



Full Council

Members are invited to a **Meeting of the Full Council** to be held in the Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House, Melton, on **Wednesday, 27 March 2024 at 6.30pm.**

This meeting will be broadcast to the public via the East Suffolk YouTube Channel at <https://youtube.com/live/T2hk02Yzl6o?feature=share>.

Members:

All Councillors

An Agenda is set out below.

Part One – Open to the Public

Pages

- 1 Apologies for Absence**
To receive apologies for absence, if any.
- 2 Declarations of Interest**
Members and Officers are invited to make any declarations of interests, and the nature of that interest, that they may have in relation to items on the Agenda and are also reminded to make any declarations at any stage during the Meeting if it becomes apparent that this may be required when a particular item or issue is considered.
- 3 Minutes** **1 - 19**
To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2024.
- 4 Announcements**
To receive any announcements from the Chair, the Leader of the Council, members of the Cabinet, or the Chief Executive, in accordance with paragraph 28.2 of the Council Procedure Rules.

5 Questions from the Public

The following questions have been submitted by the public in pursuance of paragraph 29.1 of the Council Procedure Rules:

a) Question from Michael Warren to Councillor Tom Daly, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Energy and Climate Change

A Council meeting was held on Wednesday 24th July 2019 during which a climate emergency was declared. Since that time nearly five years have passed, but from my observations of our environment in Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire, little or nothing has changed. What, in our surroundings, would we have to observe to conclude that there was/is no emergency, and that the declaration can be withdrawn?

b) Question from Kate Stott (Member of Use Your Voice Lowestoft) to Councillor Caroline Topping, Leader of the Council

In light of the recent decision by East Suffolk Council to halt work on the Lowestoft tidal barrier, could the Council provide an update on how it sees this project being completed and by when?

In the meantime, how will ESC now respond to planning applications for new developments in areas at risk of flooding due to the lack of the barrier? In particular, given that potential purchasers are likely to be able to secure neither insurance nor mortgages for new properties in these areas.

Given the threat to future jobs and businesses in Lowestoft, what cost-benefit analysis has been done as regards not investing in a tidal barrier?

6 Questions from Members

The following question from Members has been submitted in pursuance of paragraph 29.4 of the Council Procedure Rules:

Question from Councillor Amanda Folley to Councillor Toby Hammond, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development and Transport

As you will be aware, a parking review has recently been completed for Felixstowe. As we all appreciate, tourism is an important source of income for the town, and we want to encourage as many visitors to come here as possible. Is it now the intention of this Council to introduce parking charges along the length of Sea Road, and if that is so, what provision will we make for long-term parking around the town as we need to support the local economy?

7 Petitions

No petitions have been received as provided by paragraph 30.1 of the Council Procedure Rules.

8 Notices of Motion

The following Motion has been submitted in pursuance of paragraph 31.1 Council Procedure Rules:

Motion from Councillor Peter Byatt, to be seconded by Councillor Mike Deacon

This Council notes that:

1. It declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and a Biodiversity and Ecological Emergency in February 2024;
2. The Strategic Plan, Our Direction, includes the Environment as one of only four themes, promising several active programmes that should deliver positive climate, nature and environmental impact;
3. The budget confirmed vast sums of taxpayer money will be allocated to meet our aims, including the bulk of a new Reserve, The Strategic Plan Reserve, at £6 million and
4. A number of other Councils at town, District and County level in the UK that have also declared a Climate Emergency and Biodiversity Emergency have created new Committees to give this topic the weight and importance it deserves.

This Council resolves to:

1. Consider the establishment of a new Committee of Full Council, the Environment Committee, that would replace the Environmental Task Group. This Committee would advise Cabinet and Full Council on the policies, actions and resources required to deliver on our climate change and environmental ambitions and to provide progress on achieving agreed targets and outcomes that will include;
 - Continuing our commitment to net zero by 2030;
 - Supporting sustainable transport;
 - Restoring ecosystems and biodiversity;
 - Supporting, promoting and implementing green tech;
 - Working in partnership to manage coastal adaptation and resilience;
 - Focusing on reduction, re-use and recycling of materials;
 - Encouraging food self-sufficiency and
 - Preserving and maintaining the District's beauty and heritage.
2. Request that the Constitution Review Working Group works out the detail of the Environment Committee, to be agreed by Full Council, such as its terms of reference, membership, how often it meets etc.

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| 9 | Review of East Suffolk's Model District Council on 9 February 2024, and recommendations to establish a permanent East Suffolk Youth Council ES/1902 Report of the Chair of the Council. | 20 - 64 |
| 10 | Cabinet Members' Report and Outside Bodies Representatives' Reports to Council ES/1904 Report of the Leader of the Council. | 65 - 85 |

There are no Exempt or Confidential items for this Agenda.

Close



Chris Bally, Chief Executive

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democraticservices@eastsoffolk.gov.uk

Questions from the public at Full Council meetings

Any resident of East Suffolk who is listed on the electoral register may ask questions to the Chair of the Council, the Leader of the Council, members of the Cabinet, or the Chair or Vice-Chair of any committee or sub-committee of the Council, at any ordinary meeting of the Full Council (this excludes the Council's annual meeting or any extraordinary meetings of the Full Council).

Questions must be submitted in writing or by email to the Proper Officer no later than midday ten working days before the date of the meeting. Each question must give the name and address of the questioner and must name the member of the Council to whom it is to be put. The scope of questions that can be considered can be found in the Council Procedure Rules set out in Part 3 of the [East Suffolk Council Constitution](#).

Although the deadline has passed for questions to be submitted for this meeting of the Full Council, you are able to submit questions for a future meeting. Details on the deadlines for submitting questions to all of the Council's scheduled meetings can be found [on our website](#).

Filming, Videoing, Photography and Audio Recording at Council Meetings

The Council, members of the public and press may record / film / photograph or broadcast this meeting when the public and press are not lawfully excluded.

The Council cannot guarantee public seating areas will not be filmed or recorded. By entering the Conference Room and sitting in the public seating area, those present will be deemed to have consented to the possible use of filmed images and sound recordings. If you do not wish to be recorded, please speak to a member of the Democratic Services team at the earliest opportunity.



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Minutes of a Meeting of the **Full Council** held in the Conference Room, Riverside,
Lowestoft on **Wednesday, 21 February 2024 at 6:30 PM**

Members present:

Councillor Paul Ashdown, Councillor Paul Ashton, Councillor Edward Back, Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Seamus Bennett, Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Jan Candy, Councillor Jenny Ceresa, Councillor Dan Clery, Councillor Janet Craig, Councillor Tom Daly, Councillor Mike Deacon, Councillor Deborah Dean, Councillor Julia Ewart, Councillor John Fisher, Councillor Amanda Folley, Councillor Tess Gandy, Councillor Andree Gee, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor Katie Graham, Councillor Alan Green, Councillor Toby Hammond, Councillor Colin Hedgley, Councillor Mark Jepson, Councillor Beth Keys-Holloway, Councillor Vince Langdon-Morris, Councillor Geoff Lynch, Councillor Stephen Molyneux, Councillor Mike Ninnmey, Councillor Sally Noble, Councillor Mark Packard, Councillor Graham Parker, Councillor Keith Patience, Councillor Malcolm Pitchers, Councillor Sarah Plummer, Councillor Lee Reeves, Councillor Craig Rivett, Councillor Keith Robinson, Councillor Sheryl Rumble, Councillor Myles Scrancher, Councillor Rachel Smith-Lyte, Councillor Rosie Smithson, Councillor Anthony Specca, Councillor Jamie Starling, Councillor Ed Thompson, Councillor Caroline Topping, Councillor Geoff Wakeling, Councillor Sarah Whitelock, Councillor Tim Wilson, Councillor Kay Yule

