

Suffolk County Council report – November 2025

Councillors approve historic devolution deal, paving the way for major investment for Suffolk

Suffolk County Council's cabinet has voted in favour of creating a new mayoral authority for Norfolk and Suffolk - which will bring £1 billion to the counties in the next 30 years - following overwhelming support from councillors.

The new mayoral combined county authority (MCCA) would have access to a starting annual investment fund of £37.4 million - funded by the government. This is in addition to devolved funding from Whitehall to deliver public services.

The investment fund would enable the new mayor to support a wide range of long-term, locally driven projects that will boost economic growth, improve infrastructure and enhance the quality of life for residents. This could include transport infrastructure, housing and education and skills.

Margaret Catchpole letters on show in the UK for the first time

On loan from the National Library of Australia, and the State Library of New South Wales, the letters form the centrepiece of Suffolk Archives' latest exhibition *Behind Bars - Suffolk's Criminal Past*.

Servant girl turned notorious horse thief, Margaret's daring escape from Ipswich jail, her capture, and eventual transportation to Australia made her a Suffolk legend.

As well as telling Margaret's story, *Behind Bars* lifts the lid on Suffolk's lawless past. Discover gripping true crimes from the infamous Red Barn Murder that shocked the nation to the curious case of the Acton Dumpling Murderess. Step inside the world of historic investigations and harsh punishments, including Suffolk's last public execution.

Explore how justice has evolved, from dealing with riots and social unrest to the development of prisons and rehabilitation, supported by HMP Hollesley Bay. In partnership with Suffolk Constabulary, the exhibition also traces the history of policing in the county and how officers continue to keep Suffolk safe today.

Behind Bars is a free exhibition and runs from 24 October 2025 to 17 January 2026 at The Hold in Ipswich, the home of Suffolk Archives, a Suffolk County Council service. The exhibition is accompanied by a series of talks, walks, and workshops. Visit suffolkarchives.co.uk for more information.

Ofsted Focused Visit finds 'early signs of improvement' in Front Door Children's Services

The report, which noted 'early signs of improvement beginning to emerge' found:

- Children identified as at risk of harm receive prompt and appropriate responses with strong oversight and swift multi-agency collaboration
- Clear investment and support from the whole council for children's services
- High staff morale, stable workforce, strong peer and managerial support maintaining consistency for families despite leadership changes

The report also highlighted the following areas for improvement:

- Monitoring systems need to more reliably flag delays and support effective management decision-making
- More consistency in professional curiosity and threshold decisions needed
- Better recognition and response needed to pattern of concern when multiple or repeated requests are made for the same families

Since the ILACS report in August 2024, which found that the authority's children's services 'Require Improvement to be Good', Suffolk County Council's children's services have been on a transformation journey.

[Read the letter from Ofsted's focused visit](#)

1,000-year-old Sizewell silver coin hoard staying in its Suffolk home

Oxford Cotswold Archaeology carried out excavation works near the site of the future nuclear power station and discovered the lead and cloth package containing the mint condition coins.

The donation to SCCAS from Sizewell C, means that the find will be curated for posterity in its home county and will be made available to researchers of all levels.

Local and national museums can also apply for a short-term loan, so that as many people as possible can see it in the future.

"We are thrilled that Sizewell C is kindly donating this hoard, along with the rest of the excavated archive from the site to the county council's archaeological archive."

Councillor Debbie Richards, Suffolk County Council's deputy cabinet member for Archaeology and Landscape Partnerships

The hoard features coins minted between 1036 and 1044 during the reigns of Harold I, Edward the Confessor, and the lesser known Harthacnut. Though a large proportion of the coins were minted in London, many coins were struck at other locations, including Thetford, Norwich, Ipswich, Lincoln and Stamford.

Affectionately known as ‘the pasty’ - for its visual likeness to a Cornish pasty - it is speculated that it was the savings pot of a local figure, who buried it as a precaution in the face of the social and political upheaval of the 11th century.

Mapping project reaches major digital milestone

Suffolk County Council has reached a major digital milestone in putting the county on the map.

It has completed the Definitive Map and Statement (DM&S) consolidation project, using modern background mapping to prepare the updated legal record of public rights of way (PROW) such as footpaths, bridleways, and byways in Suffolk.

The consolidation project is the process of preparing a new digital DM&S that incorporates all legal changes since the previous issue.

Moving away from hand-drawn maps and written notes, the council has created new versions of the maps from a digital database using specialist software against Ordnance Survey Mastermap base mapping.

It has involved checking and digitising more than 10,500 individual routes across the county, ensuring they reflect the effects of more than 2,600 legal orders, including complex public path order packages.

This ensures that Suffolk’s PROW network — which extends across thousands of miles of countryside — is properly recorded and accessible for generations to come.

The updated Definitive Maps are clearer and easier to interpret and working from a digital database makes it easier to share data with a wide range of partners, including user groups, councils, developers, the National Trust, Natural England, and the Forestry Commission.

Working copies of the maps are available for the public to view and download from the [Rights of Way and Access pages](#) of the Suffolk County Council website.

Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member for Operational Highways, said: “The conclusion of this project marks the end of many years of dedicated and meticulous work for the team, and I congratulate them on their hard work.”

The second phase of the project will now commence, establishing a rolling programme of consolidation to incorporate future legal changes and addressing mismatches between the Definitive Map parish boundaries and current administrative boundaries.

Suffolk's first DM&S was produced in the 1950s and was divided into 19 former rural and urban districts. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 now place a statutory duty on councils to continually review the legal record of rights of way.

The first consolidated map was completed for Ipswich in 2009.

Since then, progress has continued steadily, with the sealed legal copies now held at Suffolk's Records Office, *The Hold*.

The working copies are available to view in hard copy by prior appointment at Phoenix House in Ipswich, which houses the highways department for SCC, and on [the county council's website](#).

Suffolk celebrates five years of investment in the National Cycle Network

Suffolk County Council is proud to mark five years of dedicated investment in the National Cycle Network – a key part of the county's infrastructure supporting safer, greener, and more accessible travel for all.

In that time Suffolk County Council has secured more than £5 million to enhance the network across the county.

This work has been delivered in partnership with Walk Wheel and Cycle Trust (formerly Sustrans), the national charity responsible for maintaining and developing the Network. Together, they have delivered improvements in signage, route safety, and connectivity - helping thousands of residents and visitors walk, wheel, and cycle more confidently and more often.

Key areas of improvement include routes from Ipswich Hospital to the Waterfront area, Nacton Road in Ipswich, Main Road in Martlesham, and areas within Woodbridge as part of the town's active travel project.