

# Parish Report – April 2026

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The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government has confirmed that Suffolk will move to **three unitary councils**. These new authorities will replace the current six councils, with the three new unitary councils covering western Suffolk, central and eastern Suffolk, and Ipswich and southern Suffolk.

The new councils will come into operation in April 2028. Ahead of this, elections scheduled for next year will establish three shadow authorities responsible for guiding, shaping and overseeing the transition within their respective geography.

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## ‘Shape the future of your community’ – Councils to provide funding for Neighbourhood Plans

Communities are being encouraged to shape the future of their area by creating a Neighbourhood Plan – after Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils stepped in with funding to support them.

A Neighbourhood Plan is written by the local community to help ensure that the right types of development are built in the right place. They carry legal weight when planning applications are decided.

Until last year, groups developing a plan could access financial and technical support from the government through an organisation called Locality, with basic grant payments of £10,000.

The government, however, withdrew this in June 2025.

Now Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have agreed alternative funding of up to £20,000 to support groups prepare Neighbourhood Plans which help to meet housing need in the area.

The grants will support plans which seek to allocate sites for housing development, that make an agreed contribution to meeting the district-wide housing needs.

There are already 50 adopted Neighbourhood Plans in Babergh and Mid Suffolk, with others in preparation or being considered.

They have statutory weight and status in the planning process – and are used to help guide and decide planning applications in conjunction with the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan, national planning policies and any other material considerations.

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## Future of Glass, Textile and Paper Recycling Banks

Summary of Changes by Material

### Glass Banks

- In line with Government requirements, glass recycling will be collected at the kerbside using blue/blue lidded bins, reducing reliance on glass banks.
- **Glass banks will remain in place until the end of the current contract – May 2027 with usage monitored by Waste Management Officers and contractors. If there is nominal or zero use, then the banks may be removed.**
- Site hosts will be notified in advance of any removals.
- If site hosts prefer the bank be removed sooner, they can contact the waste team directly.
- No further recycling credit payments made **after April 2026**.

### Paper Banks (Blue Wheeled Bins)

- Paper/card will be collected separately at the kerbside under the new system.
  - Anticipate **removing any remaining paper banks by September 2026**, once the new household recycling system is fully operational.
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- Waste Management Officers will contact all paper bank hosts with further details.
- Recycling credit payments **end April 2026**.

### Textile Banks

- Textile banks will **remain onsite**.
- Collections will continue to be managed entirely by third party contractors.
- Recycling credit payments **end April 2026**.

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### Funding and Host Payments

- Payments for hosting glass, paper and textile banks, previously funded by Suffolk County Council, **will end as part of the recycling system changes**.
- **To support the transition, the Suffolk Waste Partnership has agreed to continue funding for two additional years (2026/27 and 2027/28).**
- **Beneficiaries will receive one final lump-sum payment which is based on the average of the previous three years' payments for paper, glass and textiles. The lumpsum payment will be made to the host organisation in April 2026.**
- This payment **covers the period February 2026 – January 2028**.
- The lumpsum arrangement applies to glass, paper and textile banks.

### Businesses and Other Non-Domestic Users

Some businesses and community organisations (e.g. pubs, village halls, community centres) currently using banks to dispose of their own waste will need to **arrange an alternative disposal method such as a business waste collection service**.

### Contact and Further Information

For enquiries relating to recycling credit changes or future arrangements for the banks, contact:

[laura.sewell@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:laura.sewell@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk)

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### Former council offices sold

Mid Suffolk District Council has announced the sale of the remainder of its former office site in Needham Market to Hatch Homes

This deal will see the completion of the site's regeneration, as well as realising funds for reinvestment into council housing.

The transformation of the first part of the site was successfully completed by the council and created 32 homes - including affordable housing - as well as a new retail unit, which the Co-op moved into in 2023.

The second phase of the project is due to include a further 48 homes for open market and the redevelopment of grade II listed Hurstlea House into apartments, with Hatch Homes now due to deliver the project in line with current planning consent.

Work is expected to begin on site during March, with completion expected by 2029.