Officers present: Chris Bally (Chief Executive), Chris Bing (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Kate Blakemore (Strategic Director), Katy Cassidy (Democratic Services Officer (Regulatory)), Heather Fisk (Head of Housing), Lorraine Fitch (Democratic Services Manager), Phil Harris (Strategic Communications and Marketing Manager), Andy Jarvis (Strategic Director), Sue Meeken (Political Group Support Officer (Labour)), Agnes Ogundiran (Conservative Political Group Support Officer), Philip Ridley (Head of Planning and Coastal Management), Isabel Rolfe (Political Group Support Officer (GLI)), Lorraine Rogers (Chief Finance Officer), Alli Stone (Democratic Services Officer), Julian Sturman (Specialist Accountant – Capital and Treasury Management), Amber Welham (Finance Business Partner - Housing)

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lawson, Mallinder, Grey and Robinson

2 Declarations of Interest

The Monitoring Officer had granted dispensations to the nine members of the Council who were also members of Suffolk County Council (SCC), and in receipt of allowances from SCC, so they could participate and vote in the budget setting items of business.

3 Minutes

On the proposition of the Deacon, seconded by Councillor Pitchers, it was by a unanimous vote

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2024 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to amendment.

4 Announcements

Chair's Announcements

The Chair announced the sad passing of former Councillor Gordon Laing who passed away on 28 January 2024, at the age of 93. Councillor Laing was a member of both Suffolk Coastal District Council and Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council from 1983 to 2011 and served as the Chairman of Suffolk Coastal District Council in 1992.

Councillor Laing's funeral was due to be held at the Seven Hills Crematorium on Monday 26 February at 2.15pm, with a wake being held at the Ipswich Golf Club, Purdis Heath, after the service.

Councillor Deacon was invited to say a few words and spoke fondly of the well-respected former Councillor who would be sadly missed by his friends and family.

The Chair updated on the recent Model District Council event on 9 February 2024. The event was amazing, the Chair detailed the day and how it felt like he was Chairing a 'real' Full Council meeting. The young people made tremendous speeches in the Chamber during the meeting. A motion was brought forward and passed unanimously to establish a Youth Council and the Chair was looking forward to working further on developing the motion.

Positive feedback was received, notably from Castle East School who stated they rarely participated in events and felt that the day could not have gone better for the students who attended.

The Chair advised he had attended the following events:

The launch of Cancer Support Suffolk on 1 February

The Suffolk Punch Trust Royal Visit on 16 February

Vice Chair

The Vice Chair Councillor Fisher attended the Mayor of Ipswich's charity quiz evening on 15 February.

Leader's Announcements

The Leader had no announcements to make.

Members of the Cabinet

Councillor Smith-Lyte responded to Councillor Mallinder's question at the previous Full Council meeting, regarding waste collection. Councillor Smith-Lyte updated that funding for curb side collection for small electricals would be released shortly. Full details will be released in due course. Exploration was ongoing regarding how to keep electrical equipment in use for as long as possible.

Councillor Smith-Lyte concluded to state she would email Councillor Mallinder the information.

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive had no announcements to make.

5 Questions from the Public

No questions had been submitted by the electorate as provided by paragraph 29/1 of the Council Procedure Rules.

6 Questions from Members

The following questions from Members were submitted in pursuance of paragraph 29.4 of the Council Procedure Rules:

Question from Councillor Peter Byatt to Councillor Caroline Topping, Leader of the Council

What is the view of this Administration on the continuous failings of Suffolk County Council's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Service that is detrimentally affecting families in our District?

Response from Councillor Topping, Leader of the Council

'We are deeply concerned about the impact on local families of a system that isn't able to meet the ever rising demand for support with SEN and Disabilities. The Council supports a number of VCFSE organisations who work with families with SEND children and will continue to do so, but it is important that the capacity and capability in statutory support services responsible for SEND provision, such as Suffolk County Council, matches the demand.

As a previous Vice Chair of Children's education scrutiny on Suffolk County Council, I can empathise that despite the increasing rate of diagnosis, central government is just not increasing the funding accordingly. Children are rightly entitled to time with educational psychologists, and an educational health plan, but there simply aren't the resources available to successfully deliver this provision.

As a parent who would not hesitate to fight tooth and nail to make sure that my children had access to the best education possible, I would like to make it clear that my Cabinet and I will do what we can to support affected families, including through our Community Help Hub. I know that in East Suffolk Council, this commitment is shared by every single Councillor and officer, and I welcome any suggestions from across the chamber as to how we can help.'

Supplementary question from Councillor Byatt to Councillor Topping

Would Councillor Topping be willing to speak to other Suffolk Leaders with a view to writing to the government conveying, disappointment that Suffolk County Council had not been adequately funded.

Councillor Topping responded to state that she would email the other District and Borough leaders the next day and ask them to join together to write to government.

Question from Councillor Janet Craig to Councillor Sarah Whitelock, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure & Tourism

As you will be aware, the Government's Household Support Fund and Cost of Livings payments will both be ceasing shortly. What Impact Assessments have been carried out by this Council on the effects this will have on those who have been relying on these?

Response from Councillor Sarah Whitelock, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure & Tourism

The Council is part of both the Suffolk Collaborative Communities Board and its Tackling Poverty Sub Group, both of which have lobbied Government on this issue. The loss of both Household Support Fund and Cost of Living payments at the same time will clearly have a significant impact on households in East Suffolk, particularly at a time when local authorities have had year on year cuts to their budgets and there are no alternative financial resources to fill the gaps in more sustainable, long term support.

The Household Support Fund in Suffolk is paid to the County Council and is used to enable a range of activities including food supplies for food banks, pantries and pop-ups from Saxon House in Ipswich, the Local Welfare Assistance Scheme (LWAS) which provides cash payments to individuals and families in need, vouchers for families eligible for Free School Meals in the school holidays, grant funding for key VCFSE organisations via the Suffolk Community Foundation, and an allocation for District and Borough Housing Teams to support with a range of housing issues, including rent arrears. My fear is that the loss of these payments will put even more families and individuals at increased risk of homelessness, and will certainly contribute to the growing trend in inequality in this country.

We understand that the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) funding which comes via the County Council to ESC and enables a programme of activities and food support across the District during the Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays will continue.

The ESC Community Help Hub currently support many residents to apply for grants from the Suffolk LWAS – which allocated over £4 million during the last twelve months to individuals and families on lower incomes – and the loss of both LWAS and the Cost of Living payments will clearly have a significant impact on our population and increase the gap for many between the money they have and the money they need each month. We have requested data relating to LWAS allocations in East Suffolk over the last 12 months to enable us to assess the potential impact but we know, even without that data, that the loss of these funds is bad news for too many of our residents.

On a positive note our ESC Ease the Squeeze model is focussed on trying to support people to make sustainable changes which mean that they don't have to rely on emergency cash payments i.e. we aim to help people to increase their income (through work, benefits or grants) and reduce their expenditure to reduce the gap between the money they have and the money they need. Our Ease the Squeeze programme also focusses on longer term support like Community Pantries, Uniform Banks, Community Growing Spaces and Cooking on a Budget classes, all of which aim to build skills, reduce expenditure on food and essentials, and increase self-sufficiency in a sustainable way.

