishers are commonly used to tackle Class B fires, involving flammable liquids such as petrol, diesel, oils, paints and solvents. These extinguishers are often found in garages, workshops, warehouses, vehicle fleets, industrial units and farms.



While many foam extinguishers supplied in the last decade are unlikely to contain PFOAs, older models may now be unlawful to use. Business owners or responsible persons should examine labelling and manufacture dates and consult their extinguisher supplier or manufacturer if unsure.

Under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as amended) responsible persons are legally required to ensure that fire safety equipment remains suitable and effective. Any updates to firefighting equipment should prompt a review of the fire risk assessment and, if necessary, additional staff training.

To help responsible persons comply with this regulation, Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service

Protection Officers carry out audits and inspections of premises; offering advice where necessary to ensure that fire safety measures such as extinguishers, alarms, and escape routes are adequate and properly maintained.

Where serious risks or non-compliance are identified, Protection Officers have the authority to take enforcement action to protect the Suffolk community.

The Protection team enforces fire safety law in non-domestic and higher-risk residential buildings (such as high-rise apartments with communal areas, care homes, halls of residence, houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), hotels, hostels and guest houses).

In contrast, the Prevention team focuses on providing advice and support to those living in domestic premises, which includes private homes, social housing, supported living and temporary accommodation. For those who meet certain eligibility criteria, they also provide free home safety visits.

To find out more or to arrange an appointment, please call Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service Business Support Team on 01473 260588 or send an email to fire.businesssupport@suffolk.gov.uk.

Calls are monitored Monday – Thursday, 9am – 5pm; Friday, 9am – 4pm.

Sea Link paperwork reveals plans for large solar farm near Friston

The information has come to light, as the applicant of the energy site, BL Solar 12 (Helios Energy Park) Limited, has [submitted papers to the Planning Inspectorate](#) as part of preparations to examine National Grid's Sea Link project.

Suffolk County Council is currently preparing its reports for the Sea Link examination, as a statutory consultee. It will now carefully consider the potential cumulative implications of the new Helios solar farm project on local communities and the environment.



The county council will continue to object to projects where justified and make it very clear to all the parties that must work together, to protect local communities, and the environment, by minimising and mitigating the harm of their schemes.

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

The Helios Energy Park would be built in the vicinity of the consented, but as-yet unbuilt, National Grid substation at Friston – which was consented in March 2022 as part of ScottishPower's plans for the EA1N and EA2 offshore windfarms.

The size of the Helios project means that it will be considered a nationally significant infrastructure project (NSIP), with its future decided by central government, not by local councils.

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

"With potentially yet another NSIP on their doorstep, this will be difficult news for local communities to take, particularly Friston and Knodishall.

"They are already anticipating the construction of the 30-acre substation at Grove Wood as part of the infrastructure to support ScottishPower's offshore windfarms. Then there are the current Sea Link proposals, LionLink, Sizewell C and now a significant solar and battery farm.

"We knew that National Grid's official register of connection offers had indicated the Helios proposal, but that potential now feels more real.

"National Grid's customers must not damage or weaken the mitigation planting in the consented scheme.

"The county council will continue to object to projects where justified and make it very clear to all the parties that must work together, to protect local communities, and the environment, by minimising and mitigating the harm of their schemes."

Information published on the Planning Inspectorate website, shows that construction of the Helios project would likely overlap with the construction of Sea Link, if both are consented.

The cumulative impact of these, along with the consented ScottishPower proposals for the onshore infrastructure, such as the substation, will further impact the parish of Friston and adjacent parishes.



Awards recognise Suffolk's Junior Road Safety Officers

The hard work of youngsters from across Suffolk promoting road safety has been recognised in a special awards ceremony.

Suffolk County Council played host to pupils and staff at the first in-person Junior Road Safety Officer (JRSO) Awards event since before the COVID-19 pandemic.

The event recognised the dedication and creativity shown by schools and pupils in promoting road safety and encouraging active travel within their communities.

They were met in the council chamber at Endeavour House by Suffolk County Council Chair Councillor Jessica Fleming, who told them: “The role of a Junior Road Safety Officer has never been more important.

“Every month, our officers receive reports of poor parking or speeding near your schools: the work that you do is extremely helpful in raising awareness of these issues and tackling them in your communities.”

