

IKEN PARISH COUNCIL
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Suffolk County Council announces £63m A12 highway improvement proposals

Suffolk County Council has unveiled a full planning application for a package of highway improvements worth in the region of £63 million along the A12.

The works will be between the A12/A14 Seven Hills Junction and Woods Lane junction north of Woodbridge.

They aim to enhance transport connectivity, safety, and accessibility for all users, including motorists, cyclists, pedestrians, and public transport passengers.

Suffolk County Council is responsible for this section of the A12 and the proposals feature significant upgrades to the 6.8 mile (11km) stretch.

Key elements of the scheme are:

- Highway upgrades to improve traffic flow and safety, including enhancements to seven road junctions.
- Construction of a mobility hub at Adastral Park, designed to support sustainable travel options and improve public transport integration
- Replacement of the Martlesham footbridge with a new non-motorised users bridge to improve accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists
- New signalised bus link junction north of Anson Road, connecting the A12 and Main Road via Portal Avenue
- Dual carriageway upgrade between the A12/B1438 Ipswich Road junction and the A12/B1079 Grundisburgh Road junction, including a new layby, shared use footway/cycleway, and agricultural accessway
- New shared use footway/cycleways at Portal Avenue and north of A1152 Woods Lane, along with improved crossing facilities at key junctions
- Additional highway features, such as maintenance bays, traffic signs, upgraded signals, and pedestrian crossings

The proposals have been drawn up following two public consultations since the scheme was first outlined in 2020.

They will be formally submitted to the council's planning directorate on November 14. Members of the public and interested stakeholders can submit their views regarding the planning application after this date.

Comments should be sent to: Suffolk County Council, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich, IP1 2BX, or via email to planning@suffolk.gov.uk

Suffolk County Council objects to Sea Link as Examination begins

Suffolk County Council has made clear its objection to the Sea Link project, as the Planning Inspectorate begins official proceedings on the scheme's application for development consent.

The first Open Floor Hearing, saw the beginning of the Examination phase which began on Wednesday 5 November at Snape Maltings. This is an opportunity for people present their views in person to the Examination panel.

The county council maintains that development consent should not be granted, and it continues to object to the Sea Link proposals.

Councillor Richard Rout presented a summary of the council's concerns, the reasons for its objection are:

- Inadequate road access arrangements
- Poor-quality design of the converter station and its integration with the surrounding landscape
- Cumulative impacts of the scheme, its relationship and timing with other projects
- Disproportionate proposals for a new bridge
- Impacts of the scheme on the Suffolk and Essex Coast and Heaths National Landscape

New Armed Forces Covenant for Suffolk

As Britain prepares to honour its war dead in Remembrance Week a new pledge to support our serving and former personnel has been signed by Suffolk County Council.

The council is a signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant, a formal pledge by the nation to ensure that members of the military community—those who serve or have served, and their families—are treated fairly and with respect.

Launched in 2012, the original Covenant pledge focused on integration and shared armed forces community/civil society joint benefit projects.

It also set out the conditions to deliver the covenant locally such as the creation of an Armed Forces Covenant Partnership Board and the appointment of a politically independent Armed Forces Commissioner for Suffolk.

The new Covenant better reflects the engagement, learning, legislation, and delivery that has taken place since the original pledge signed by most local authorities, including Suffolk, since 2012.

It was signed Councillor Matthew Hicks, the leader of Suffolk County Council, supported by council chairman Councillor Jessica Fleming and Suffolk Armed Forces Commissioner Andrew Smith.

Council fears Sunnica is to become a 'Trojan horse' for new large infrastructure projects

Sunnica Ltd is a joint venture between Tribus Clean Energy and PS Renewables. They are hoping to extend the provision in their agreed planning permission, to secure 'future value-adding flexibility', as stated in their letter to government:

"To provide the Scheme with sufficient future value-adding flexibility in relation to adjacent land that may be subject to planning applications in conjunction with the Scheme."

These changes would enable them to integrate future proposed developments that come forward, by allowing local planning applications to overlap with the entire boundaries of the Sunnica scheme.

It means that new, vast projects such as data centres could cover many hectares of land, on top of that covered by the already-agreed solar panels, battery storage and associated infrastructure.

A consultation on these proposed changes will begin in due course. However, while the proposal sets out a limited number of consultees, it is very important to recognise that any relevant party will be able to respond.

"It appears to me that the Sunnica solar farm is a Trojan horse - a devious way of introducing even more infrastructure into our county which is lucrative only for the developer and landowners while our communities and landscape pay a heavy price."

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

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

"I stand by my previous comments that Sunnica is the poorest infrastructure application that I have ever dealt with.