The Cabinet will continue to work with Council officers to explore additional support that could be provided to residents in East Suffolk and will work with Suffolk partners through collaborative arrangements like the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders group to try and collectively maximise the support available for local residents through the ongoing cost of living crisis. There are proposed funding increases to Citizens Advice East Suffolk, Disability Advice Service and Disability Advice North East Suffolk within the budget being considered by this Council this evening and these three organisations are key partners for us in terms of supporting our residents, particularly those most likely to be impacted by the withdrawal of this support.

7 Petitions

No petitions had been received as provided by paragraph 30.1 of the Council Procedure Rules.

8 Notices of Motion

The following Motion has been submitted in pursuance of paragraph 31.1 of the Council Procedure Rules:

Declaring a Biodiversity & Ecological Emergency

Proposer: Councillor Rachel Smith-Lyte
Seconder: Councillor Louise Gooch

This Council notes that:

There was political precedent as councils began declaring ecological and biodiversity emergencies as early as Brighton & Hove City Council in 2018, an example subsequently followed by many councils including Bath & North East Somerset Council and Cambridgeshire . Woodbridge Town Council have an established Climate & Ecological Emergency Committee . These declarations have been made across levels of local government by Lib Dem, Labour, Conservative and Coalition administrations.

The government states that ‘Local authorities are perfectly placed to lead by example, working with local communities, landowners and other partners to provide inspiring examples to others through the development of local plans and strategies.’

The Scottish Government’s Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045 states that an ‘emergency response’ is required as ‘a new international consensus is building around the urgent need to act decisively to address the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change together. Just like climate change, the loss of species and degradation of our natural environment is an existential threat to humanity. And just like climate change, the action needed is both urgent and transformative.’

This Council resolves to:

Declare a biodiversity and ecological emergency, and update the East Suffolk Environmental policy accordingly.

Develop a ‘Biodiversity Action Plan’ informed by consultation with residents, community groups, officers and councillors. This plan should be subject to annual review by the Environmental Task Group (ETG) in order to maintain its efficacy.

Lead by example by including targeted and site appropriate wildlife measures in council-owned land, buildings and communal areas, and commit to effective monitoring of biodiversity with resultant measures to be implemented by ESC to inform further action.

Explore supplementing the Greenprint Forum with a youth membership, or a partnership with local under-18 education institutions to allow future business and community leaders to have necessary access to biodiversity and ecology knowledge and resources.

Councillor Smith-Lyte outlined the purpose of the motion and the two interlinked crisis in the rising temperatures being experienced globally and the decline in nature. Councillor Smith-Lyte described biodiversity in more detail and the importance of East Suffolk ensuring that action was taken to protect nature.

Councillor Gooch seconded the motion and added her support, drawing light to the 2019 statistic from the State of Nature report which stated that in the last century 97% of wild meadows had been lost. Councillor Gooch summarised the difference between biodiversity and ecology. The former being the study at three different levels; genetic,

species and ecosystem. The latter being the study of organisms and how they interact with the environment around them.

Councillor Gooch added. 'At East Suffolk Council, we recognize the value of having, preserving and restoring a healthy biodiversity sphere in respect of the value to humans, in terms of the health, economic, social and educational benefits; and also, the intrinsic value of these systems in themselves.'

Councillor Jepson stated that he was mindful of the word emergency being used in a political arena. He acknowledged that there was a collective agreement that things needed to change with regard to the environment. Councillor Jepson summarised the work carried out by Councillor Mallinder in the previous administration and highlighted what was achieved.

Councillor Jepson was keen to ensure that there were demonstrable outcomes provided for output to be measured. He supported the motion.

Councillor Folley asked how the motion could be perceived when there were large scale building developments in operation, such as the creation of 5,000 new homes and a leisure centre in Felixstowe, using greenfield sites and farmland.

Councillor Smith-Lyte responded to state that she believed certain building projects had already been agreed or implemented. There would be the opportunity to ensure projects were done in the right way.

Councillor Hammond referenced Councillor Jepson's previous point and highlighted that ecological collapse would be a collapse of everything and therefore believed emergency was an appropriate word to use. Councillor Hammond recognised the work carried out in the previous administration, Councillor Mallinder and the desire to build on that going forward.

Councillor Deacon queried how Councillor Smith-Lyte intended the motion could alter the direction of Felixstowe's housing development in respect of environmental damage.

Councillor Smith-Lyte responded to state that it was too early to say, however the motion would give more leverage and help towards biodiversity net gain. Councillor Smith-Lyte referenced Councillor Jepson's previous point and the intention was to look to work more effectively with other partners and community groups.

Councillor Hedgley offered his support to the motion and encouraged there be consideration to any financial impacts given the wider financial challenges facing some Local Authorities elsewhere.

Councillor Ashton was happy to support the motion and was looking forward to working on developing opportunities for the open spaces in the district with the Environmental Task Group.

Councillor Ashton advised that he had attended a meeting with the head of his Ward's Farming Cluster. It was clear that lots of landowners and farmers were forward thinking

and using land for improving biodiversity. Support could be provided to assist with working through some of the rules and regulations.

Councillor Ashton concluded to state that the biggest draw on biodiversity was humans, and it was important to turn over land to allow genuine bio diversity to evolve.

Councillor Smithson supported the motion and the use of the word emergency.

Councillor Thompson outlined the importance of growing trees and provided information on a competition which provides funding to plant trees, which would help biodiversity.

Councillor Pitchers supported the motion, however had concerns regarding the planning arena and impacts on developers. Councillor Pitchers queried how would the Council ensure they did not push too far with biodiversity net gain.

Councillor Langdon-Morris advised that people are aware and noticing what was going on in their communities and referenced a recent email received relating to the removal of an ancient hedge row by a developer.

Councillor Daly stated the use of emergency was the right word and the discussed the reduction in insect numbers, highlighting the importance of insects and their habitats within the wider ecosystem. Councillor Daly added that there needed to be behavioural change in the way land was managed, mitigation put in place and education provided.

Councillor Daly advised he was working with the National Wildlife Trust on Nature Round Tables which brought together partners, including farm clusters, woodland partners and others.

Councillor Ewart raised the issue of a water emergency and whether water could be brought into the scope of the motion as it was a key element not to include.

Councillor Ninnmey supported the motion and advised of a presentation he had attended regarding the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood Scheme and highlighted the loss of the greenfield land due to the development. During the presentation there was reference to the creation of a country park to the north of the development.

Councillor Noble shared her support to the motion and agreed with the use of the word emergency and working with developers to build in mitigation and improve opportunities for bio diversity net gain, quality of water and any other ways to tackle the crisis that was faced.

Councillor Topping highlighted the importance of master planning and working with developers to build in a sustainable and sensitive way.

Councillor Topping confirmed that the motion was not to undermine any of the previous work carried out, there was a lot of amazing work done and the motion intended to build on it.

Councillor Topping offered congratulations to Suffolk Wildlife Trust who had recently purchased Worlingham Marshes, which would be a new nature reserve.

Councillor Byatt welcomed the motion with some queries. These included that motion would relate to the Council's Strategic Plan and how it would be incorporated into the Climate change action plan which was instated by the previous administration. Within the action plan there were 14 strands in place, which provided the framework. Councillor Byatt stated it was important to know the detail, including statistics, costings and how the motion would fit into current workstreams.

Councillor Byatt stated the progress of the motion would need to go to Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet with regular updates available. The importance of working with developers in a positive way was supported. Councillor Byatt concluded to state he hoped to see some gaps addressed in policy tweaks and detail added.