The Junior Road Safety Officer (JRSO) scheme has been running for more than 20 years and gives pupils in Years 4 to 6 (ages 9–11) the opportunity to get involved in road safety work at their schools, delivering sessions to peers and taking on initiatives in their wider communities.

The scheme is an effective way both of engaging parents and carers and expanding the reach of the road safety education team.

The awards focus on the work that has gone on in the 61 participating schools over the last 12 months.

There are three levels of award – bronze, silver and gold with 22 schools achieving gold this year.

The event was attended by 90 pupils and 40 staff and there were 21 certificate presentations.

For more details of the scheme go to the [Suffolk County Council website](#).

Launch of Suffolk's super sustainable visitor centre marks new era of environmental education

It marks a major milestone in the county's mission to educate, engage, and inspire the next generation on sustainability and waste reduction.



Visitors will experience first-hand how waste is transformed into energy and how Suffolk is leading by example in sustainability and resource efficiency.

Hosted by Suffolk County Council and the facility's operator SUEZ recycling and recovery UK, the launch event on Friday 25 July 2025 celebrated ten years of partnership and progress at the site, which has already welcomed thousands of visitors through its original cardboard visitor centre.

"With the new Simpler Recycling changes on the horizon, the new centre has opened at the perfect time to empower people of all ages to better understand their role in reducing, reusing, and creating a more sustainable future for Suffolk, and beyond."

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

In a fitting twist, that iconic cardboard structure has now been recycled, making way for a modern, hands-on educational space designed to bring Suffolk's waste journey to life for school groups, community organisations and curious minds of all ages.

The Energy-from-Waste facility receives general household waste, where energy is recovered to produce electricity – enough to power around 50,000 homes each year.

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

"The new visitor centre stands as a symbol of what's possible through long-term collaboration, innovation, and a commitment to community education.

"I think local schools and community groups will love their visit when they experience the innovative hands-on demonstrations, interactive games and new educational tools.

"With the new Simpler Recycling changes on the horizon, the new centre has opened at the perfect time to empower people of all ages to better understand their role in reducing, reusing, and creating a more sustainable future for Suffolk, and beyond."

Tim Otley, Managing Director, Energy from SUEZ, said:

"Sustainability is at the heart of Suffolk's new visitor centre - during the build and fitout, we have reused, repurposed and reclaimed items to maximise the centre's green credentials.

"Together with Suffolk County Council, we have welcomed over 12,000 visitors in our first ten years of operations here at Great Blakenham and our team look forward to welcoming thousands more over the next decade of our partnership."

The event featured keynote speeches from representatives of Suffolk County Council and SUEZ, who reflected on the journey so far and outlined their shared vision for the future.

Among those speaking were Councillor Chris Chambers (Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy, Planning and Waste, Suffolk County Council), John Scanlon (Chief Executive



Officer, SUEZ recycling and recovery UK) and Tim Otley (Managing Director, Energy, SUEZ recycling and recovery UK).

The visitor centre is now open for bookings from schools and local groups across Suffolk.

For more information about booking a tour please visit suffolkefw.co.uk or email suffolkefw.uk@suez.com

Developer and Director sentenced over serious fire safety failings in Felixstowe

Dragon Wood Homes Ltd and its director, Mr Paul Whyman, were sentenced today (25 July 2025) at Ipswich Crown Court after previously pleading guilty to failing to comply with a Fire Enforcement Notice issued by Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS).

The Enforcement Notice was served in relation to Cliff House, Chevalier Road, a former hotel converted into luxury residential apartments in 2017. SFRS officers identified multiple serious deficiencies during inspections beginning in 2018, including inadequate fire compartmentation, which posed a risk of rapid fire spread throughout the building.

Despite repeated opportunities to rectify the issues, the developer failed to undertake the necessary work. Legal action was taken by SFRS against both the company and Mr Whyman. At an earlier hearing on 5 February 2025, both parties pleaded guilty at Ipswich Crown Court. Sentencing was delivered today by His Honour Judge David Pugh.

In summing up, HHJ Pugh stated that SFRS had identified significant fire safety failures, which were supported by two independent expert reports. He emphasised that it was not acceptable for Mr Whyman or Dragon Wood Homes Ltd to ignore the professional advice provided.

- Mr Whyman was given a 12-month community order, requiring him to complete 180 hours of unpaid work.
- Dragon Wood Homes Ltd was fined £40,000.
- Both Mr Whyman and the company were also ordered to pay £15,000 each in legal costs within 12 months.

