

I apologise for the delay in sending this report.

As you are aware, I sit on the fostering panels for Suffolk County Council, and in this month's report, there are two important items relating to fostering and kinship carers. Please do take a moment to read these – and if you're interested or have any questions, I'd be happy to hear from you.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to register to attend and speak at the Sea Link hearings. These sessions provide a vital opportunity to expand on or raise new concerns directly with the inspectors, so your participation is greatly appreciated.

Last week, I attended the Sizewell C Main Site Development Forum. A great deal of information was shared by the panel in a short time. The next Community Forum is scheduled for 23rd October at 18:30, to be held at the Sizewell Sports and Social Club. The agenda will be included at the end of my report. Doors open at 17:00 for exhibits and information stands, where the public can speak directly with representatives from Sizewell C. I also recommend reviewing the minutes from the last traffic meetings for the latest updates and keeping an eye on the works tracker.

As Christmas approaches, please be aware that scams involving AI-generated voices mimicking loved ones are on the rise. It's strongly advised that families and close contacts agree on a 'safe word' to help prevent falling victim to these increasingly sophisticated scams.

Halloween is a spooky and exciting time, but staying safe makes it even more fun for children (and adults!) It's important that children always go trick-or-treating with an adult or a group of friends and only visit houses that have their lights on or a pumpkin outside, please respect those houses that do not participate. Keep to the paths, watch out for cars, and carry a torch or glow stick so you can be seen in the dark. Make sure your costume fits well so you don't trip and it's always wise for an adult to check the treats re any surprises or allergies etc. Have fun, be kind, and enjoy a safe and happy Halloween! 🎃

Bonfire Night can be fun for us, but it can be frightening for some and for our pets. Loud bangs, bright flashes, and strong smells can cause extreme stress for animals. Always stand well back from the fire and fireworks and never touch or go near them. Listen carefully to adults, and never pick up fireworks, even if they look like they've gone out. Keep pets inside so they don't get scared and remember – it's best to attend a professionally organised event, stay warm, stay safe, and have a sparkly, happy Bonfire Night!

Here are some tips to keep pets safe:

 **Keep pets indoors** – Close windows, draw curtains, and keep lights on to soften the noise and flashes.

 **Play calming music** – Gentle background noise can help mask fireworks.

 **Create a safe space** – Let pets hide where they feel secure, like under a bed or in a quiet room.

 **Walk dogs early** – Make sure they're exercised well before dark.

 **ID and microchip** – Ensure your pet's ID tag and microchip details are up to date, just in

case they get scared and escape.

 **Keep fireworks, sparklers, and bonfires away** – Never let pets near fire or fireworks.

Let's make sure everyone – including our furry friends – has a safe and stress-free Bonfire Night!

Best wishes

TJ

Tom's race with new foster carers

The release of 'The Run', the seventh fostering awareness film produced by award-winning producers ReelTwentyFive, has been announced and will premiere at the Everyman cinema in Birmingham on 9th October 2025.

What started as a small local project in the Midlands is now a major nationwide campaign involving over 90 local authority fostering services, project managed by CAN Digital. 'The Run' is set to be the most ambitious jointly funded fostering film project yet.

The film focuses on Tom, an 11-year-old boy, contrasting his need to run - away from danger, a chaotic home life, to get to school in time for breakfast club because he's hungry - with running as a sport.

Despite the disadvantages Tom faces before being fostered – not even having PE kit for school – he's good at running and the film climaxes with Tom taking part in an athletics tournament, running in a stadium, with the support of his new foster family.

It's Tom's chance to shine. Can Tom win his race? On the track and in his life?

The message of this project is very simple, but so important – we need foster carers and we need people to foster for Suffolk County Council.

"This sentiment applies across the country, which is why this project has grown into a national campaign. 'The Run' is a brilliant, emotional film none of us could have produced on our own, which is why this partnership is so important.

"We have an engaging, high-quality film – which is great for all of us – but the message is loud and clear; there's an urgent need for more foster carers to step forward across the country. Here in Suffolk, we need foster carers who can give the gift of time by offering a long-term, loving home to children in care."

That message is at the core of the film project. Local authority fostering services are under pressure like never before as more children need a safe, stable home. This is combined with increased competition from independent fostering agencies to recruit foster carers.