Councillor Smith-Lyte concluded the debate to reiterate her earlier speech and stated that restoring and ecosystem and biodiversity was in the Strategic Plan. Councillor Smith-Lyte appreciated the support from the Chamber.

The motion was passed by a unanimous vote in favour.

9 General Fund Budget and Council Tax Report 2024 / 25

Councillor Langdon-Morris Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money introduced the report which related to the General Fund Budget and Council Tax Report 2024/25.

At the end of the 2024/25 budget process, the Council was required to approve a balanced budget for the following financial year and set the Band D rate of Council Tax. The report set out the context and initial parameters in order to achieve that objective and contribute towards a sustainable position for the next financial year.

The report brought together all the relevant information to enable Members to review, consider and comment upon the Council's General Fund revenue budgets before making recommendations to Council on 21 February 2024.

On behalf of the Administration, Councillor Langdon-Morris thanked the Chief Finance Officer, the newly appointed Deputy Chief Finance Officer and wider team for their work and support in completing the work ready to bring to Full Council.

Councillor Langdon-Morris stated that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had reviewed the report and did not raise any issues. A balanced budget was being presented.

Councillor Langdon Morris talked through the circulated report in detail and provided some headlines which included the recommendation to increase to the referendum limit for 2024/25 for the Band D Council Tax to £186.57, which was an increase of £5.40 or 2.98%. The increase would generate approximately £0.492m of additional income for East Suffolk.

Councillor Langdon-Morris highlighted the recent emergency events regarding the winding down of COVID relief and the financial response required for flood relief in the district.

Councillor Langdon-Morris concluded to state that the 2024 / 2025 budget estimates were robust and considered known risks and mitigating strategies. The reserves were adequate for the 2024 / 2025 budget plan.

It was noted that Councillor Rumble left the meeting at 7:44pm.

Congratulations was offered to Councillor Langdon-Morris on his first budget report. There were a number of questions and speeches made by members in the chamber. These included Councillor Byatt who queried the Strategic Plan, reserves and how the themes were prioritised. Councillor Langdon-Morris responded to state that the funding was placed from earmarked reserves, was under discussion and could move over time.

Councillor Rivett congratulated the team and made a speech regarding the current financial climate and the previous administration for leaving the financial landscape of the Council in a strong position. Councillor Rivett outlined the Conservative group had examined the budget and noted there had been a conservative approach and much of it was unchanged from their approach. Councillor Rivett noted the spend profile over the next 5 years and the planned reduction of reserves from £48 million to £31 million.

Councillor Gandy requested specific East Suffolk figures be provided regarding indicators included in the referenced pages 44 and 45 of the report.

Councillor Langdon-Morris responded to state he would provide Councillor Gandy with a response outside of the meeting.

Councillor Daly thanked Councillor Langdon-Morris for the fully informative report and made commentary on elements which effected his portfolio.

Councillor Green referenced page 73 and regarding reputation and reference to 'consulting widely', Councillor Green queried who would be consulted. On page 188 there was reference to consultancy compliance requirements and queried the amount of the money against the budget point.

Councillor Langdon-Morris responded that there was an annual consultation process through the East Suffolk website. There were 192 responses, and it was hoped that would increase and more data would be collected.

The Chief Finance Officer responded regarding Councillor Green's second question, to state that it would be included in the Capital Programme Report which was next on the agenda.

Councillor Bennett referenced the Cycling and Walking Strategy and was pleased to note the commitment to support to begin to resource the strategy.

Councillor Deacon queried the reduction against the Port Health budget point.

The Chief Finance Officer responded that the Port Health staffing budget was in the report. A cost recovery position was being moved towards and there was uncertainty around the BTOM. The budget did include the staffing costs.

Councillor Ashton talked to his portfolio in a speech and answered a question from Councillor Smithson regarding the need for productivity, efficiency and given the medium-term nature of the budget why it was not being worked on presently. Efficiency work was taking place in Customer Services and within elements of IT systems at the Council. Improvements would continue to be explored regarding asset management which would continue to make efficiencies.

Councillor Parker referenced page 80 and the cost of training for the flood barrier and queried if there was opportunity to train people in-house.

Councillor Yule responded to state that it had been investigated it and at present the resources were not available. Work was ongoing to explore options.

Councillor Hammond congratulated Councillor Langdon-Morris for the report and made a speech relating to his portfolio. Councillor Hammond concluded to query the justification for regeneration costs of specific projects in the Lowestoft area, namely the Town Hall and Jubilee Parade work.

Councillor Langdon-Morris responded that the Town Hall regeneration was funded from the Town Fund and match funded from Central Government, with contribution from East Suffolk Council. Councillor Langdon-Morris offered his opinion that there was potential in Lowestoft due to the renewable energy sector in the town. He referenced the strategic vision of the previous administration to provide places for people to relax, live and work. Councillor Langdon-Morris concluded that a works were a continuation of the action already initiated.

Councillor Gooch questioned if there was a team working on the asset management rent review, queried if there was a strategy in place and if so, how was work being monitored.

Councillor Ashton responded to state that a team was working through the rent review. The team were working to catch up with tenancy agreements and rent reviews which had fallen behind schedule. It was approximated that rent had been increased by £200,000 and there was more financial gain to make. Councillor Ashton was confident there was now a professional approach to managing assets within East Suffolk.

Councillor Folley questioned what scrutiny East Suffolk could have regarding the Parish precept to ensure value for money and to know what funding was being spent on.

Councillor Langdon-Morris responded to state that he attends a number of parish council meetings and provides scrutiny to decisions made and expenditure taken.

The Chief Finance Officer added that scrutiny of parish work was within the parish areas, and it did not sit with the District Council.

Councillor Ewart requested towns such as Saxmundham and Leiston be referenced in future reports. Councillor Langdon-Morris noted the point made.

Councillor Topping congratulated Councillor Langdon-Morris, Councillor Wilson and the Finance team for the work they had done. Councillor Topping also offered thanks to the previous administration for the work they had carried out.

Councillor Wilson thanked the chamber for the attention this evening and referenced the reduction in reserves projected for the medium-term financial strategy. Councillor Wilson highlighted the work the team had carried out and in bringing the report to Council.

The vote was required to be a recorded vote. The Monitoring Officer conducted the vote and all Members present voted in favour of the General Fund Budget and Council Tax Report 2024/25.

Councillors present and voted 'for' were Councillor Ashdown, Ashton, Back, Beavan, Bennett, Byatt, Candy, Ceresa, Clery, Craig, Daly, Deacon, Dean, Ewart, Fisher, Folley, Gandy, Gee, Gooch, Graham, Green, Hammond, Hedgley, Jepson, Keys-Holloway, Langdon-Morris, Lynch, Molyneux, Ninnmey, Noble, Packard, Parker, Pitchers, Plummer, Reeves, Rivett, Scrancher, Smith-Lyte, Smithson, Specca, Starling, Thompson, Topping, Wakeling, Whitelock, Wilson and Yule.

RESOLVED

That Full Council approve:

1. The 2024/25 General Fund Revenue Budget as set out in this report and summarised in Appendix A5 to the report and notes the budget forecast for 2025/26 and beyond;
2. The reserves and balances movements as presented in Appendix A6 to the report;
3. A proposed Band D Council Tax for East Suffolk Council of £186.57 for 2024/25, an increase of £5.40 or 2.98%;
4. That the following Council Tax premiums be applied, following the enactment of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill on 26 October 2023:

the 100% premium for properties which have been empty and unfurnished for a period of between 1 and 2 years from 1 April 2024, and the 100% premium for second homes from 1 April 2025; and

5. That the Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer be granted delegated authority to implement the introduction of the additional Council Tax premiums.

