

District and Borough Councils' clear message to communities: "Let's shape the future of Suffolk together!"

Suffolk's five district and borough councils are launching [a county-wide survey asking people for their views](#) on the future of vital local government services

The move comes as part of the government's Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) initiative which would see county, district and borough councils replaced and all their services delivered by one or more new unitary councils covering a specific area in the county.

District and borough councils believe that Suffolk would be best served by more than one unitary council. They have submitted their interim report, which sets out the benefits of a multi-unitary model. In a letter sent earlier this month to all Suffolk councils, the government offered clear encouragement for the districts and boroughs to continue developing their proposals.

With this in mind, they are now seeking to further develop the best possible case for a multiple unitary solution in Suffolk, creating councils that are big enough to deliver, but local enough to care; councils that will be efficient and financially sustainable, delivering genuine value for money.

This is the most dramatic change to local government in 50 years, and the Leaders of the borough and district councils are committed to ensuring that every community is involved in shaping the new councils and their services.

As part of the wider engagement work the district and borough councils are carrying out, residents, businesses, community groups and other organisations can now [have their say](#) on what is important to them, in the areas in which they live and work.

Encouraging as many Suffolk people as possible to take part, the Leaders of the five district and borough councils, Cllr John Ward, leader of Babergh District Council, Cllr Caroline Topping, leader of East Suffolk Council, Cllr Neil MacDonald, leader of Ipswich Borough Council, Cllr Andy Mellen, leader of Mid Suffolk District Council, and Cllr Cliff Waterman, Leader of West Suffolk Council, said:

"We want to transform public services, so they work for all our citizens and communities, and we want you to help us shape them.

"Suffolk County Council has only one plan – to create a single mega-council, which we believe would be out of touch with communities and residents. It would cover a vast geographical area seeking to save as much money as possible, no matter how perilous the impact on local democracy, the quality of services provided or proper accountability where you live - whether it's Hadleigh, Sudbury, Bury St Edmunds, Stowmarket, Felixstowe, Lowestoft or Ipswich.

“We can’t let that happen and we want to hear what you think, to understand the challenges and opportunities, and to ensure that all of Suffolk is listened to and properly represented in the generational changes which are taking place.

“We are absolutely certain that a multiple unitary model, with each new council delivering all services to different, recognisable parts of Suffolk, is vital to meet the differing needs of our diverse communities.

“With this in mind, we are greatly encouraged by the government’s recent feedback which makes it absolutely clear that we can make a case for local unitaries focused on meeting the needs of all our communities, embodying a true sense of place and local identity. It also supports our argument to have greater representation in the Mayoral Strategic Authority to ensure local voices are heard from across Suffolk.

“Creating more than one unitary council in Suffolk will ensure strong local leadership and democratic representation, better community engagement, neighbourhood empowerment and more responsive councils. We want more locally targeted, modern and flexible services, to drive better outcomes and value, rather than a basic and unimaginative ‘one size fits all’ option which simply bolts district and borough services on to an old and tired county council system.

“This is a fantastic opportunity to work with communities, service users and organisations to rewire how services are delivered and drive better outcomes to meet local needs. For example, the needs and challenges for people living in Ipswich are different to those in rural Suffolk. For the first time your council will be able to deliver services tailored to meet local needs when previously it was a one size fits all approach that only worked for the few.

“It’s particularly important that we can make a strong financial case for change – not only highlighting how we can deliver savings in the short and medium term, but how we can absolutely guarantee the future sustainability of the services people depend on.”

ENDS

.....

Editors notes

The survey, which closes on 25 July 2025, can be found at www.babergh.gov.uk/devolution-and-lgr (URL FOR PRINT EDITIONS)

Issued on behalf of:

Babergh District Council
East Suffolk Council
Ipswich Borough Council
Mid Suffolk District Council
West Suffolk Council

