A Report for Little Cornard Parish Council Meeting on 16th September 2025
From James Finch – County Councillor for the Stour Valley

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➢ Smarter, Simpler Better – ONE Suffolk

What is happening ? The Government is asking councils in Suffolk to simplify. There are currently six councils, leading to confusion, waste and duplication. Instead, Suffolk County Council is proposing a new single council which will be responsible for both county wide and local services.

- New District and Borough Council boundary proposals mean 3 councils and 3 sets of salaries
- District and borough councils' new boundary proposals criticised as costly and unworkable
- Creating 3 new councils in Suffolk would lead to increased costs and carry safeguarding risks – more cost to set up, a post code lottery for essential services.

Therefore, One New Unitary Council for Suffolk is the best for the county overall. One Suffolk would replace all of the current county, district and borough councils resulting in a better use of public money.

What would change ? A single Council means:

- ✓ Simpler and Better services which are easier to contact and better co-ordinated
- ✓ Clear accountability, no more confusion about who does what
- ✓ Safer, more joined up services
- ✓ Stronger local voice for communities
- ✓ Better leadership for Suffolk
- ✓ Greater value for money
- ✓ Keeping Council Tax as low as possible.

➢ From Parish Pews to Pixels

More than 400 years of the county's rich historical heritage is now at your fingertips. Millions of records dating back to 1538 are now available online in Suffolk for the first time, with more additional local-interest records to follow.

Records digitised include full-colour, high-quality digital images of parish registers from across the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. They include key historical moments like the 1776 baptism of the artist John Constable and the 1846 burial of abolitionist Thomas Clarkson.

Until now, these baptism, marriage, confirmation, and burial records were only available on microfiche or in-person. Access will be free at The Hold in Ipswich – the home of Suffolk Archives and at Suffolk Community Libraries. Viewing from home will require an Ancestry subscription. Royalties will be used to support archive services.

The project has helped preserve fragile historic documents by reducing wear and tear. Suffolk Archives were also able to carry out conservation checks during the scanning process.

This project is a fantastic step forward in making Suffolk's rich history more accessible. Whether you're overseas, have mobility challenges, or simply prefer to research from home, these records are now just a click away.

➢ Guide published to support developers in Suffolk

Suffolk County Council has updated its "**Developers Guide to Infrastructure Contributions in Suffolk**", following a consultation over the summer. It has been updated and redesigned in line with the feedback and takes account of legislative and policy changes. The guide is there to support developers appreciate the myriad ways which a new project will affect local communities and its financial implications on local authorities.

The guide sets out what developers should consider, including financial contributions, to help reduce the impact of new projects on communities and the county council. For example, new housing would have a knock-on effect on things like the local environment, education, waste services, local amenities, highways, and flooding, and therefore cost implications for local authorities. The "Developers Guide to Infrastructure Contributions in Suffolk" can be found on the Suffolk County Council website.

➢ New and Improved bus services coming to Suffolk this month

Further to my article last month, these routes have all been suggested by the community through the council's "scheme on a page" initiative and have been funded through the 2025/26 Local Authority Bus Grant from Department for Transport.

These are the new local routes and changes of Bus numbers launched as from 31st August 2025

Operator	Number	Route	Change	Commencing
Chambers	Was 90, 91, now 50	(Ipswich -) Hadleigh - Sudbury	New Sunday Sudbury – Ipswich service plus additional Sudbury – Hadleigh Mon-Sat journeys	31/8/25
Chambers	Was 84, 753, 784, now 43/X43	Bury St Edmunds – Sicklesmere – Lavenham – Acton - Sudbury – Great Cornard - Leavenheath – Stoke-by-Nayland – Nayland - Colchester	New Sunday and evening journeys for Sudbury – Colchester section. Daytime Mon-Sat services retimed to give better frequency for Stoke By Nayland and Leavenheath. All journeys via West Suffolk and Colchester hospitals.	31/8/25
Chambers	49	Acton Lane (near Health Centre) – Tesco – Chaucer Avenue bus gate – Town Centre	New Sudbury town service	1/9/25
Chambers	Was 375, now 45	Sudbury - Alpheton - Shimpling - Bury St Edmunds	Upgrade from Weds only to run Mon-Sat, route change to cover West Suffolk Hospital	1/9/25

➢ Council remains opposed to Norwich Tilbury pylon project, as application is submitted

Primarily, the county council maintains that offshore and undergrounding solutions should be priorities for the scheme, not 114 miles of pylons cutting through countryside, sensitive landscapes and communities in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex.

Previously, SCC has formally and strongly requested that National Grid pauses the Norwich to Tilbury proposals, to allow for effective consideration of offshore alternatives.

When the full details of National Grid's application are published next month, we hope they reflect many of the concerns raised by us, and local communities, from consultations and discussions.

The application for the Development Consent Order - essentially planning permission - was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) by National Grid on Friday 29 August.

PINS has 28 days to determine whether or not to accept the application. Should it be accepted, full details of the project will then be published, with the six-month Examination period likely to begin in early 2026. If consent was then granted, construction could begin in 2027.

➢ Virtual Fostering and Adoption Sessions for the Stour Valley

Fostering is a flexible role with options for short term care from a weekend a month to longer term opportunities, all providing life-changing support for local children. If you want to find out more about what it's like to foster or adopt with us, please call a member of the team on 01473 264800

My Priorities

Education - Supporting Vulnerable People - Jobs and Growth - Localism and the Stour Valley - Building on Suffolk's Strength all underpinned by strong financial management and fair council tax.