10 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Report 2024/25 to 2027/28

Councillor David Beavan Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing introduced report ES/1842 which related to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Report 2024/25 to 2027/28.

Councillor Beavan talked through some of the financial information provided in the attached report. The report detailed how rents and service charges are determined, and the proposed increases for 2024/25 were set out for approval.

Councillor Beavan highlighted the 2020 Rent Standards which permitted the Council to increase its rents for at least five years to 2024/25 by up to CPI for September of the previous year plus 1%.

Due to high inflation, CPI was 6.7% in September 2023, which resulted in social housing landlords having the ability to increase rents by up to 7.7% (6.7% CPI + 1%). In line with government guidance a 7.75 increase was being proposed for 2024/2025 and was deemed necessary for the HRA to meet its' required investment in the housing stock and delivering the required services tenants.

Councillor Beavan outlined that every five to six years there are 53 Mondays in the rent year and 2024/25 was a 53-week rent year. It was proposed to continue to collect rents over the week as normal and still provide two rent free weeks over the Christmas period. To cover the Rent would be increased to an average weekly social rent of £96.78 for 2024/2025 an increase of £6.92 compared to the previous year.

The average grouped home service charge related to services provided to sheltered schemes and communal utility costs. The proposed general service charge for grouped homes for 2024/25 was set at an average weekly charge of £19.31. This was an increase of £3.21 compared to 2023/24.

Councillor Beavan noted the recent recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which supported using as much funding as possible to provide housing across the district. A formal recommendation was noted which endorsed borrowing to invest in housing as interest rates come down, with use of an arm's length company and the Cabinet member for housing to explore options. It was noted that the action had been endorsed however would not impact on the budget report presented that evening.

Councillor Beavan made a speech which outlined the challenges faced by East Suffolk Council including budget constraints, new regulations, retrofitting aspirations and the demand for housing in general. Councillor Beavan concluded that a long-term, cross-party plan to deliver the promised new homes which were safe and sustainable.

Councillor Deacon asked if Councillor Beavan could repeat the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Beavan responded to state that the Officers report outlined investment in housing as interested rates reduce, the use of an arm's length company and the investigation of new ways to finance retrofitting and building options.

Councillor Deacon added the request to increase the build of 50 units to 100 units.

Councillor Folley discussed an issue where properties were sold to housing associations in the South of the district. Flagship were understood to have sold several properties at a loss in auction. The money was not coming back into the area for new housing to replace it. Councillor Folley queried what the Council could do to get the money put back into the area, considering the need for emergency accommodation.

Councillor Beavan responded to state that the Council was unable to tell housing associations what to do, however the Council meet regularly and would encourage being given first refusal when properties were being sold on. At the present time there was no funding to be able to buy up such properties and therefore the exploration of other means such as borrowing or using, an arm's length company was desired to move things forward.

Councillor Byatt queried if the stock surveys and various inspection work had been completed. Councillor Byatt also queried if there was scope to receive Police Crime Commissioner funding for antisocial behaviour (ASB) and extra resources in tackling ASB in local communities.

Councillor Byatt noted the use of local companies in the report and questioned if there was any option to recover any materials used in the refurbishment of St Peters Court, prior to demolition.

Councillor Beavan responded to state that 90% of the stock surveys were completed. The foundations for Deben Fields were in place. Damp and mould work was continuing. With regard to ASB Councillor Beavan acknowledged there were problems and having additional resources would be useful to explore. He confirmed the willingness to use local companies for work and the awareness for use of consultants. The cost of demolition of St Peters court was currently around £2 million. Councillor Beavan concluded that regarding Community Led Housing, work in underway to explore opportunities.

Councillor Ewart raised that she was working with Suffolk County Council who were looking into liquidating some of its properties and that could be something East Suffolk could explore. It could create social or key working housing, as an example.

Councillor Beavan agreed that it could be something to explore and was part of work referred to as 'One Public Estate' and included buildings such as Suffolk County Council's building, like police stations and old fire stations.

Councillor Jepson raised that care was needed regarding borrowing and spending and ongoing costs needed to be considered.

Councillor Beavan responded to state the Council would borrow prudently and needed a minimum revenue to make business cases viable, investment was recognised as being needed to improve opportunities to increase income.

Councillor Beavan advised there would be the requested hot house in the summer where housing could be discussed in depth.

Councillor Lynch queried if money invested in solar panelling could be better spent on increasing Council Housing.

Councillor Gandy queried if the Council was going to explore a private rental licensing process.

Councillor Beavan responded to state that it could be explored and work was on-going in the private sector.

Councillor Langdon Morris thanked Members for their support and work on interrogating and reviewing the finances regarding housing in preparation for the meeting.

Councillor Beavan concluded the item to state that there was confidential work taking place with regard to solar panels, which he would update on when in a position to. Solar panels provided free energy to tenants and could provide energy back into the grid as well as being good for the environment.

On the proposition of Councillor Beavan, seconded by Councillor Langdon-Morris it was by unanimous vote

RESOLVED

That Full Council approve:

1. The draft HRA budget for 2024/25, and the indicative figures for 2025/26 to 2027/28;
2. Movements in HRA Reserves and Balances;
3. Proposed rent increase of up to 7.7%. In line with the Rent Standard September 2023 CPI + 1%.

4. Service charges and associated fees for 2024/25;

5. Rent and Service Charges to be charged over a 51-week period unless being used for Temporary Accommodation when a 53-week period will be applied, due to 2024/25 being a 53-week year.

That the following be noted:

6. Projected outturn position for 2023/24;

7. Changes affecting public and private sector housing and welfare;

8. Effects of the cost-of-living crisis to the HRA.

On the proposition of the Chair, seconded by the Vice-Chair, it was resolved by Members to extend the meeting beyond 3 hours.

It was noted that Councillor Ninnmey left the meeting at 9:20pm

11 Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28

Councillor Langdon-Morris Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money introduced report ES/1841 which related to the Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28.

As part of the budget setting process, the Council was required to agree a programme of capital expenditure for the coming four years. The capital programme played an important part in the delivery of the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), which in turn supports wider service delivery. The report set out the Council's capital programme including revisions to the current programme for the financial years 2023/24 to 2027/28. The report also formed the basis of Scrutiny Committee's review of the Budget at its meeting on 18 January 2024 as required under the Budget and Policy Framework.

Councillor Pitchers queried why the funding related to the Lowestoft Tidal Barrier was included on page 183 of the report.

The Chris Finance Officer responded to state that when the papers were prepared the decision had not yet been made.

Councillor Langdon-Morris concluded the item to thank colleagues for their support and assistance with preparing the report.

On the proposition of Councillor Langdon-Morris seconded by Councillor Wilson it was by unanimous vote

RESOLVED

That Full Council:

1. Approve the General Fund capital programme for 2023/24 to 2027/28 including revisions as shown in Appendix B.
2. Approve the Housing Revenue Account capital programme for 2023/24 to 2027/28 including revisions as shown in Appendix G.

12 Capital Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28

Councillor Langdon-Morris Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money introduced report ES/1856 which related to the Capital Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28

The Audit & Governance committee considered the report on 8 January 2024 and did not make any specific recommendations.

The Capital Strategy in Appendix A gave a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services in East Suffolk, along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.

