

June 2026 report for SCC Martlesham Division

SCC decides to continue challenge of Government's reorganisation

Suffolk County Council's cabinet has agreed to pursue legal action against the Government following a meeting of its cabinet on Monday June 29.

This comes after correspondence between Suffolk County Council and the government was published for the first time last week – revealing that the Secretary of State rejected advice from civil servants when he chose the three unitary option for Suffolk.

Suffolk County Council argues that the Secretary of State departed from his officials' advice, exceeded his statutory powers and failed to apply the Government's own published criteria when making the decision.

The Government's letter states:

"We consider the 1 unitary to be the strongest proposal for Suffolk against the criteria. The single unitary proposal meets all the criteria, and does so more strongly than the 3 unitary proposal in relation to its geography, financial resilience, and service delivery. The 3 unitary proposal meets the criteria though it is complicated by a significant boundary change request modification."

In the cabinet meeting, councillors heard that the legal challenge is intended to halt Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Suffolk entirely, and that the reorganisation could cost around £40 million while creating significant disruption to public services.

Deciding to continue with a judicial review is not an attempt to replace the Government's preferred three-unitary model with a single authority, but to ensure decisions of this scale are made lawfully, transparently and in accordance with the Government's own published process.

Suffolk unites to fight fraud

Suffolk Constabulary and Suffolk Trading Standards have joined forces with businesses and community interest groups from across the county to launch Suffolk Against Fraud.

Being scammed or targeted by fraud can have a devastating impact on vulnerable people in Suffolk. It can also destroy small businesses. This partnership sees statutory organisations, local businesses, charities and community groups working together to support residents and businesses in Suffolk to help protect them from fraud.

As well as bringing together investigative resource, expertise and intelligence to tackle and combat fraud, Suffolk Against Fraud will see joined up campaigns and media messaging and improved quality of victim support.

Fraud poses a significant threat to the people, prosperity, and security of the residents of Suffolk. It is by far the most common crime and now accounts for over 40% of all offences in the County.

Anyone who believes they may have been targeted is encouraged to report it to Report Fraud at www.reportfraud.police.uk or by calling 0300 123 2040. If money has already been transferred, they should contact their bank immediately.

SCC takes precautionary action following school fire

Suffolk County Council has announced an immediate programme of precautionary measures following a fire at Sidegate Primary School in Ipswich on June 24.

While investigations remain at an early stage, initial discussions with Suffolk Fire and Rescue indicate that the fire may be linked to solar panels installed on the roof of one of the school buildings. These solar panels were installed by the council in 2012 as part of a wider programme.

In response to this incident and following two other fires in school buildings where solar panels have been identified as a potential factor, the council has taken the decision to temporarily switch off all solar panel systems installed in identified schools between 2011 and 2016. This is part of a county-wide risk mitigation programme.

Currently there is no firm evidence that the three school fires were caused by the same issue and there is no conclusive evidence linking the fires. However, the involvement of solar panels in each case have prompted this precautionary action.

Sarah-Jane Smedmor, Executive Director of Children and Young People at Suffolk County Council, said:

“This move is about ensuring that our children and young people and staff across schools remain safe.

“We do not specifically know what caused the fires. However, we cannot take the risk that those incidents were unrelated or coincidental – we must act with precaution to eliminate any potential fire risks.”

Engineers will visit the 80 schools who are part of the council programme in the next two weeks to isolate the solar panel systems. The work is expected to be completed without disruption to the day-to-day operation of schools.

This decision has been taken in partnership with Suffolk Fire and Rescue, Concertus, DPL (electrical contractor) and Suffolk County Council while further investigation work continues.

New events lined up for much-loved Brecks Outdoor Festival

[A festival of outdoor activities](#) returns for a third year to celebrate the Brecks, taking place from 8 to 23 August 2026, with regular favourites and some new events.

60 events, many of which will be free, will take place over the fortnight recognising the collaboration of 27 partner organisations in the Brecks Landscape Partnership.

The Brecks is an invaluable part of the UK's landscape, covering nearly 400 square miles:

- Over 40% of the landscape is covered by conservation areas
- Nearly 13,000 species have been recorded in the area
- 28% of the UK's rarest species are found there
- It contains Thetford Forest and Kings Forest, making the largest lowland forest in the UK
- It is home to eight registered parks and gardens, 157 scheduled monuments and over 1,000 listed buildings

Now a staple feature of the local calendar, a number of popular events will return, including:

- **Elveden Estate tour and meal** - a behind-the-scenes tour and estate-grown meal
- **River Discovery Day** - family river dipping activities, themed games and crafts on Thetford Riverside and free guided paddleboarding along the Little Ouse
- **The Nine Stiles Walk** - a guided walk of the ancient 'Beating the Bounds' route, around the town of Brandon

New events for 2026 include:

- **Saints, Sites, and Sights** - a long-distance walk following the Little Ouse trail from Brandon to Thetford
- **Groove & Meditation** - a wellbeing guided walk including elements of music and dance
- **Archaeology for Kids** - a day-long workshop at West Stow Country Park
- **Eclipse Effect Edventure** - a special night walk to coincide with the summer solar eclipse
- **Help Create a Video Game** – a drop-in art activity, encouraging children to develop nature-inspired artwork for a new Brecks video game

Other events will include guided walks, creative activities, outdoor yoga, family activities and trails, outdoor swimming and more.

A small partnership delivery team hosted by Suffolk County Council has facilitated successful management of the project, bringing together more than 60 local, regional and national groups, as well as many volunteers - all with a central vision and plan.

The festival runs from 8 to 23 August 2026, the full programme of events can be found at www.brecks.org

Blast off for an out-of-this-world adventure to the moon

The chance to touch a real moon rock, marvel at a giant inflatable solar system, and explore Suffolk's space stories awaits adventurers to Suffolk Archives' free, family friendly summer exhibition.

The Moon: Meet Our Nearest Neighbour, a touring exhibition from Bespoke Scientific, touches down at The Hold Ipswich from 26 June to 19 September. Discover the science and mythology of the moon. Re-live historic moments in lunar discovery, including how the space race unfolded and the lead up to the 1969 moon landing. Explore how the moon influences our natural environment from tides and seas to nighttime animals.

Learn about Alice Grace Cook, a pioneering female astronomer from Stowmarket. Search for the truth behind the mystery of the Rendlesham UFO. Look to the sky with local astronomical groups to understand how you can safely observe its wonders closer to home. There are loads happening alongside the exhibition.

Blast off with the pop-up Wonder Dome Planetarium in August. Fully immersive shows that'll take you on a thrilling trip through the cosmos and its many wonders - from the birth of planets to the death of stars.

Book on to Suffolk Archives' space-themed craft sessions, including relaxed options; and look out for free craft pop-ups in Suffolk Libraries. The Hold also has star-studded films for little ones with WALL-E and E.T. and a fun trail.

Enjoy a step-free Stars of Science walk highlighting Ipswich's contributions to science and exploration. There are also talks about Suffolk archaeologist Basil Brown's work in astronomy and an evening with Space East about technological developments happening here in Suffolk.

Find out more and book tickets: www.suffolkarchives.co.uk