

October 2025 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks

Window now open to apply for primary and secondary school places

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 <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.

Second year of £500,000 Culture Project Fund launched

Suffolk County Council is pleased to announce the second year of its £500,000 Culture Project Fund. This initiative is aimed at strengthening and supporting local arts and museum projects in our local communities across the county. This fund's goal is to improve the cultural landscape in Suffolk, benefiting communities through diverse and impactful initiatives that align with the council's key priorities: health and wellbeing, economic development, environmental protection, and value for money. The fund offers three tiers of grants:

Small grants up to £1,500

Medium grants up to £10,000

Large grants up to £20,000

This inclusive approach ensures that both grassroots ventures and larger, more established organisations have equal opportunities to access funding. Eligible applicants include Arts and Museum organisations which operate as skilled freelancers, registered charities, community interest

companies, non-profits, and social enterprises based in Suffolk. The fund supports both capital and revenue projects, with a maximum of £10,000 available for capital expenditure. The second year of the Culture Project Fund marks a significant investment in the future of Suffolk's cultural sector and underlines our commitment to investment in Arts and Museums. By supporting projects that focus on our key priorities, we aim to create happier, healthier, and more united communities. This fund is about more than just arts and culture, it's about building resilience, fostering inclusion, and boosting the wellbeing of our residents. We're excited to see the positive impact these projects will have on our county. The culture project fund will support projects that have been designed to reach, engage and inspire people and communities to take part in and enjoy arts and museums. The fund is particularly to support projects that reach some of our most vulnerable people and communities with an application process that is streamlined and accessible. This includes activities designed for those on low incomes, isolated individuals, and marginalised groups, the fund aims to support projects that enhance both mental and physical health, creating resilience and improving overall wellbeing through inclusive and accessible activities. Furthermore, the fund aims to strengthen Suffolk's economy by supporting projects that enhance skills development, promote social enterprises, and attract visitors. By focusing on these areas, the Council seeks to foster a thriving cultural sector that contributes to the county's growth. For information on what was funded in 2025.26 see [Culture project fund - Suffolk County Council](#)

Key Dates:

Fund opens for applications: 15 September 2025

Medium and Large grant applications deadline: 28 November 2025

Medium and Large grants awarded by: End February 2026

Small grant presentations: Announced end of March 2026

Suffolk County Council encourages all eligible organisations to apply. For more information or to apply, please visit www.suffolk.gov.uk/cultureprojectfund or contact the Arts & Museum Team at PH&C Culture Project Fund cultureprojectfund@suffolk.gov.uk

Saving Suffolk £39.4 million a year & enhancing local services – One Suffolk plan revealed

Millions of pounds of public money would be saved and reinvested in frontline services and benefits for the whole of Suffolk, if the Government backs a new plan published on Monday 8 September. The ambitious proposal will see all of Suffolk's six councils abolished and replaced with one new unitary council - which would deliver both local and county-wide services. The One Suffolk business case demonstrates that a single unitary for Suffolk will save £78.2 million after the first five years, while three councils would cost an eye-watering £145.3 million more than the current two-tier system. After the first five years, one council would save £39.4 million a year, 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 generic national modelling. One Suffolk would have the capacity to create real improvements to council services which would benefit everyone, including:

- Improved financial resilience, enabling the unitary council to free up resources for frontline services and keep council tax as low as possible.
- Harmonising Council Tax to the lowest level across Suffolk. 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 £40m 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.
- A proactive and revitalised highways service that says 'yes' more - acting swiftly, communicating clearly and delivering more.
- Creating a unified planning framework that delivers greater consistency, efficiency, and strategic alignment across Suffolk, paired with local planning committees so decisions are made close to home.
- Leveraging technology and innovation to create a modern council prepared for future challenges.
- 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.