The film's project director Rachel Brown explains;

"This whole project grew out of the constant struggle to recruit foster carers, when you have limited resources. By working as a group – which has grown from 12 to over 90 councils across the country – we've found a way to raise our voice and shout.

"I say shout quite deliberately - because this is a national emergency. Make no mistake, children's futures depend on having homes to give them a supportive, nurturing upbringing.

"The Run' won't change things on its own, but we hope that everyone who sees it, will at least pause for thought, hopefully stepping forward to help our most vulnerable children and young people."

One thing is for sure, there are children like Tom all over the country. Here in Suffolk, if you want to make a difference talk, to Suffolk Fostering and Adoption Service on 01473 264800 or make an enquiry at www.fosterandadopt.suffolk.gov.uk

Watch 'The Run' <https://youtu.be/zkNFmljDYQA>

Celebrating our Kinship Carers - Family or friends who step up to raise a child

Corporate Parenting - supporting the children in our care to thrive - in my view, is the most important thing we do as councillors.

In Suffolk, our ambition is to be a fostering service that truly listens. In my time as Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's services, a priority for me has been really getting to know our foster families – not just to hear them but to listen, and to do all I can in my role to make their experiences better.

This week is Kinship Care week, a chance to recognise and celebrate our Kinship Carers, who step up in extraordinary ways to keep children connected to their families, roots and communities.

Kinship Care Week reminds us that there is a powerful community of kinship carers who share their experiences in many different ways to help other kinship carers feel less lonely and isolated. This Kinship Care Week let's raise a teacup together to kinship families everywhere!

Kinship care is when someone with a family connection steps up to care for a child when their parents aren't able to. Kinship Carers might be grandparents, aunts or uncles, brothers or sisters, a step-parent, stepbrother or stepsister, or someone who isn't related but knows the child well.

Whatever their relationship to the child, in that moment a commitment is made. To bring love and hope to a child who has experienced trauma, no matter what.

Kinship Foster Carers have a different start to their fostering journey compared with mainstream foster carers. Rarely do Kinship Foster Carers have the time and space to consider their decision regarding becoming a foster carer, as varied and complex, or unexpected circumstances may lead them into this role. The focus of Kinship Care is on the child remaining within their family, and this can come with complexities and challenges.

I have so much time for our Kinship Carers who take on this extraordinary responsibility, at what can often be a very intense time.

I'm always keen to take every opportunity I can to hear from our foster carers, kinship carers, and adopters, and I have heard some very powerful examples of the enormous undertaking our Kinship carers take on. Hearing these stories first-hand, really drives home the huge impact that taking on the responsibility of Kinship Care can have on health and wellbeing, family relationships, work, and other areas of day-to-day life, all while ensuring their child feels safe and loved.

Kinship Care is complex and brings with it its own set of unique needs. Here in Suffolk, our Kinship Team provide bespoke training, home visits, advice and support to Kinship Carers. When an assessment for Fostering or a Special Guardianship Order is the most appropriate way forward, our team help to guide carers through what can often be a difficult and challenging assessment and court process.

We have recently developed our 'Kinship Local Offer' which recognises not only the support available from the Kinship Team and Suffolk County Council, but also helps Kinship Carers to navigate their way to support from our partners and voluntary agencies, all of whom are key to providing the support Kinship Carers may need to ensure they are best placed to ensure their own well-being but also meet the needs of the vulnerable children they care for.

Kinship Care week is a time for us to recognise and celebrate the extraordinary people in children's lives that step forward and care for a child when their own parents are unable to care for them. To all our Kinship Carers who take on this extraordinary responsibility, I want to say, Thank you.

If you need support or advice about Kinship Care, please contact Suffolk County Council's Kinship Team on 01473 265025.

Our plan to get Suffolk working

Work, health and community are deeply connected. In Suffolk, we want everyone to have the chance to thrive in all three.

Overall, our employment and economic activity rates suggest we are already performing well compared to some other areas of the country. Yet for many people, there remain real barriers to finding and keeping a good job.

That's why, as the cabinet member responsible for economic development and skills at Suffolk County Council, I'm pleased to be bringing a new plan to Get Suffolk Working to our cabinet meeting this week. The plan's aim is to reduce economic inactivity and help more people into sustainable, meaningful and rewarding employment.

Cllr Richard Smith MVO, deputy leader of the council and cabinet member for finance, economic development and skills

This is Suffolk's response to the government's Get Britain Working white paper, which aims to raise the national employment rate to 80%. Our approach brings together health, skills and employment services, because we know people's lives don't fit neatly into one box. We want support to be joined up and shaped around what really matters to people.

Economic inactivity is a complex challenge. In Suffolk, long-term health conditions are now the most common reason people are out of work – a trend that's grown in recent years. Other barriers include low qualifications, caring responsibilities and limited access to transport or digital services.

These challenges are not new, but they are pressing, and they require a new kind of response – one that is collaborative, compassionate and focused on real circumstances.

It complements existing strategies – like the Suffolk Economic Strategy, the Local Skills Improvement Plan and health and care strategies – and focuses on making better use of the resources we already have.

A key part of the plan is the launch of Connect to Work, a new programme backed by up to £9.5 million in funding from the DWP. It will help more than 2,700 Suffolk residents over the next five years – particularly those with health conditions, disabilities and other complex challenges. The programme will offer tailored training, personalised support and job placements, helping people find work that matches their strengths and experience.

That's what Get Suffolk Working is all about: making sure support reaches the people who need it most, in ways that work for them. Whether someone has been out of work for months or years, we want to meet them where they are and help them take the next step.

This is a plan is for those with a disability who want to work for an employer that will enable them to fulfil their aspirations. It's for the young person with anxiety who needs support to build confidence. It's for the carer who's ready to re-enter the workforce but needs flexible opportunities.

We've also looked at how services can work better together. For example, someone receiving mental health support should be able to get advice about employment. A young person leaving school should be able to find a clear route into training and work. And businesses struggling to recruit should be able to connect with local talent that's too often overlooked.

To keep things on track, a new *Get Suffolk Working Partnership Board* will oversee the strategy, supported by a dedicated delivery group. Collaboration has been central to developing this plan, and it will be key to delivering it.

The benefits are clear. Being in work can improve health and wellbeing, reduce social isolation, and build confidence and independence. For our economy, it means a stronger, more resilient workforce that can support growth and innovation.

As cabinet prepares to review the strategy, I encourage anyone interested in employment, health or community wellbeing to visit www.suffolk.gov.uk and read the draft Get Suffolk Working report. It sets out where we are, what we've learned and how we plan to help more people succeed in Suffolk.

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.

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 earlier today (Thursday 2 October).

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.

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

"For too long, Suffolk, and indeed Norfolk, has been a devolution desert. Alongside local government reorganisation, this gives us a rare opportunity to reshape governance, improve the lives of our residents, and ensure that Suffolk has the strong, unified voice it needs – and deserves – on the national stage.

"Two weeks ago, we discussed our proposal for One Suffolk, a single unitary authority for our county. This sustainable model, effective delivery and credible voice is precisely what One Suffolk would deliver. It would be smarter simpler and better. It would be a strong voice for our county. And it would be the most effective partner for the new mayor.

"Through both devolution and local government reorganisation, we are re-shaping local governance in our county. We are setting up Suffolk for future prosperity and growth, and we are giving Suffolk that single, loud voice so that it can no longer be overlooked by those in Westminster."

The proposal to establish an MCCA received overwhelming backing by councillors at the full council meeting – with 98% voting in favour of the motion.

Speaking during the full council meeting, Cllr Matthew Hicks, Suffolk County Council's leader, said:

"This is a historic day. The scale and the impact of the decisions we make as a Cabinet is often significant – but there is something truly significant about today's decision – that has the potential to be transformative for some 1.7 million residents in Suffolk and Norfolk.

"We have a unique deal on the table – one which binds devolution with an even bigger change in the form of local government reorganisation – to which we gave our strong backing just two weeks ago.

"By supporting this proposal, we are taking a bold step towards a brighter future for Suffolk and Norfolk."

In the future, Suffolk and Norfolk will be able to access multi-year, cross government funding that would enhance the investment fund and enable better tailoring of that money to benefit local needs and opportunities.

Earlier this week the Suffolk Business Board gave its endorsement to the proposal to create an MCCA, calling it a 'transformative opportunity to unlock growth'.

The Business Board, comprising leaders from key sectors across the region, is spearheading a new economic strategy aimed at accelerating inward investment, job creation and skills development.

Suffolk is one of six areas on the devolution priority programme. Alongside local government reorganisation, devolution will bring in the biggest change to local government for over 50 years.

The next step in the devolution process will be for councillors at Norfolk County Council to vote on the proposal on Thursday 16 October. If they consent, government will formally lay a Statutory Instrument, enabling the MCCA to be formed.

Elections for the new mayor would then be held in May 2026.

Reminder: Window now open to apply for primary and secondary school places

Parents and carers can now apply for a place in the normal year of entry at a primary (including infant and junior) school and a secondary school for September 2026.

The deadline for applications to secure a place at a secondary school is Friday 31 October 2025 and for primary school places, including infant and junior schools, the deadline is Thursday 15 January 2026.

All applications received by the relevant closing date are processed at the same time using the schools' oversubscription criteria to prioritise applications when necessary. Late applications are processed after all of those received on time.

Last year, Suffolk County Council received over 14,700 on time applications for pupils wishing to start at a primary or infant school, or to transfer to a junior school, or into Year 7 at a secondary school from September 2025.

94% of applicants received offers for their first preference school and 98.4% of applicants received an offer for one of their top three preferred schools.

"Parents and carers need to carefully consider which schools to apply for on behalf of their child. They need to make sure they complete and submit their application by the closing date to give them the best chance of getting a place at one of their preferred schools. We recommend that parents and carers apply for more than one school, and they can list up to three schools on their application."

"I would strongly advise that parents and carers think about how their child will travel to school before they apply for a school place. It is important that parents and carers check which is their child's nearest suitable school on our Nearest School Checker because this might not be their catchment area school. This can be found at <http://nearestschool.suffolk.gov.uk/>."

Further information on SCC's School Travel Policy can be found at www.suffolkonboard.com/schooltravel.

Parents and carers should apply online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions as they will receive confirmation that their application has been received. If for any reason they are unable to apply online they should apply on a paper application (CAF1). Suffolk County Council is unable to acknowledge receipt of paper applications and therefore suggest that proof of posting is obtained.

If families are planning to move house or think their circumstances may change before next September, it is still important to make an application on time using the current address. It is recommended to apply for schools based on the current address in case the proposed move falls through. Advice and guidance about this process is available at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions.

Families who apply online will be able to log on to the Online Service on National Offer Day, which is Monday 2 March 2026 for secondary school places and Thursday 16 April 2026 for primary school places, to see their offer of a school place, and they will receive an email to confirm this offer on the same day. Offer letters will be sent by second class post to applicants who made a paper application.

Information to help parents and carers make their application is available at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions.

Ipswich council's decision means Suffolk communities will suffer

Ipswich Borough Council rejects proposal to invest public money in project to help parish councils respond to and deal with multiple and uncoordinated nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs)

Ipswich Borough Council's selfish attitude means communities across Suffolk are going to be left at the mercy of energy and water project developers, Suffolk County Council has said.

On Friday 19 September, Suffolk's six council leaders met with the police and crime commissioner (PCC) to consider a proposal to collectively invest public money in a project to help parish councils across Suffolk respond to and deal with multiple and uncoordinated nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs) – like Sizewell C in the east, Sunnica solar farm in the west and the Norwich to Tilbury pylons that cut through Suffolk from north to south.

NSIPs are detailed and complex, meaning it's often difficult for communities to engage with proposals and ensure local concerns are addressed through decision-making processes. This often requires access to technical expertise beyond the capability and capacity of residents and parish councils. Across Suffolk, there are around 20 NSIPs either proposed, submitted or approved.

The proposal put before leaders was to invest £80,000 in a programme to provide dedicated support to parish councils – which would boost the £30,000 already committed by the Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC). The support would include help to understand the process, deadlines and opportunities for dialogue with developers – as well as connect those communities with experts willing to do pro bono work in this area.

At the meeting, the leader of Ipswich Borough Council, Councillor Neil MacDonald, said he could not support the proposal because the county town does not have any parish councils and questioned whether SALC was the right organisation to host the additional resource. This is despite his council supporting a proposal to subsume 66 parishes into the new Greater Ipswich Council.

Investment decisions require unanimous support – so although all the other councils and the PCC supported it, the proposal was rejected.

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

“If this isn't a perfect demonstration of the need to scrap all of Suffolk's councils and have one organisation that supports the whole of the county, I don't know what is.

“This is exactly the kind of narrow-minded selfish approach that will hold Suffolk back if we end up with three councils not doing what is right for our county. If Ipswich Borough Council leaders seriously want to subsume 66 parishes into their expanded council border then they should try to understand organisations like SALC, and parish councils, that do vital work for residents.

“The Suffolk Public Sector Leaders Group has previously invested in both county-wide and local projects – including some that have benefited Ipswich specifically. Yet faced with the opportunity to act in the clear interests of the county, our borough council has turned its back.

“Ipswich’s MP recently signed a deal with Sizewell C to create 500 jobs for people in the town. Now when it comes to supporting the areas affected by this and other projects, political goodwill seems to have evaporated.

“Frankly this is an embarrassing and shortsighted position to take and I expect our colleagues in the district councils will be angry about the borough’s approach. This is exactly the kind of thing that will happen under a three-council model.”

Links etc

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/national-infrastructure-and-energy-projects/sizewell-c-nuclear-power-station/governance-groups/> some of which are

www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Energy-Projects/Sizewell/Governance/STF-slide-pack-September-2025.pdf

www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Energy-Projects/Sizewell/Governance/6-August-Presentation.pdf

www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Energy-Projects/Sizewell/Governance/2-September-2025-Rights-of-Way-Working-Group.pdf

www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Energy-Projects/Sizewell/Governance/21-July-2025-Accommodation-Working-Group-Meeting-Minutes.pdf

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/national-infrastructure-and-energy-projects/sizewell-c-nuclear-power-station/works-tracker-sizewell-c-forums-and-contact-details/>

Agenda

Sizewell C Community Forum

Thursday 23rd October 2025



Meeting Title: Community Forum (Autumn)	Location: Sizewell Sports and Social Club, King Georges Avenue, Leiston, IP16 4JX
Date: Thursday 23 rd October 2025	Time: Doors open 1700 for Exhibits and Information Stands Meeting time: 18.30-20:30 (The meeting will start promptly at 18.30)
Chair: Christine Abraham	
Sizewell C Attendees:	County and District Councillors:
Panel: Damian Leydon - Site Delivery Director Richard Bull – Head of Planning Marjorie Barnes - Head of READ	Suffolk County Council: Cllr Richard Smith, Cllr TJ East Suffolk Council: Cllr Tom Daly, Cllr Katie Graham, Cllr Sarah Whitelock
Guest Speakers: Ceri Bryant- Occupational Health and Wellbeing Manager Clive Mobbs – Chaplin	External Stakeholders: Jenny Riddell-Carpenter, MP for Suffolk Coastal Jess Asato, MP for Lowestoft Jack Abbott MP for Ipswich Central
Advisers: David Peacop – Site Operations Director David Seal – Offsite Delivery Manager Tim Newton- Site Security Manager Jez Porter – SPM Highways Spencer Bowdler – Site Operations – Site Lead Zoe Botten – Community Relations Manager Rebecca Quigg – Transport Co-ordinator Darren Benford-Brown – Community Safety	Simon Barlow – Project Manager, Environment Agency Angela Ramsay, Office for Nuclear Regulation Sally Longmate - CEO, Suffolk Association of Local Councils Hannah Bloom - Chief Executive, Suffolk Community Foundation Caroline Botwood, DESNZ Director Simon Amstutz - Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape

1. Welcome and Introduction of the Chair and Panel – (Chair)
2. Community Relations – (Marjorie Barnes)
3. Project Look Ahead for 2025/2026 & Key Milestones – (Damian Leydon)
4. Workforce, Wellbeing and Pastoral Care – (Ceri Bryant, Clive Mobbs)
5. Q&A – via Town and Parish Council Representative – (Chair)
6. Dates of future meetings – (Chair)