



Cllr Chris Chambers

**Gipping Valley
Division**

www.chrischambers.uk

**June 2025
Report**



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Proposal to create one new council for Suffolk reaches latest milestone

Work will continue on proposals to scrap Suffolk's six councils and replace them with a new, single, fit for purpose, authority delivering all public services - after the Government encouraged further work on the plan.

The proposal, which independent analysis by accounting firm PwC shows would save over £104 million in just five years and £26 million a year thereafter, has been reviewed by the Government. The money saved could be reinvested in vital public services. Ministers have urged the proposal to be developed further ahead of the final plan being signed off in September 2025.

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

"The Government is encouraging all councils in Suffolk to continue to develop proposals for reorganisation. It's clear from their interim feedback that our single unitary council for Suffolk proposal best meets the criteria, and any alternatives will have to work hard to justify the risks of breaking up critical services like social care, creating new council boundaries and smaller population sizes.

"This is all quite apart from the significant extra cost of having more than one council. All the evidence shows that one council for Suffolk is the only viable option to deliver significant savings that can be reinvested into frontline services. In the first five years, early independent figures suggest a single council will save £104 million, while breaking Suffolk into three, as the districts and borough suggest, will cost taxpayers an additional £52 million. To be clear - their proposal would cost more than the current 50-year-old system!

"The savings from creating a single unitary council can be reinvested into frontline public services that benefit residents and ensure their council tax is as low as possible. The funding could be reinvested in services like pothole repairs, waste collection and disposal, housing, social care, planning, parks and leisure, supporting town centres, school placements and travel and street cleaning.

"But this isn't just about money, it's about people too. A single council will absolutely be able to reflect and serve the whole of Suffolk, rural and urban, and our plans will clearly show how local priorities and residents' voices can and will be central to decision making.

"If we're going to create a truly sustainable and effective council structure for Suffolk, then one new council is not just the only viable option, but also the best one."

More than one council would cost more

Chris Chambers - County Councillor for the Gipping Valley Division

E-mail : chris.chambers@suffolk.gov.uk

Mob : 07595310290

 [/gippingvalleychris](https://www.facebook.com/gippingvalleychris)

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Creating two or even three councils for Suffolk, including a Greater Ipswich, has also been proposed by the five district and borough councils in Suffolk. If three were created, it would mean expanding Ipswich's current boundaries to include areas like Felixstowe, Woodbridge and possibly even Needham Market – as well as the villages in between. But having multiple councils would actually cost money, not save it, and the costs will take years to get back. A key part of this calculation is the cost of breaking up critical public services such as social care. The national report by PwC has shown that the financial cost of breaking up services into three councils would be over £150 million, not to mention the risk to vulnerable people caused by the upheaval.

It's time to shine the light on communities in Suffolk

The Suffolk Community Awards 2025 will recognise and celebrate all those who have improved the quality of life for communities across Suffolk.

The Suffolk Community Awards, now in its sixth year, is brought together by Community Action Suffolk, Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Association of Local Councils. This year's award ceremony is set to be another prestigious, heart-warming event showcasing the excellent work and achievements of individuals and groups across Suffolk, being recognised by 18 awards, including a new entry which will recognise one local councils' response to climate change.

Other award categories range from youth participation and young person of the year to community building, contribution to volunteering, most active communities and council, councillor, young councillor and clerk of the year.

Nominations are now open and must be made by **Sunday 13 July** at www.suffolkcommunityawards.co.uk

Once received, all nominations are carefully considered and judged by an expert panel before being announced at the award ceremony which will take place on Tuesday 23 September from the Museum of Food in Stowmarket. The event will be hosted by former BBC Radio Suffolk breakfast presenter, Mark Murphy MBE.

David Hepper, Winner of last year's Councillor of the Year, said:

"I have always tried to involve myself in the various concerns in the village, because I firmly believe that by doing so you get much more out of life – to be part of a community, rather than just being a resident. Being a Parish Councillor is part of that, and it was flattering to be recognised, and the award gave me confidence that I must be doing something right."