“In a similar vein, we now learn that they want to move the goalposts on their application, to allow them to sweep through even more potential developments associated with the scheme. For example, this could be large data centres, potentially covering even more land. “It appears to me that the Sunnica solar farm is a Trojan horse - a devious way of introducing even more infrastructure into our county which is lucrative only for the developer and landowners while our communities and landscape pay a heavy price. “The approach Sunnica is taking shows complete contempt for local residents and communities.

“I strongly encourage all parishes, organisations, and individuals, who believe they may be affected by the proposed changes to respond to the consultation, when it commences.”

17 November 2025: Since the publication of this news story, Sunnica Ltd has announced that it does not intend to proceed with the change concerning the 'future value-adding flexibility'. The consultation will solely focus on the amended Order Limits surrounding Burwell substation.

Leading from the Front: Football Club Boss Gets Checked to Inspire Fans

NHS Health Checks aim to detect early signs of conditions such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, kidney disease, and dementia. Undertaken by a trained healthcare professional from Suffolk GP Federation they are open to people between the ages of 40 and 74 years that are registered with a Suffolk GP practice, haven't had a check in the last 5 years and don't have a pre-diagnosed condition.

It takes just 20–30 minutes and can help people take proactive steps to improve their health and reduce future risks.

Mark Ashton said:

“It’s about setting an example, if we want our community to stay match fit, we’ve got to lead the way.

“Having a check is a great way to get an assessment of your overall health, identifying and addressing any problems that might be lurking round the corner. It’s quick, easy, and could make all the difference. My message is, if I can do it, so can you.”

Councillor Steve Wiles, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Protection at Suffolk County Council said

“It’s fantastic to see our local football leaders stepping up and showing that health really matters. It shows that looking after your health is something we can all get behind.

“These checks are quick, free, and could make a real difference. If you’re eligible, don’t put it off, book yours today and give yourself the best chance of staying well.”

Dr Ruth Bushaway, Medical Director at Suffolk GP Federation said

“We’re here to make it easy and welcoming. It’s not about judgement; our confidential service is about giving people the tools to look after themselves. Your health is your greatest asset - don’t wait for extra time to protect it.”

For more information or to book your free NHS Health Check, which are available throughout Suffolk at GP practices, pharmacies and community venues, visit www.suffolkfed.org.uk/healthcare-services/nhs-health-checks

Suffolk County Council continues to drive electric vehicle progress

The county council continues to be one of the country’s leading local authorities for electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure, under its Plug In Suffolk project.

Plug in Suffolk has grown considerably in recent years to provide more EV charging solutions to more Suffolk residents.

The council has long recognised the importance of this, not only to support the ever-growing number of Suffolk drivers who are switching to EVs, but also to benefit the county’s visitors and the tourism economy.

“We have been pioneers in Suffolk, and are putting national funding to good use to find solutions to help our residents make the important transition to EVs.”

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

The county council’s latest EV charging solution is a trial of cross-pavement gullies. It is working with around 30 residents who do not have off-street parking to easily charge. The trial has seen each homeowner have a gully installed across the pavement, allowing them to safely run a cable from their house, through the gully, to their car.

The success of the project will be assessed in early 2026, to see if it can be rolled out further. Early indications are that it has proved popular.

Homeowner, John Taylor from Ipswich, said:

“I’ve been an EV driver for 10 years and was used to relying on a mix of workplace chargers, public chargepoints in council car parks and at supermarkets.

“Having the charge gully has been transformational, allowing me to charge off my solar panels and cheap renewable grid electricity, saving me over £500 a year! – I’m proof that it is possible for average and low earners to go electric.”

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

"It was a real pleasure to meet John and see what a success the charging gully has been. For him, it has been revolutionary, and just as importantly it has not been a hazard for those using the pavement.

"That's exactly what we've been achieving with Plug In Suffolk - solutions to EV charging for those that want to move away from petrol and diesel cars, but don't have off-street parking to simply install their own charger by their driveway.

"I'm proud that the county council has been leading the way in EV progress for many years, and will continue to do so."

Following the site visit to the cross-pavement charging installation, the minister was invited to Suffolk County Council, for a meeting to discuss the council's experience of EV funding, and its wider support for the EV transition.

On the ministerial visit, Councillor Richard Rout said:

"It was good to sit down with the minister, in Suffolk, and discuss the opportunities and challenges that the county council faces with EV infrastructure.

"We have been pioneers in Suffolk, and are putting national funding to good use to find solutions to help our residents make the important transition to EVs.

"However rumours that the Chancellor's upcoming Budget plans might include a pay-per-mile EV tax do concern me and I raised this with the minister.