There being no questions, on the proposition of Councillor Langdon-Morris, seconded by Councillor Wilson it was by unanimous vote

RESOLVED

That Full Council:

1. Approve the Capital Strategy for 2024/25 to 2027/28

13 Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2024/25 & Treasury Management Investment Strategy for 2024/25

Councillor Langdon-Morris Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money introduced report ES/1857 which related to Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2024/25 & Treasury Management Investment Strategy for 2024/25.

The report sets out the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25 and the Treasury Management Investment Strategy for 2024/25 and covers:

The current treasury position.

Treasury indicators which limit the treasury risk and activities of the Council.

Prospects for interest rates.

The borrowing strategy; and

The investment strategy

Councillor Smithson questioned the how confident the Council could be that money borrowed from other authorities was secure.

The Specialist Accountant for Capital and Treasury Management Financial Compliance advised that there was a matrix and scrutiny over any investments made and there was confidence in the lending decision made. If an authority issued a Section 114 Notice, or experiences financial difficulty there would be the option to utilise the Public Works fund to repay any borrowed money from Local Authorities.

Councillor Gandy queried how quickly some properties that were losing money could be removed from the Council's portfolio as referenced on page 235, table 1 of the report.

Councillor Langdon-Morris advised he would respond in written form to Councillor Gandy on her question.

Councillor Byatt questioned that investments were being made ethically.

Councillor Langdon-Morris responded to state that whilst there was consideration there was also work to be done and stated it would be good to follow up a discussion with Cabinet Members and the finance team to further explore ethical compliance.

Councillor Wilson added that there was a recent discussion about the choice of bank the Council used and that all options were considered and with a view to disruption and upheaval which was concluded not to be a viable option. Ethical investment was a consideration for conversations and decisions made.

Councillor Langdon-Morris concluded to state that it was a significant sum of money projected over 4 years.

On the proposition of Councillor Langdon-Morris, seconded by Councillor Wilson, it was unanimously

RESOLVED

That Full Council:

1. Approved the Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25 and the Treasury Management Investment Strategy for 2024/25.

2. Notes the 2022/23 Outturn report at Appendix C and the 2023/24 Mid Year report at Appendix D.

14 Exempt/Confidential Items

On the proposition of Councillor Specca, seconded by Councillor Fisher, it was by a unanimous vote

RESOLVED

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

15 Exempt Minutes

On the proposition of Councillor Beavan seconded by Councillor Hammond, it was by a unanimous vote

RESOLVED

That the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2024 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The meeting concluded at 9:42pm

.....
Chair



| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Committee | Full Council |
| Date | 27/03/2024 |
| Subject | Review of East Suffolk’s Model District Council on 9 February 2024, and recommendations to establish a permanent East Suffolk Youth Council |
| Report Author(s) | Councillor Dr Anthony Specia Chair of East Suffolk Council |
| Head of Service | Chris Bing Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer chris.bing@eastsoffolk.gov.uk |
| Director | Kate Blakemore Strategic Director kate.blakemore@eastsoffolk.gov.uk |

| | |
|-------------------------------|------|
| Key Decision? | No |
| Is the report Open or Exempt? | OPEN |

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is NOT in the public interest to disclose the exempt information. | Not applicable |
|---|----------------|

Purpose/Summary

This report provides a review of East Suffolk Council's (ESC's) Model District Council (MDC) for Youth event on 9 February 2024, and seeks Full Council's approval to establish a permanent East Suffolk Youth Council (ESYC) to give effect to the motion passed at the MDC.

Recommendation(s)

That Full Council

1. Welcomes and acknowledges the motion unanimously passed by youth participants in the Model District Council of 9 February 2024, calling on East Suffolk Council to establish a permanent East Suffolk Youth Council for youth at secondary-school, and further to establish lines of communication and exchange between the East Suffolk Youth Council and East Suffolk Council;
2. Establishes a permanent East Suffolk Youth Council as soon as practicably possible;
3. Delegates to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services the authority, in consultation with the Chair of East Suffolk Council, the Constitution Review Working Group and in partnership with the Head of Communities and Leisure, to develop and implement plans for a permanent East Suffolk Youth Council.

Strategic plan

How does this proposal support Our Direction 2028?

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Environmental Impact | The establishing of an ESYC will assist the Council to hear from and consult with young people studying, working and living in East Suffolk on environmental matters, such as achieving net zero by 2030 and supporting sustainable transport. |
| Sustainable Housing | The establishing of an ESYC will assist the Council to hear from and consult with young people studying, working and living in East Suffolk on housing matters, such as to understand young people's housing needs and views on types of housing tenure. |
| Tackling Inequalities | The establishing of an ESYC will assist the Council to hear from and consult with young people studying, working and living in East Suffolk on equality matters, such as ensuring young people feel safe and digitally enabled. |
| Thriving Economy | The establishing of an ESYC will assist the Council to hear from and consult with young people studying, working and living in East Suffolk on economic matters, such as supporting young people to develop careers and businesses in East Suffolk. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Our Foundations / governance of the organisation | It is important for the Council to consult with stakeholders, including young people, and to take their feedback into consideration in taking decisions and formulating policy. |
|---|---|

Justification for recommendations

1. Background

- 1.1 On 9 February 2024, a Model District Council (MDC) for Youth was held at ESC's Riverside offices. 51 pupils from 7 secondary schools across East Suffolk attended the event. The agenda included a keynote speech from Rhammel Afflick BEM (Head of Advocacy and Communications at the British Youth Council), a presentation on local government, a public speaking workshop, a 'Question Time' session with political leaders and an ESC marketplace which provided an opportunity for pupils to learn more about some of the services the Council provides, as well as potential career opportunities at the Council.
- 1.2 The event culminated in the simulation of an ESC Full Council meeting where the pupils played the parts of ESC councillors. Participants were tasked with considering the topic of intergenerational political equity and drafting motions to debate how the youth voice should be heard in East Suffolk. They were supported in preparing for the meeting by political group leaders and Political Group Support Officers.
- 1.3 The Participants and Research Guides for the MDC are appended to this report at Appendix A and B, for information and so that there is record of this civic event in the ESC's archives for posterity.
- 1.4 The feedback on the event from the schools which participated was very positive with comments received including *'a real taste of actual politics in action was invaluable to the pupils. They learnt so much, not just about the process, but about the power of politics'* (Thomas Mills High School, Framlingham) and *'I just wanted to contact you to say how much myself and our pupils enjoyed our day with you all on Friday. It was the first time we, as a specialist C & I school, have engaged in anything like this with neurotypical mainstream schools and it couldn't have been more successful. The pupils that were invited along had such a wonderful day and learnt so much, not only about council elections and protocol but also about themselves and their own resilience to thrive in situations that they previously may have shied away from due to their neuro diversity'* (Castle EAST School, Bungay) and *"Some of the best work I have seen from any council in engaging young people, well done"* (Benjamin Britten Academy, Lowestoft).

2. Introduction

- 2.1. The Chair of East Suffolk Council has championed youth democracy during his 23/24 chairship, including the convening of a MDC on 9 February 2024. The MDC was successfully delivered by the Chair in collaboration with the Council's Communities and Democratic Services teams and teachers from secondary schools across East Suffolk.