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 [/gippingvalleychris](https://www.facebook.com/gippingvalleychris)

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The Suffolk Community Awards event organisers said in a joint comment:

“Volunteers, community leaders and organisations across Suffolk are the beating heart of the county. Their hard work, dedication and innovation makes Suffolk a better place to live and work. Our 3 organisations greatly value the massive contribution that the voluntary and community sector makes to our wonderful county. That is why we work together to host these awards. To recognise and celebrate their outstanding contribution to Suffolk life.”

Councillor Philip Faircloth-Mutton, cabinet member for Equality and Communities at Suffolk County Council, said:

“I am incredibly proud that Suffolk County Council is once again supporting the Suffolk Community Awards.

“These awards are a vital opportunity to shine a light on the remarkable efforts of our volunteers, community leaders, and local organisations. Their dedication continues to make Suffolk a fantastic place to live and work, and it’s a privilege to recognise their exceptional contributions to our communities.”

To make a nomination for the Suffolk Community Awards, go to www.suffolkcommunityawards.co.uk

Suffolk must avoid a “postcode lottery” of services and create one new council

Creating a new, single council for Suffolk will eliminate the risks of a postcode lottery of essential and life-saving public services, the Leader of Suffolk County Council, Cllr. Matthew Hicks, has said today.

Speaking at the county council’s Annual General Meeting, Cllr Hicks criticised proposals to create two or even three councils – which he argued would lead to “artificial borders” within the county. He said:

“Any suggestion of disaggregating or creating artificial divisions within this single market — leading to a postcode lottery in care services or pitting one side of the county against another — is not something we should pursue with any seriousness. The only option is for one Suffolk, and this is coming over loud and clear as we talk with people across our county.

“Now is not the time to create postcode lotteries of essential services, with authorities squabbling over finite pools of financial and human resources.”

He emphasised that Suffolk had secured the opportunity to choose a bold new future that generations can be proud of and warned about throwing this opportunity away. He said:

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Mob : 07595310290

 [/gippingvalleychris](https://www.facebook.com/gippingvalleychris)

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“We cannot afford to throw this opportunity away by choosing to recreate multiple layers of bureaucracy and complexity, with unnecessary multiple local authorities. We cannot risk the disaggregation and dismemberment of our adult social care services from the essential economies of scale it needs to continue to provide good quality care and support services to our most vulnerable residents. We cannot afford to throw away hundreds of millions of pounds of efficiency savings which could be used to invest further in essential services.”

Closing his speech, Cllr Hicks recommitted himself, and his administration, to lead Suffolk through to a bold new future, saying:

"Now is the time for visionary leadership. This council has a responsibility to get this right for the people of Suffolk, to create a future that we and future generations can be proud of - and that's what this administration will do."

You can read [his full speech](#) and watch the full council meeting on the councils' [YouTube channel](#).

Dementia Marketplace 2025

On Wednesday 25th June 2025, Care Development East, in partnership with Suffolk County Council and the Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board (SNEE ICB), will host the third annual Dementia Marketplace—a free, one-day event offering practical advice, support, and information for anyone affected by dementia.

Held from 10:00am to 3:30pm at [Trinity Park Conference & Events Centre, Ipswich](#).

Dementia is the UK's biggest health and social care challenge—and it's growing. One in three people born in the UK today will develop dementia in their lifetime. By 2040, 1.4 million people are expected to be living with the condition. Early diagnosis is key—it unlocks treatment, support, and care that can make a real difference.