"To my mind, this would undo a lot of the good work that has been done to date, punish existing EV owners who have been sold the vehicles on the basis they save money, and create yet another barrier to ownership. It would be a retrograde step."

The Plug In Suffolk project began nearly seven years ago, as the UK's first 'fully open' public fast charging network for electric vehicles, meaning drivers simply pay by contactless payment with no need to register their details. Around 100 of these chargepoints were installed in largely rural locations, such as community centres.

Following a successful bid in March 2024 to the government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund, the county council was awarded £5.3 million to install on-street chargepoints.

It was the first local authority in England to both award their LEVI main funding tender, and subsequently sign a contract with an operator, *Believ*, who are providing a further £16 million of funding, meaning Suffolk will see 6,000 chargepoints installed.

After close work with district and borough councils, communities, *Believ*, and from a survey to residents last year, the first of these on-street installations is beginning this month (November 2025).

Find out more about [Plug in Suffolk](#) on the Suffolk County Council website.

Have your say on plans for key Ipswich town centre route

Suffolk County Council is asking residents, businesses and local groups for their views on proposals for a new cycle path along a key Ipswich town centre route.

The cycle path would be in Princes Street and would provide a continuous, high-quality route supporting active travel from Ipswich railway station to the town centre.

The council wants Princes Street to become safer, more accessible and more enjoyable for everyone to walk, wheel and cycle while ensuring those who need to travel by car can still do so easily and directly.

It has now launched a public consultation to refine and finalise the proposals, which are being funded by Active Travel England.

They are:

- A new segregated two-way cycle path along the east side of Princes Street (between the Chancery Road / Grafton Way junction and Civic Drive).
- Update to priority crossings for pedestrians across Portman Road, Chalon Street, and Friars Bridge Road.

An [online survey](#) is now underway and runs until Monday December 22.

An unmanned public display will also be available at Endeavour House in Ipswich until December 22 (10am–4pm).

This project forms part of Suffolk's wider Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) to deliver safer, greener routes across the county.

For more details go to the [Princes Street Active Travel website](#).

One Suffolk plan gains county-wide backing as Government launches consultation

It comes as the Government launches a [consultation on the future of local councils in Suffolk](#), which is likely to see either one or as many as three councils tasked with delivering services for the next 50 years.

Millions of pounds of taxpayers' money is at stake, as is the sustainability and delivery of critical public services like social care, highways and housing.

Suffolk businessman, Richard Brame, said:

"I would like to see one unitary council that is better connected but better connected with business too. So, when we are looking to have a discussion about property, broadband or rates, we know where to go. Nobody does at the moment and frequently it's more than one place.

"If this was a business, there would be no question. Would you have three CFOs, or would you have one? Would you have three HR departments, or would you have one?

"From a business perspective, from a strategic perspective, one unitary is a really obvious route to go down."

Pete Waters, executive director of Visit East Anglia, said:

"Visitors do not recognise current district authority geographies, they go where they want in Suffolk. Visitors do recognise counties. LGR offers the opportunity for Visit East of England (VEE) to market locations based on their draw for visitors, rather than arbitrary council boundaries.

"Working with one county unitary would give VEE the opportunity to contribute to the bigger strategic picture for Suffolk's visitor economy, rather than focus on arbitrary boundaries."

Nick Hulme, chief executive of East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust, said:

"The fragmentation that would result from dividing governance and service provision across three councils poses potential risks to patient care continuity and system efficiency.

"A multicouncil model would likely perpetuate the postcode lottery we already contend with - where patients face unequal access to services depending on their location.

"A single unitary council would provide a unified governance structure, enabling consistent policy, streamlined decision-making, and more effective joint planning across the region."

Prema Fairburn-Dorai, Suffolk Care Association chairperson, said:

“Although it is not the ideal solution to the social care crisis, the majority of our members are in favour of a One Suffolk model as it will in the long run cause less disruption and will afford continuity of services to vulnerable individuals in Suffolk.”

David Barker MBE, Suffolk farmer, said:

“It will make life so much easier for farmers to have a consistent approach from one council. We have one farm at Westhorpe and one at Great Ashfield, and under the three tier proposal they would be in different areas – which really wouldn’t make a lot of sense.

“I’ve also been involved with the local access forum, and we work with one Suffolk County Council across the whole of Suffolk. That makes so much more sense than having three different councils with three different local access forums.

“The One Suffolk business case demonstrates that a single unitary for Suffolk is the only financially viable option. In the first five years, it will see savings of £78.2 million, while three councils would cost a £145.3 million more than the current two-tier system.