2.2. At the simulated Full Council meeting at the MDC, the young people unanimously passed the following motion:

That Council resolves:

- 2.2.1. *To create a Youth Council in East Suffolk Council, which will meet on a termly basis.*
- 2.2.2. *To elect youth councillors (age 12-17) on a yearly basis across key stages, schools and colleges, and ensure inclusion of those outside of the typical education system such as individuals in homeschool and in work.*
- 2.2.3. *To allow the Youth Council to attend meetings of Cabinet, Full Council, and relevant committees; and have a minimum of one yearly meeting with the Leader of East Suffolk Council, with speaking rights where legally permitted.*
- 2.2.4. *That a Cabinet Member to represent the voice of East Suffolk youths be appointed.*

3. Proposal

- 3.1. The recommendations in this report have been drafted to acknowledge the motion from the youth, to confirm ESC's intention to establish a permanent ESYC and, importantly, so that the students who participated in the MDC can see that their motion was acted upon and responded to promptly, especially as some of the students will be completing the secondary school stage of their education at the end of the 23/24 academic year.
- 3.2. In formulating and finalising the Terms of Reference and arrangements for the ESYC, regard will be had to the specific asks of the young people as expressed in their MDC motion and implemented so far as is legal, possible and practicable.
- 3.3. In relation to the MDC resolution 2.2.4, it should be noted that the portfolio of the Cabinet Member with responsibilities for Communities, Leisure and Tourism includes Young People, Apprentices and Youth Council.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1. The costs of setting up and running an ESYC can be met within the Chair's existing civic budget of £6,600.
- 4.2. The hosting of the Model District Council event on 9 February 2024 cost in the region of £2,500. However, it is anticipated that, moving forward, termly ESYC meetings will cost significantly less because there will be lower spend on delegate material and catering for these shorter routine meetings.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1. The motion passed by the MDC on 9 February 2024 is not binding on ESC. It is advisory.
- 5.2. The ESYC will be able to make recommendations to ESC but it will not be able to take decisions binding on ESC.
- 5.3. All ESYC recommendations will require legal consideration and comment before being brought forward to ESC.

6. Risk Implications

- 6.1. The health and safety and safeguarding risks in convening meetings for young people at ESC offices will be mitigated through partnership working with schools and effective risk assessment and management.

7. Options

- 7.1. To agree the recommendations to set up a permanent ESC Youth Council and for resource to be committed to putting the necessary arrangements in place.
- 7.2. To not agree the recommendations to set up an ESC Youth Council.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1. That East Suffolk Council:
 - 8.1.1. Welcomes and acknowledges the motion unanimously passed by youth participants in the Model District Council of 9 February 2024, calling on East Suffolk Council to establish a permanent East Suffolk Youth Council for youth at secondary-school, and further to establish lines of communication and exchange between the East Suffolk Youth Council and East Suffolk Council;
 - 8.1.2. Establishes a permanent East Suffolk Youth Council as soon as practicably possible;
 - 8.1.3. Delegates to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services the authority, in consultation with the Chair, the Constitution Review Working Group and in partnership with the Head of Communities and Leisure, to develop and implement plans for a permanent East Suffolk Youth Council.

9. Reasons for Recommendations

- 9.1. The reasons for the recommendation are for ESC to agree to establishing a permanent East Suffolk Youth Council to recognise and respect the youth voice in East Suffolk and to give effect to the motion unanimously passed by pupils at the MDC on 9 February 2024.

10. Conclusions/Next Steps

- 10.1. If the recommendations in this report are agreed, the establishment of ESYC will be added to the work programme for the CRWG.

Areas of consideration comments

Section 151 Officer comments:

The ESYC can be financed within the Chair's existing civic budget.

Monitoring Officer comments:

The Constitution Review Working Group will be consulted, and their views taken into consideration, in developing the arrangements and recommending amendments to the Constitution to provide for the ESYC.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion/EQIA:

The Terms of Reference and arrangements for the ESYC will ensure that it is open to and inclusive of all young people in East Suffolk.

Safeguarding:

The arrangements for the ESYC will reflect best practice guidance on safeguarding, including risk assessments.

Crime and Disorder:

Not applicable.

Corporate Services implications:

(i.e., Legal, Finance, Procurement, Human Resources, Digital, Customer Services, Asset Management)

ESYC meetings, once a term at ESH or Riverside, could be arranged and clerked by Democratic Services within existing budgets.

Residents and Businesses consultation/consideration:

Not applicable.

Appendices:

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Appendix A | Participants Guide from the Model District Council on 9 February 2024 |
|-------------------|---|

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|-------------------|---|
| Appendix B | Research Guide from the Model District Council on 9 February 2024 |
|-------------------|---|

Background reference papers:

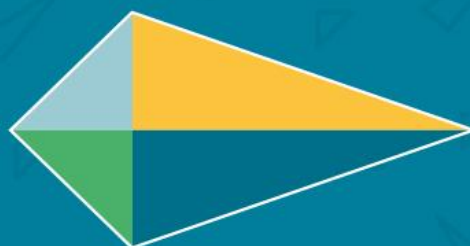
None.



PARTICIPANTS GUIDE

Model District Council

9 February 2024



EASTSUFFOLK
COUNCIL

Participants Guide

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Participants Guide

Welcome

CLlr Dr Anthony Specca, Chair of Council

On behalf of East Suffolk Council, I'm positively delighted to welcome you to the first Model District Council ever held in East Suffolk.

Each of you have elected to participate in this simulation of the real East Suffolk Council because you're passionate about democracy, the youth voice, and your schools and communities. It's our privilege to invite you into the Council Chamber.

As Chair of Council, and as an educator, I believe it's vital to engage youth in politics. The better future that we politicians strive to imagine and realise belongs especially to you, and the better present that we work to govern and administer is yours as much as anyone else's. It's only fair that your voice is heard, and our democracy will be stronger for it.

That's why I've selected the topic of intergenerational political equity for you to discuss in your simulated Council. How should the youth voice be heard in East Suffolk politics? How should East Suffolk Council respond to it, and maybe even act upon it?

Playing the roles of Councillors from all wards and political parties in East Suffolk, your challenge is to negotiate, draft and pass a motion answering these questions. Can you find a way to agree on them, no matter what ward or political party you've been asked to represent in the simulation? Can you pass a motion that the real East Suffolk Council might be able to take forward?

This challenge will be at the heart of your day, but there's more, too. Through an inspiring keynote, as well as interactive briefings from officers, you'll learn more about local democracy, the work of East Suffolk Council, and the career opportunities we can offer. You'll learn valuable transferrable skills: public speaking, negotiating, building consensus, working constructively with others who disagree. And you'll learn a lot about yourselves and what you're capable of doing for your communities and your own futures.

I wish you a most enjoyable day. Get stuck in, learn a lot, make new friends – and help change the politics of East Suffolk for the better.

Participants Guide

Chris Bally, Chief Executive

Welcome to East Suffolk Council - I'm really excited that the Council is holding its first "Model Council" in 2024.

East Suffolk Council is England's largest district council stretching from Felixstowe in the south to Lowestoft in the north taking in Kesgrave, Framlingham and Bungay along its western edge with a 49 mile coastline on the east. 251,000 people live in East Suffolk and the Council provides a range of services to them including Housing, Planning & Building Control, Environmental Health, Leisure, Waste & Recycling and Car Parking. We also manage the coastline, check goods coming into the UK at the Port of Felixstowe and deliver major programmes that support the economy and our communities across the district.

As well as these services, East Suffolk Council is a large organisation employing around 1,000 people. We have finance, human resources, property, IT, customer services, legal and communications teams supporting the organisation - it really is a very exciting and diverse place to work.

We're a political organisation - this means that our Councillors are elected and form an Administration which determines the policies of the Council. You can find out more about the Council's priorities on our website by looking for 'Our Direction 2028' - the Council's strategy for the next 4 years [East Suffolk Strategic Plan » East Suffolk Council](#). Our key themes are environmental impact, sustainable housing, tackling inequalities and a thriving economy.