What to Expect:

- Marketplace – Information and advice from over 40 dementia-related services and support groups
- Expert Speaker Sessions – Short, accessible talks throughout the day
- Innovation Room – New for 2025, come see, and try out a range of equipment and digital care technology to help keep people as safe and independent for as long as possible. It will also include the launch of Reverie a new cutting-edge Virtual Reality (VR) app designed with and for people with dementia featuring customised Suffolk film content
- Supervised Activities Room – A safe space for people with dementia while carers explore the event

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Opening at 10:00am with a short welcome from:

- Gareth Everton, Executive Director for Adult Social Care
- Eugene Staunton, Deputy Director, SNEE ICB

Speaking about the Dementia Marketplace's return, Cllr Beccy Hopfensperger, Cabinet Member for Adult Care said:

"I am pleased to see the Dementia Marketplace return this year, as it is an important event that truly showcases the incredible support available for people living with dementia, as well as their families and carers. With an ageing population here in Suffolk, it is absolutely essential that we continue to do all we can to help people find the support they need to live well with dementia—and events like this play a key role in making that happen."

Cllr Beccy Hopfensperger, Cabinet Member for Adult Care

Event Details:

Venue: Trinity Park, Ipswich, IP3 8UH

Date: Wednesday 25th June 2025

Time: 10:00am – 3:30pm (drop-in)

Entry is free, [please book your ticket today via Eventbrite](#).

Suffolk is open for business

Last week I joined business and public sector leaders from across Norfolk and Suffolk at UKREiiF - the UK's Real Estate Investment & Infrastructure Forum. This three-day event in Leeds brought together thousands of investors, developers, and policymakers to share ideas and build the partnerships that will shape the UK's future.

I was proud to be part of a panel of local leaders flying the flag for Suffolk, making the case for why this region is one of the best places in the UK to live, work, invest and grow.

And my message was clear: Suffolk is open for business.

Suffolk is already a national powerhouse. We have a £21billion economy and are home to more than 35,000 businesses, many of them world-class and countless others ready to grow.

Our region is seeing huge amount of investment in the energy sector, with Sizewell C and offshore wind leading the way. We need to harness this investment, deliver high quality jobs, and true legacy benefit, whilst ensuring projects are coordinated and our rural communities and landscapes are protected.

We're leaders agri-food and advanced manufacturing and our ports, led by the Port of Felixstowe, handle 36% of the UK's containerised trade, making us a vital gateway to global

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markets. BT's world-renowned research labs at Adastral Park are at the forefront of advances in cybersecurity, AI and space-based technologies. Suffolk truly is a place where big ideas happen.

But we weren't at UKREiiF just to talk about what we do well already, but to look to the future.

That future is being shaped by the Suffolk Business Board, established last May following the integration of the Local Enterprise Partnership into the county council. The Board brings together business leaders, academia, the voluntary sector, and local government to drive innovation, growth, and skills across Suffolk. I was joined at UKREiiF by Mark Pendlington and Oliver Paul both on the Board and two of our leading business voices, both passionate about Suffolk's potential.

The Board has hit the ground running. Earlier this year, it published the ambitious Suffolk Economic Strategy, designed to build on Suffolk's strengths by attracting investment into our key sectors and encouraging major companies to set up and expand here. This isn't just a plan on paper. It's already translating into action.

At UKREiiF, we showcased some of the concrete opportunities emerging from the strategy, from unlocking land for over 11,500 new homes on brownfield sites to supporting innovation hubs around our ports and market towns. These aren't distant ambitions. They are shovel-ready, investor-ready projects that will drive Suffolk forward.

Crucially, our growth plan is aligned with Norfolk's, reflecting the strong economic ties between our counties. Both Suffolk and Norfolk have thriving rural areas and growing urban centres, with Ipswich and Norwich ranked among the UK's top ten growth locations.

Working together will be essential – particularly as we enter a new era of devolution. Next May, residents will elect a Mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk, who will have a seat at the Prime Minister's Council of the Nations and Regions – a real opportunity to shape national policy from the local level. Joint devolution business plans are already being developed, with key investment priorities for the new Mayor to champion to help drive housing, infrastructure, and business growth in the years ahead.

What we heard at UKREiiF confirmed what we already knew. Investors are looking for places with a clear vision, a united voice, and a pipeline of projects ready to go. Suffolk ticks all those boxes.

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