I am certain that One Suffolk will deliver the greatest possible savings and the greatest improvement to services of any of the proposals put to government. It will save a net £39.4m each year, which, amongst other things, will enable the new council to establish a new locality model backed by 16 locality teams, empower towns and parish councils that want to do more to take on funding and responsibilities, and deliver initiatives like a new deal for Market Towns and Ipswich which is backed by a £40m capital investment pot and a full review of car parking and markets conducted hand-in-hand with business. When we go through a process like this and tell residents it will save money, it is only fair they feel that benefit on day one of the new council. That is why we back harmonising Council Tax to the lowest level in Suffolk. Currently this would see everyone in Suffolk have their bills reduced, apart from in Mid Suffolk where bills would be frozen at the same level. We are very clear that this would be a brand-new council with a new culture and a new relationship with residents, businesses, community and voluntary organisations and town and parish councils. Too often our existing councils, both county and district or borough, start from a position of no. We've heard this loud and clear and have built the One Suffolk proposal around enabling what people want to see locally and giving them access to their local council. I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their engagement with the One Suffolk campaign. We spoke directly to residents, members of the business community, voluntary, community, faith and social enterprises, parish and town councils, and political stakeholders and other key influencers. Together we have created a plan for Suffolk that we can all proudly stand behind. One Suffolk was developed by Suffolk County Council in response to Government's call to reorganise local government across the country and move away from the current two-tier system that has been in place since 1974. Under the One Suffolk proposal is the creation of a brand-new organisation with new councillors, innovative service delivery methods, and streamlined local communications and accountability. This isn't just a continuation or expansion of the existing structure. One Suffolk will forge new relationships with town and parish councils, businesses, voluntary groups, and public sector organisations. The alternative proposal from the districts and borough councils, to split Suffolk into three arbitrary council areas, could put key services such as social care at serious risk. It would also cost many millions to set up. 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 One Suffolk campaign engaged communities from across Suffolk, with 8,189 responses to our Residents' Survey. This made it the largest survey response rate for the county council in the past decade.

300th No Cold Calling Zone launched during Trusted Trader Week

The new zone was created following an incident where a doorstep caller approached a resident offering to clean her driveway for £400. The men then pressured her into making cash withdrawals, escorting her to a local bank where they helped her withdraw two sums of money totalling £400. The driveway was only partially cleaned and dirt was deliberately sprayed over her property and vehicles. The launch of this milestone zone takes place during Trusted Trader Week, which highlights the work Suffolk Trading Standards does to protect residents from rogue traders and promote vetted, reliable businesses through the Suffolk Trusted Trader scheme. Doorstep cold callers can often turn out to be unscrupulous people who prey on the elderly and vulnerable in their homes, the very place where they should feel safest. No Cold Calling Zones help deter such behaviour by making it clear that residents in that zone will not deal with traders who knock at their door uninvited. I applaud the hard work of the community, councillors, police and Trading Standards in bringing this milestone zone into place. These schemes are proven to have a deterrent effect, and I am proud that Suffolk now has 300 in operation. I urge residents that are looking to have work undertaken in their home to get quotes from two or three traders. Ask friends and family for recommendations of traders who have carried out work for them. You can also check Suffolk Trusted Trader for traders that have been vetted and approved by us. A 'No Cold Calling Zone' is a nominated area where residents collectively state they do not want uninvited traders calling at their homes. Zones are established in response to incidents of doorstep crime, distraction burglary, or where there is a community more vulnerable to such practices. Residents in a nominated area are consulted and, with their agreement, receive an information pack, door sticker, and street signage to reinforce the message. Since the first zone was launched in Ipswich in 2009, more than 14,300 properties across Suffolk are now covered. Anyone wishing to nominate their road can visit the 'No Cold Calling' page on the [Suffolk County Council website](#).

Don't Go It Alone: Join Your Local Stop Smoking Group This Stoptober

Feel Good Suffolk is running a series of local support groups to help people stop smoking with expert guidance and, most importantly, the encouragement of others on the same journey. We all know quitting smoking is tough. But it doesn't have to be something you do on your own. Sharing the experience with others, talking honestly about the challenges, and celebrating milestones together can make all the difference. Research shows that staying smoke-free for 28 days ensures you are up to five times more likely to quit for good. Stopping smoking means more energy, fresher skin, easier breathing – and more money in your pocket for the things you enjoy. Each group, led by trained stop smoking advisors, runs for six weeks and offers:

- Free stop smoking products such as Nicotine Replacement Therapies and vapes.
- Practical tips and strategies to beat cravings
- Help with stress and coping mechanisms
- Advice on stop smoking products and treatments
- A supportive space to share experiences and keep each other motivated

On top of the group sessions, one-to-one support is also available for those who prefer a more personalised approach. Feel Good Suffolk is committed to helping everyone find a method that works for them, ensuring that quitting smoking is a positive and successful experience. Feel Good Suffolk website.

For more information and to sign up for a group stop smoking programme, visit www.feelgoodsuffolk.co.uk/Stoptober

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