

Redacted document Armed Forces Day Bid 2025 from Suffolk County Council

Suffolk potentially bidding for a town to be considered as the host venue of a National Armed Forces Day has been mentioned to and at the Suffolk Armed Forces Covenant Board over the last 18 months or so.

A research paper was created following engagement with Scarborough Borough Council who delivered the 2022 National Armed Forces Day. They had to create a Bid Team, underwrite a £600,000 event budget and once they were awarded the event, had to create an Event Management Team of 3 people. This research paper was shared with the Suffolk Armed Forces Covenant Board and discussed. Upon recognising the resources required, the Board did not seek to approach local authorities in Suffolk to consider a future event bid.

Upon returning from the Christmas break, both East Suffolk Council and now Lowestoft Town Council's have emailed Suffolk County Council Armed Forces Lead enquiring as to whether 'Suffolk' (via the Suffolk Chief Officers Leadership Team (SCOLT)) could potentially bid to the Ministry of Defence for Lowestoft to be considered as the National Armed Forces Day host in 2025.

The future of the National Armed Forces Day event is currently under review by the Ministry of Defence and Secretary of State and the outcome of which can not be prejudged. Therefore as we do not know whether there will be an event to bid for, engaging SCOLT about a potential bid would be entirely speculative. On this speculation basis, it's unlikely to get on their agenda especially considering the more pressing priorities of local government.

Upon discussion with Suffolk County Council Public Health and Communities Senior Management, any approach to SCOLT would need to be made by East Suffolk Council, as we are led by the view of the Armed Forces Covenant Board, that we do not believe there is county support for a bid of this nature. With the challenges placed on local government finances currently, and knowing the costs experienced by not only Scarborough who had to underwrite £600,000 for their event in 2022 but also more recently Cornwall County Council who had to find £800,000 for their event in Falmouth in 2023, it is highly unlikely that Suffolk County Council would be able to support a bid.

Response from ESC representatives:

I have received direction from East Suffolk Councils Corporate Leadership Team, regarding your proposal to bid for hosting the 2025 National Armed Forces Day Event.

East Suffolk Council feel it would get involved if Suffolk County Council, and all other councils within Suffolk, were collectively supportive of the idea.