

County Council report – September 2025

New council boundary proposals mean 3 councils, 3 sets of salaries and the same old story for Suffolk

- District and borough councils' new boundary proposals criticised as costly and unworkable
- Creating 3 new councils in Suffolk would lead to increased costs and carry safeguarding risks
- One new unitary council for Suffolk is best for county

The proposed map comes following repeated calls from Suffolk County Council for clarity on how their suggested 3-council model will be formed. The map is essential information for Suffolk residents to ensure they fully understand the proposals being put forward.

Under their suggested boundaries, Ipswich would form a unitary council with Hadleigh, Kesgrave and Felixstowe (known as South Suffolk); Bury St Edmunds would be grouped with Sudbury, Haverhill, Newmarket and Brandon (known as West Suffolk) and Lowestoft would find itself with Woodbridge, Eye and Stowmarket (known as East Suffolk).

Alongside the map, the districts and borough have not released any information of what impact these proposed boundaries would have on council tax rates – with Ipswich residents currently paying the highest rate of district or borough council tax in the whole country.

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

“We have been asking the district councils for their proposed council boundaries since March. Given what they've released today, I can see why they've kept them secret for so long. Their proposals are chaotic, confusing, and ultimately unworkable. They will mean higher council tax across the county, but particularly in places like Felixstowe, Hadleigh, Kesgrave the villages south of Ipswich and the Shotley peninsula, more money spent on senior staff and administration and less money going on frontline local services in Suffolk.

“The financial figures that the districts and borough are putting forward are optimistic to the point of being dangerous. We must never lose sight of the fact that the key care services we deliver support some of the most vulnerable people in our community. Spurious assumptions to support an argument to protect their perceived political fiefdoms have no place in this debate.

“Breaking up key expensive care services, that are currently delivered county wide, won't just cost more as they employ new senior teams, it will put the most vulnerable in

our community at risk. They will create a postcode lottery for care, drive up costs and create boundaries where they don't currently exist.

“The districts and borough have finally given into pressure to publish their plans, but what they have brought forward just means three sets of salaries and the same old story from local government. I remain as convinced as ever that One Suffolk is the only solution with the best interest of Suffolk's residents at its heart.”

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](#). You can also complete the survey by visiting a Community Library or by calling **0345 603 1842**. The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete.

Responses will inform the One Suffolk business case, which will be submitted to Government in September.

Guide published to support developers in Suffolk

Suffolk County Council has updated its “[Developers Guide to Infrastructure Contributions in Suffolk](#)”, following a consultation over the summer.

It has been updated and redesigned in line with the feedback and takes account of legislative and policy changes.

The guide is there to support developers appreciate the myriad ways which a new project will affect local communities and its financial implications on local authorities.

The guide sets out what developers should consider, including financial contributions, to help reduce the impact of new projects on communities and the county council. For example, new housing would have a knock-on effect on things like the local environment, education, waste services, local amenities, highways, and flooding, and therefore cost implications for local authorities.

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

“When a major planning application is proposed, it will have an impact on local infrastructure, services that local authorities provide, and associated costs.

“The government's National Planning Policy Framework outlines that developers will financially support local authorities, allowing infrastructure to support the new project and allow for growth.

“We have been regularly updating our guide since it was originally published in 2011. It’s there to support developers appreciate the myriad ways which a new project will affect local communities and its financial implications on local authorities.”

The “Developers Guide to Infrastructure Contributions in Suffolk” can be found on the [Suffolk County Council website](#).

Council remains opposed to pylon project, as application submitted

Primarily, the county council maintains that offshore and undergrounding solutions should be priorities for the scheme, not 114 miles of pylons cutting through countryside, sensitive landscapes and communities in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex. Previously, SCC has formally and strongly requested that National Grid pauses the Norwich to Tilbury proposals, to allow for effective consideration of offshore alternatives.

“When the full details of National Grid’s application are published next month, we hope they reflect many of the concerns raised by us, and local communities, from consultations and discussions.” **Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet Member for Devolution, Local Government Reorganisation and NSIPs**

The application for the Development Consent Order - essentially planning permission - was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) by National Grid on Friday 29 August.

PINS has 28 days to determine whether or not to accept the application. Should it be accepted, full details of the project will then be published, with the six-month Examination period likely to begin in early 2026. If consent was then granted, construction could begin in 2027.

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

“In its current guise, the Norwich to Tilbury pylon project is not suitable. The less damaging alternatives, such as offshore transmission or high voltage direct current undergrounding, have never been fully considered.

“Such a significant and impactful project should not be determined simply for being the cheapest and fastest solution. The Hiorns Report concluded that proposals were premature and would not be needed until the mid-2030s.

“When the full details of National Grid’s application are published next month, we hope they reflect many of the concerns raised by us, and local communities, from consultations and discussions. We have highlighted the need for numerous local mitigations, issues around airfields, construction traffic, public rights of way, removal of existing pylon lines, the list goes on.

“For example, we consider there to be a robust case for undergrounding where the line crosses the Waveney Valley – only to be told earlier this year, that this was not going to happen, and that was that without any alternative mitigation proposed.”

Suffolk County Council’s response to previous consultations for the Norwich to Tilbury project can be found at [suffolk.gov.uk](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk)