

SHOTTISHAM PARISH COUNCIL
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Suffolk Business Board backs devolution as catalyst for growth

A letter from the Suffolk Business Board to Suffolk County Council outlines the Board's strong belief that devolution will empower local leadership, attract significant investment and drive economic growth across the region.

Suffolk's £21 billion economy is among the best-connected in the UK, home to globally recognised businesses and thousands of ambitious enterprises. The Suffolk 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.

The letter states:

"The ambitions and opportunities business can deliver needs the active support of a streamlined governance structure that can help create the conditions for growth. Which is why, as local business leaders, we endorse the proposal to create a Mayoral Combined County Authority across Norfolk and Suffolk – a transformative opportunity to unlock growth, give more power and decision-making authority to local people and shape a more prosperous future for our region."

The letter highlights the benefits of devolution, including local decision-making, guaranteed long-term funding and greater influence at the national level.

"Devolution means decisions made closer to home, by people who understand our local strengths, challenges and ambitions and want to help make things happen. It offers the opportunity to create high-quality jobs, attract long-term investment – including for vital improvements to infrastructure – and transform the delivery of public services in a way that reflects Suffolk's unique character and needs."

The Suffolk Business Board stresses that a directly elected mayor would provide strategic leadership and accountability to deliver on key priorities such as regenerating Ipswich, expanding clean energy innovation in East Suffolk, and growing the region's digital and technology sectors.

The letter also underscores the successful track record of collaboration between Suffolk and Norfolk, which has already attracted over £1.3 billion in investment and created and safeguarded more than 15,300 new jobs in recent years.

Read the full letter:

- [Open letter from the Suffolk Business Board](#)

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 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.

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.

Councillors at Norfolk County Council have also voted for the proposal and consequently 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.
You can watch the cabinet meeting on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMpJrEQcU0w>

Suffolk Fire and Rescue highlights mental health support on World Mental Health Day

This year's theme, Access to Services: Mental Health in Catastrophes and Emergencies, highlights how vital it is for frontline responders to have the right support in place when dealing with challenging incidents.

Blue light responders, from the control room to the incident ground routinely face demanding and emotionally charged situations. SFRS recognises the importance of ensuring that everyone has access to practical, confidential, and timely mental health support.

Acknowledging these risks, **Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Henry Griffin outlined SFRS's approach to supporting staff wellbeing:**

"Firefighters and blue light staff often experience situations that can be emotionally taxing. At SFRS, we take staff wellbeing extremely seriously, not just during major incidents but every day.

"We want every member of our service to know that support is available whenever it's needed, and that asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness."

Reflecting this priority, SFRS offers access to a comprehensive range of support services, including:

- Mental Health First Aiders offering peer-to-peer guidance
- Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) for structured debriefs, counselling, and follow-up support after traumatic incidents (firefighters and control room staff)
- Peer support networks and union representatives for confidential conversations and signposting
- The Fire Fighters Charity, which delivers programmes to promote mental health, resilience, and overall wellbeing, including counselling, practical support, and wellbeing workshops

Reflecting on mental health challenges across the community, **Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Public Health and Public Protection, Councillor Steve Wiles, said:**

"World Mental Health Day is a reminder that everyone's mental health matters, whether responding to an emergency or coping with everyday pressures. Taking time to offload by sharing your feelings with a colleague, someone outside of work, or a trained counsellor, doing something you enjoy, or getting out into nature can all make a difference.

"Reaching out for support isn't something to be ashamed of - it's one of the most sensible steps you can take to safeguard your own wellbeing and your relationships with others." SFRS is also sharing practical guidance from the Mental Health Foundation about how to manage stress and emotional overload during global events and relentless negative news. This includes setting boundaries, having phone-free time, living in the moment, focusing on what you can control and giving yourself permission to rest.

Members of the public experiencing mental health challenges can access local support through:

- Suffolk Mind – 01473 400785, www.suffolkmind.org.uk
- Wellbeing Suffolk – 0300 123 1503, www.wellbeingnands.co.uk

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 patterns 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.