The Enforcement Notice remains in force, and fire safety deficiencies continue to affect the premises, which still cannot safely adopt a “stay put” evacuation strategy typically used in purpose-built flats.

Councillor Steve Wiles, Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet Member for Public Health and Public Protection, said:

“This outcome sends a clear message: we will not tolerate developers or property owners who ignore their legal responsibilities and put people’s lives at risk.



“Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has acted with patience and professionalism throughout this lengthy process, always with the safety of residents at the heart of their actions. Everyone deserves to live in a safe home. While we are pleased that justice has been served, it is deeply regrettable that it took this level of enforcement to reach a resolution.”

SFRS remains committed to protecting the public and will continue to support residents of Cliff House while monitoring the ongoing safety concerns at the premises.

Suffolk County Council wins government funding for autonomous vehicles trial

Suffolk County Council has secured £75,000 of government funding for a feasibility study exploring how to introduce self-driving shuttle vehicles into the county’s transport network. The ADAstra study is one of 14 initiatives across the UK selected for funding through the Connected and Automated Mobility (CAM) Pathfinder Feasibility Studies Competition in support of the government’s ambition to establish a £40bn CAM sector by 2040.

The council has been working with design experts [Smart City Consultancy](#) to assess the technical, operational, and regulatory requirements of incorporating autonomous shuttle services into a future network of mobility hubs across the county.

A self-driving shuttle, built in New Zealand by Ohmio, is operated by Smart City Consultancy and is based at BT Adastral Park near Ipswich.

The shuttle can accommodate 15 people in total, but currently has a maximum seated capacity of eight, with a safety driver.

Councillor Chris Chambers, Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy, Planning and Waste, said:

“We are committed to delivering a range of transport options to meet the changing needs of the county.

“The use of self-driving, environmentally friendly shuttles operating alongside traditional services as part of a Mobility Hub network is a key component of that strategy.

“ADAstra will enable us to test our ideas with passengers and stakeholders, giving people the chance to see the shuttles in action and build out the longer-term business case.”

The study aims to shape a viable strategy for commercial deployment of autonomous vehicles, potentially linking future residential developments in Suffolk with strategic bus routes.

The central element of the project is testing public perception around safety and operations.



Though the current study does not include trials with remote operators, the findings will inform future planning for staff-free, remotely supervised vehicles.

Future public engagement will see a series of events in high-footfall locations across the county plus an invitation-only event for key stakeholders.

These events aim to gather feedback and raise awareness about how autonomous technology can benefit communities by improving accessibility, addressing driver shortages, and offering sustainable transport solutions, particularly in rural areas.

Ian Pulford, Director at Smart City Consultancy, added:

“We are passionate about driving adoption of new autonomous services.

“ADASTRA is an important first step toward delivering a Suffolk-wide Mobility Hub network that connects people, services and opportunities—ultimately creating jobs and transforming the way we travel.”

The ADASTRA study will position Suffolk to lead in future funding rounds under the £150 million CAM Pathfinder programme.

ADASTRA is part of CCAV’s CAM Pathfinder Programme, funded by UK Government.

The CAM Pathfinder Programme, as part of the UK’s modern Industrial Strategy and the Advanced Manufacturing Sector Plan, is delivered by the [Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles](#).

This is a joint unit between the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) and the Department for Transport (DfT) in partnership with Innovate UK and Zenic.

All Suffolk food waste to be processed in the county

This will mean a more efficient, environmentally friendly and cheaper way to deal with Suffolk’s food waste, with weekly household kerbside collections beginning in 2026. Suffolk County Council and Bio Capital have agreed a four-year contract to process food waste at the recently approved anaerobic digestion plant at the Adnams Distribution Centre, in Reydon near Southwold.

Around 31,000 tonnes of household food waste could be sent to the new facility each year, which will be processed to generate green fuel (biomethane), and turned into soil fertiliser – meaning Suffolk’s food waste is put to better use.

The food waste has another life, being turned into renewable energy and nutrient-rich digestate that can be used to improve soil health. This will benefit our local farmers by helping to maintain productive, sustainable farmland right here in Suffolk.

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

This is part of the government's 'Simpler Recycling' initiative, to standardise recycling practices across all local authorities in England. It aims to make recycling easier, more consistent, and more effective.