"Additionally, one council would save £39.4 million a year from year six, whereas three would cost £13.1 million more than the current model. The business case is built on rigorous financial analysis of Suffolk-based data conducted by global advisory firm Grant Thornton, rather than using generic national modelling as used in the three-council model."

In addition to financial resilience, the One Suffolk plan spells out how the proposed unitary council creates key benefits for the county, including:

- Harmonising Council Tax to the lowest level across Suffolk in year one. Based on current levels, this would result in Band D properties seeing a reduction of £245 in Ipswich, £17 in East Suffolk, £29 in West Suffolk, £19 in Babergh and a freeze in Mid Suffolk.
- A new deal for market towns, including Ipswich, backed by a £40 million capital investment fund, and a review of car parking charges and markets conducted in consultation with traders, businesses and representative bodies.
- Empowering communities by offering powers and funding to town and parish councils where these councils express a desire for additional responsibilities. Creating a new town council for Ipswich to enhance democratic representation.
- Building a strong, flourishing, and resilient local economy that serves all residents, businesses, and communities.
- A stronger voice for Suffolk through effective collaboration with the new mayor, focusing on clear investment priorities that maximise benefits.

One Suffolk is one of two proposals being consulted on by the government. The alternative, from Suffolk’s districts and borough councils, would see Suffolk split into three arbitrary council areas, putting key services such as social care at serious risk and costing millions to set up.

The three unitary proposal relies on business cases produced elsewhere in the country that have since proved undeliverable. It does not address the enormous risks and costs associated with splitting up critical services such as social care and children's services and poses clear risks to the most vulnerable people in Suffolk.

Not only would three councils cost significantly more than a single unitary for Suffolk - it would also cost more than the current two-tier system. By creating three new areas across Suffolk, essential county-wide services like adult social care and children's services must be disaggregated - resulting in higher costs and a postcode lottery for the county's most vulnerable residents.

The public [consultation on the future of local councils in Suffolk](#) will be live until **11 January 2026**. After the consultation period, Government ministers will be making their final decision on how to proceed with LGR in Suffolk in early 2026.

Seasoned political journalist backs One Suffolk

A political journalist with over 40 years' experience scrutinising and reporting on councils in Suffolk has backed the plan to scrap the county's six councils and replace them with one authority delivering all local and county wide services.

Suffolk-born Paul Geater, who currently presents a current affairs radio talk show on Suffolk Sound but previously spent decades as a political correspondent for the East Anglian Daily Times and Ipswich Star, said:

"I started off by thinking the three councils option was probably going to be the best [but], the more I have heard, the more I have looked into this, the more convinced I have been that the One Suffolk option is the only real sensible choice for the government.

"I am highly sceptical about the financial claims both sides have made about this. [But] I am much more sceptical about the claims from the three councils, I just don't see how their proposals can achieve the kind of savings the government is talking about.

"It comes down to a few things. First of all, Suffolk has an identity and has had an identity for more than a millennium. I don't think I come from Ipswich and South Suffolk, Suffolk has its own identity. I was born and brought up in the East of Suffolk... I lived for a time and worked for a time in Bury St Edmunds in West Suffolk. It is all Suffolk to me and I think that identity is very important.

"When you look at how the proposed splitting is being done, frankly the three Suffolk people seem to be using a kind of geographical gymnastics to try to equalise figures in all kinds of places and it really does develop something of a dog's breakfast of a map. Stowmarket has absolutely nothing to do with Lowestoft, it looks to either Ipswich or Bury St Edmunds and yet the idea is that local government should be run for Stowmarket from Lowestoft. It doesn't make any sense. It just looks to be as if you're building in duplication.

“I have filled in my consultation form and said that as a reporter who spent 40 years covering local government in this county that my feeling is the only solution for Suffolk is to have one council for the county.”

Suffolk Archives Awarded National Accreditation

Accreditation is the UK quality standard which recognises good performance in all areas of archive service delivery. Accredited Archive Services ensure the long-term collection, preservation and accessibility of our archive heritage.

Receiving it shows that Suffolk Archives, based at The Hold in Ipswich, has met clearly defined national standards relating to management and resourcing; the care of its unique collections and what the service offers to its entire range of users.

The Archive Service Accreditation Panel said Suffolk Archives was:

“A well-managed service, which runs an effective archive and local studies service from modern premises, including a commendable engagement programme.

“There is a strong understanding of the communities served, and a genuine appetite for co-creation and engagement with new groups. The public facilities at Ipswich are modern and of excellent quality.”

Suffolk Archives is the home to more than 900 years of local history. It collects, cares for, and shares the county’s stories through records that reflect Suffolk people’s lives, work, and heritage.

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