The silver coin hoard is currently undergoing further conservation and research by specialists.

You can learn more about the archaeology discovered during Sizewell C construction at a [free open day](#) on Saturday 25 October 2025 at the Riverside Centre in Stratford St Andrew, which will highlight finds from the Two Village Bypass.

There is also a series of webinars being delivered by Oxford Cotswold Archaeology over the autumn and winter, to present findings from the ongoing excavations.

Details on all these events can be found at www.sizewellc.com
Read more about [the original discovery of the hoard](#).

Suffolk residents safer than ever thanks to 70% increase in home fire safety visits

This increase in tailored fire safety advice and support comes as Candle Fire Safety Week (20–26 October) coincides with Diwali, the Festival of Lights (20 October), celebrated by Hindu, Sikh, and Jain communities, when homes are illuminated with candles and oil lamps (diyas).

The timing serves as a timely reminder of the importance of fire safety, particularly when using open flames in the home.

Preventing fires, protecting lives

Despite being one of the smallest fire prevention teams in the country, the SFRS Prevention Team, led by Group Manager Lee Wilkins, has transformed home fire safety delivery across Suffolk.

Children and young people at heightened risk

Children and young people are particularly vulnerable in domestic fires. According to the Home Office, over 350 children under the age of 11 are injured and seven are killed in accidental fires in the home each year. ¹

Many of these incidents result from the accidental misuse of equipment or open flames, highlighting the need for targeted education and preventative measures.

To address this, the Prevention Team delivers the SPARK programme, designed by the Service's Youth Education and Development Manager, Claire Watkins. The programme provides fire safety advice tailored to each Key Stage, ensuring it is both age-appropriate and engaging.

Schools are selected based on local fire and safety incident data and the needs of communities facing higher levels of risk, ensuring that safety messages reach children and young people aged 4–19 who need them most.

Since its launch in September 2024, SPARK has already been delivered to over 5,700 children and young people in the 2024–25 academic year alone - an **850%** increase compared with previous years.

Protecting the county's most vulnerable residents

For Suffolk residents, individuals who qualify for a Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV) are visited by a specialist practitioner or operational firefighters who will help create a tailored home fire safety plan. Those deemed most at risk also receive free smoke alarms or specialist equipment.

This includes the elderly, individuals with hearing or sight impairments, those with limited mobility, and people living with dementia, who may have a reduced ability to respond quickly to fire hazards.

A study published in the *Journal of Fire Sciences* found that fire injury risk increases with age, being more common in older individuals. ² This is supported by data from the Home Office, published in 2024, which reported that in the year ending March 2024, 37% of all fire-related fatalities in England occurred among people aged 65 years and over, with a fatality rate of 10.9 per million for those aged 80 and over compared with 4.2 per million for the general population. ³

Factors contributing to this elevated risk include physical frailty, cognitive impairments, and the use of medications affecting alertness and mobility. ⁴

To help identify the most vulnerable in the community, the team has integrated with Safelincs, an online platform that allows residents or their carers to complete a virtual home fire safety check.

Based on the data entered, the platform alerts the Prevention Team to those considered most vulnerable and at higher risk. This approach ensures fire safety support reaches as many people as possible while prioritising additional resources for those who need it most. People deemed as low risk will still receive a bespoke Home Fire Action Plan.

References:

1. Home Office. (2022). *Fire safety for parents and child carers (accessible version)*. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-for-parents-and-child-carers/fire-safety-for-parents-and-child-carers-accessible-version>
2. Smith, J., et al. (2023). *Fire injury risk and age: a review*. Journal of Fire Sciences.
3. Home Office. (2024). *Detailed Analysis of Fires in England, April 2023 – March 2024*.UK.
4. Jones, L., et al. (2022). *Older adults and fire risk: contributing factors*. NFPA Journal.

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.

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 places 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](#).

Andrew Reid
County Councillor - Wilford Division
Tel: 07545 423799
Email: andrew.reid@suffolk.gov.uk