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

"The contract with Bio Capital is a significant step forward for Suffolk, and shows the county council's commitment to sustainability and the renewable energy sector.

"It was important for us to find a local solution, so that once food waste is collected it doesn't then have to make excessive journeys to be processed – we have delivered an effective and efficient answer.

"The food waste then has another life, being turned into renewable energy and nutrient-rich digestate that can be used to improve soil health. This will benefit our local farmers by helping to maintain productive, sustainable farmland right here in Suffolk.

"Homes up and down the country continue to throw away far too much food, and Suffolk is no different. This increases a local authority's costs to deal with it, but ultimately it is money that households are throwing away.

"When household food waste collections begin next year, I hope people take notice of the amount of food they're throwing away. Reducing this will help protect the environment and save people money as well – the average family could save over £1,000 per year."

Jake Harrison, Chief Operating Officer at Bio Capital, said:

"Bio Capital's partnership with Suffolk County Council will help to propel forward the regional circular economy and transform thousands of tonnes of food waste into renewable energy that will power regional homes and businesses.

"It's great to be working with the council on such a progressive project that will help to ensure a more sustainable future for the county, while also delivering multiple benefits for everyone who lives and works there."

Jenny Hanlon, CEO of Adnams, said:

"Adnams has a longstanding focus on sustainability and innovation, so to see this project moving forward in a partnership approach is a really exciting step.

"We're very much celebrating the fact that our site will be redeveloped and will soon be helping homeowners on their own journey to achieving net zero.



“There are so many long-term benefits to the local economy – including job creation – and we’re pleased to have a role in positioning Suffolk as a leader in the renewable energy sector.”

Currently, food waste that is thrown away in your general rubbish bin is taken to the Energy from Waste site at Great Blakenham, near Ipswich, where energy is recovered to produce electricity.

Further information on Simpler Recycling can be found at www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk

New environmental charity to invest £78m in boosting Suffolk’s biodiversity

- **East Suffolk Trust (EaST) is a brand new grant-giving charity set up to enhance biodiversity and restore landscapes in East Suffolk and the wider county**
- **At least £78m has been pledged by Sizewell C over the next 70 years**
- **Its mission is to make East Suffolk the most ecologically diverse and resilient area in England**

A pioneering new environmental charity has pledged to spend at least £78m on boosting biodiversity in Suffolk.

East Suffolk Trust (EaST), jointly established by Sizewell C, East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council, aims to make East Suffolk the most ecologically diverse and resilient area in England.

Funded by Sizewell C - the new 3.2GW nuclear power project under construction on the Suffolk coast - EaST will distribute funds to local organisations through a dedicated grant scheme.

Governed by a Board of independent Trustees, the trailblazing charity could serve as a greenprint for how major infrastructure projects can help deliver local nature recovery across the UK.

EaST Trustee and Director General of the Royal Horticultural Society, Clare Matterson CBE, said:

“East Suffolk is famed for its landscapes and wildlife, which enrich the lives of those of us lucky enough to live here, as well as the thousands of visitors drawn to the region each year. Yet the diversity and abundance of our animals and plants continue to decline.

“EaST, whose Board is made up of a deeply experienced group of charity trustees, has been launched to reverse this decline and restore nature in East Suffolk and the county as a whole, and I’m absolutely delighted to be a part of it.”



From hedgerows to woodlands, ponds to wetlands, EaST will boost biodiversity and build resilient eco-systems to address the dual challenges we face; climate change and the biodiversity crisis.

Councillor Philip Faircloth-Mutton, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Environment, Communities and Equality

EaST will receive unrestricted annual donations from Sizewell C of £1.5m throughout the power station's construction and for the first 20 years of its operation. Thereafter, annual contributions will continue at £750,000.

With Sizewell C expected to generate power for at least 60 years and potentially up to 100 - the total investment in nature in Suffolk could exceed £100m over the coming century. In addition to Sizewell C's contributions, EaST will seek funding from local businesses and organisations that will further boost its ability to catalyse change.

Councillor Philip Faircloth-Mutton, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Environment, Communities and Equality, said:

"The charity's ambitious grant-giving programme will empower people and organisations to better conserve, protect and enhance Suffolk's existing wild landscapes and seascapes. From hedgerows to woodlands, ponds to wetlands, EaST will boost biodiversity and build resilient eco-systems to address the dual challenges we face; climate change and the biodiversity crisis."

