

## **Report for Lavenham PC, 3.12.25 by Robert Lindsay, County Councillor**

### **Only a few weeks to have your say on new councils for Suffolk**

On 19<sup>th</sup> November, the government launched its consultation on the two proposals submitted for council reorganisation in Suffolk.

Suffolk County Council is proposing one council for the whole county, and the districts and borough submitted a business case proposing three councils, Western Suffolk, Central and Eastern, and Ipswich and Southern Suffolk.

Central government will be making the decision on what model will go ahead some time next year, so the consultation is a chance to influence their decision.

It closes 11<sup>th</sup> January 2026, a relatively short time for Suffolk residents to express their preferences. You can find the consultation here:

<https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation/norfolk-suffolk/>

If you want to read through the business cases proposed for the changes, there are links to them on the consultation page above, or they can also be found here:

Three Councils for Suffolk:

<https://threecouncilsforsuffolk.org/wp-content/uploads/Three-Councils-For-Suffolk-Case-for-Change-1.pdf>

One Suffolk:

<https://onesuffolkcouncil.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/HI-RES-WEB-FINAL-LGR-BUSINESS-CASE-Compressed.pdf>

In terms of councillor numbers, the Conservatives who run Suffolk County are advocating that the current 350 odd councillors across Suffolk comes down to 140, while the districts are talking about a less drastic reduction to about 200.

Next May 2026 the County council elections (that were postponed from last year) are planned to be held. At the same time there will be a poll to elect a newly created Mayor of Norfolk and Suffolk. Whoever is elected will take office straight away. All five major political parties (bar, so far, Reform) have now chosen a candidate.

May 2027 – yet another election for “shadow” unitary councillors who will have a year to select a leader and a cabinet, find a headquarters, recruit staff etc before...

May 2028 – County Council and Districts are dissolved and the new unitaries start functioning.

## **New Project Celebrating Disability**

Suffolk Archives has received a grant of £139,107 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to deliver a new project called Beyond Labels: Celebrating Disability which aims to shine a light on the lives achievements and challenges of people with disabilities in Suffolk. Beyond Labels will collect and preserve personal stories - as well as the histories of organisations, schools, and charities that support disabled people - to create a record that celebrates disability while sparking conversations about inclusion, accessibility, and equality.

There will be a free public exhibition at The Hold in Ipswich which will run from February to May 2026 to celebrate the stories collected through the project and encourage greater awareness and empathy across Suffolk.