EaST is currently recruiting a Chief Executive Officer and plans to begin awarding its first grants in spring 2026. A website with further details about the application process, eligibility criteria, and grant procedure will launch later this year.

Cllr Tom Daly, East Suffolk Council's Cabinet Member for Energy & Climate, said:

"It is vitally important to minimise and mitigate any potential impact of development on biodiversity and to balance the need for energy production with environmental conservation.

"I hope that the establishment of a grant-giving Trust will encourage and incentivise schemes designed to protect and enhance biodiversity - contributing to long-term environmental sustainability. I would encourage local community groups and landowners to get involved when applications open next year."

Julia Pyke, Joint Managing Director of Sizewell C, added:

"This charity is the first of its kind anywhere in the UK and perhaps the world. Taken together with the work we have already delivered to create new nature reserves around Sizewell, including our flagship Wild Aldhurst reserve near Leiston, much of which has been voluntary, it shows how major infrastructure projects like ours can be an important force for good for nature, as well as for people and businesses in Suffolk and across the UK.



“It’s right that we invest in nature in Suffolk. While the construction of Sizewell C will have some impacts on the local environment, this is one of the many ways that we’re leaving a positive environmental legacy in East Suffolk for decades after the power station has been completed.”

Column: Suffolk needs investment in transport infrastructure

I am sure a very large sigh of relief went around much of Suffolk with the announcement that repairs to the Orwell Bridge had finished ahead of schedule and the A14 was back to normal.

Well done to National Highways for getting the work done on what was a major project. However, the disruption and congestion that ensued from it proved that the status quo on Suffolk’s roads cannot continue.

The fact of the matter is that we need investment. Suffolk has been on the backburner of too many governments for far too long. This county is crying out for investment in its transport infrastructure.

Which is why Suffolk County Council is now undertaking a comprehensive review of what needs to be done and where, and how we then present our case to the government to get the funding we need to support and fund improving our key transport infrastructure.

During the disruption from the bridge works the calls became ever louder for a northern bypass for Ipswich.

This council agreed earlier this month to commit to a range of measures one of which was the recognition that a bypass, or other interventions, for Ipswich should be built and to re-examine the best possible route for it.

However, a bypass on its own is not the answer, the situation is far more complex.

Other hugely important areas form part of the bigger picture – as well as the Orwell Bridge and the A14 corridor, there is the Port of Felixstowe, the Sizewell power stations, the A12/A14 Copdock Interchange, and the need to upgrade the Ely/Haughley rail junctions.

Regrettably, the government recently announced that in its next five-year funding cycle there would be no money to upgrade the Ely-Haughley rail junctions.

This is a real missed opportunity. The scheme is widely recognised as being key to getting freight from Port of Felixstowe off the A14 and on to rail, freeing up capacity on the road network.



The council will continue to call for the scheme to be included in the next available round of government funding because the importance of the A14 both to the regional and UK economy cannot be overstated.

Not only it is a vital artery supporting the Port of Felixstowe – Britain’s busiest container port – it also links key logistics and industrial hubs worth billions to the UK economy. Yet one simple road accident or broken-down vehicle can bring it grinding to a halt. This cannot continue.

Our review will also examine and identify future housing needs, funding options, and developing a business case to present to the government.

The role of a future Mayor for Suffolk will also feature, as will issues such as cross-party political support, and how to reach an agreed position for any future administration following local government reform which will see Suffolk County Council replaced by one or more unitary authorities.

I recently wrote to the Transport Secretary, Heidi Alexander MP, pointing out the important transport projects in Suffolk which have been recognised as priorities for the health of the UK economy and the wider East of England region, yet which have either been rejected for funding or have not been progressed by Government at all.

Now, with a number of Labour MPs representing Suffolk, they must stand up for our county and make the case to their own Government. It is time for this Labour Government to move beyond warm words and deliver the infrastructure investment that Suffolk and our region so clearly need.

I also said that we continue to face a fundamental question: How does the Government suggest we fund critical infrastructure investment when all conventional routes to national investment have so far failed us?

This is why the transport review we are undertaking is so important. We need make the strongest case possible to get investment for this county’s infrastructure.

We are not naïve. We know government resources are limited and priorities must be made, but Suffolk cannot be excluded from significant transport investment any longer.