Hopefully, as well as learning a bit about how we work as a council and the importance of democracy, you'll be inspired to find out more about what we do and maybe see yourself working in East Suffolk Council or in local government more generally in your future. It's a great place to work with many different career paths and I look forward to meeting you on the day.

Participants Guide

Timetable

| | |
|-------|---|
| 09:00 | Sign-in |
| 09:15 | Welcome by the Chair and the Chief Executive |
| 09:25 | Icebreaker |
| 09:30 | Keynote speaker – Rhammel Afflick, BEM |
| 09:50 | Introducing the Model District Council – including introduction to Councils |
| 10:10 | Public speaking tips – Beth Derks |
| 10:30 | Break |
| 10:45 | Political Group meetings |
| 12:00 | Lunch and ESC Careers Fair and Information Stands |
| 13:00 | Model District Council meeting |
| 14:30 | Reflections on the meeting: How it felt debating and discussing? What do you think about the outcome? Any surprises? |
| 14:50 | Break |
| 15:05 | Question Time style panel with the Group Leaders |
| 15:35 | Model District Council – Next Steps |
| 15:45 | Group photos |
| 15:55 | Closing remarks |

Participants Guide

How to Participate

Today you will be playing the role of an East Suffolk Councillor from a political group - GLI, which is Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent parties working together, Conservative or Labour - who has been elected to represent one of the 28 geographical wards (areas) in East Suffolk. Each ward has one, two or three Councillors depending on how many people live in that area.

You have each been given your ID badge for the day, which contains the information about your role. Please wear your ID badges all day.

This Model District Council is a chance for you to stand up and get involved with local government. You will negotiate, draft, debate and vote on a motion (explained below but in a nutshell an idea or proposal) about **how the youth voice could and should be heard in East Suffolk**. You will also have a chance to question the leaders of the political groups on East Suffolk Council and ask that they take your motion forward to a meeting of East Suffolk Council's Full Council in 2024.

The Chair will introduce the Model District Council to everyone and explain the purpose of the day – what we all want to achieve by the end of the Model District Council.

You will then go into your separate political group meetings in one of the breakout rooms nearby and will be supported by various officers, including the Council's Political Group Support Officers (PGSOs). They are as follows:

Isabel Rolfe – GLI

Agnes Ogundiran – Conservative

Sue Meeken – Labour

Once in your breakout rooms, you will have the opportunity to discuss the question in bold above in full and decide on your particular stance (your opinion) on the issue you have been asked to consider.

Stimulus questions – things you might want to consider in your groups:

Are you in favour of an East Suffolk Youth Council?

Can you think of a better alternative/ a different way of engaging young people and hearing the youth voice?

Are things already happening to help public bodies to hear, understand and respond to the youth voice that the Council doesn't know about?

Or, are you happy with the way things currently are and feel that no change is needed?

Once you have discussed the matter fully and have hopefully come to an agreement with your fellow Councillors, you will then need to work upon a Motion (see information about what a Motion is below) to take to the Model District Council meeting in the afternoon.

Participants Guide

Motions

A Motion is a request for Full Council to make a decision or to take an action. This request must be about matters for which the Council has a responsibility and/or which affects the East Suffolk district.

Format of the Motion

The Motion could begin with:

This Council notes that..... [a list of factual statements and opinions about this topic]

Followed by:

This Council resolves to..... [the views or actions you want the Council to endorse or commit to take]

Don't worry about coming up with a Motion all by yourselves or getting the wording right, the PGSOs are here to assist you and they have plenty of experience in drafting Motions.

Once you have agreed what your Motion will be, you will need to decide which Councillor from your political group will propose the Motion by reading out the Motion at the Full Council meeting and explaining why they support it. You will also need another Councillor from your political group to formally second the Motion (which is to agree and support the proposal). Councillors who are not proposing or seconding the motion should still think about what opinions they would like to express, for or against the motion, when the motion is debated.

Once you have come up with a Motion that you are all happy with, decided who the proposer and seconder will be and collated your key arguments and considered how you could best express them to seek to persuade other councillors to agree with your point of view, you are ready for the Model District Council Full Council meeting which will take place after lunch.

Full Council Meeting

The room will be laid out as it is for East Suffolk Council Full Council meetings. Please sit with your political groups in the seat allocated to you. The Chair will start and control the meeting and the agenda (order of business) for the meeting will be:

- Apologies
- Announcements (things Councillors need to know)
- Questions from Councillors
- Motions on Notice
- Close

The Chair will then invite a political group to share their Motion. The Proposer should read out the Motion in full and explain why they support it. The seconder should then share their support for the Motion. The Chair will ask if the seconder wishes to explain why they have supported the Motion at that point, or if they would prefer to wait until later.

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The Chair will then invite all the Councillors to debate the Motion. Councillors will be expected to raise their hands when they wish to speak and the Chair will keep a note of who raised their hands and in which order. The Chair will invite Councillors to speak in the order they put their hands up.

If a Councillor wishes to amend the Motion presented by another party, they can propose a change to it, which must be seconded by another Councillor. If the amendment is proposed and seconded, there will need to be a vote on it.

Everyone who wishes to speak during the debate will be given the opportunity to do so.

At the end of the debate, once all Councillors have had an opportunity to speak, the Chair will invite the Councillors to vote as to whether they are for or against the motion. Councillors can elect to abstain (not to vote) on the motion if they prefer. The votes will be counted and the Chair will announce the result.

Participants Guide

Social Media

If you want to share your experience of the Model District Council on social media, use #ESCMDC2024

East Suffolk Council is on X, Facebook and Instagram.

 [X.com/EastSuffolk](https://x.com/EastSuffolk)

 [Facebook.com/eastsuffolkcouncil](https://facebook.com/eastsuffolkcouncil)

Instagram @eastsuffolkcouncil

Participants Guide

Policies / Code of Conduct

East Suffolk Council takes both respect for all and health and safety very seriously and asks all participants today to abide by the following policies.

Code of good conduct

As a student representing your school, you are expected to maintain high professional standards of behaviour throughout the day. In particular, you must adhere to the following code of good conduct, any breach of which may result in exclusion from Model District Council.

- You must respect the authority of Cllr Dr Anthony Specca and the East Suffolk Council Councillors and officers.
- You must treat all participants and observers, whether Councillors, officers or guests, with respect. Bullying, insults or abuse of any kind is strictly forbidden, whether openly in speech, or in written notes exchanged during the event.
- You must negotiate with the other participants (both in your political party and the other political parties) in a respectful way – listen to what they say and take it in turns to make your point. Staged ‘walkouts’ or refusals to speak with other participants are unacceptable.
- Please wear your ID badges all day.
- You must respect the privacy rules outlined below.
- You should dress smartly in school uniform for this event.
- You must be on time for all meetings (group meetings and the Council meeting). Meetings will begin promptly out of respect for all participants.
- You are not authorised to access all areas of the building. You must stay in the areas that you are directed to.
- The toilets are located in the Reception area.

Privacy

All participants must maintain confidentiality for themselves and for other participants.

Participants must not make any attempt to photograph or record other participants without permission.

Participants should under no circumstances reveal personal information about themselves to each other or share personal information about one another if using social media to communicate about their experience at this event.

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Publicity

East Suffolk Council staff may photograph or otherwise record certain elements of the day, including images of participants, for use in publicity material, website content and social media content. Any participants who do not wish to appear in photographs or recordings should please inform Cllr Dr Speca or any Council officer.

Teaching staff and other observers

Teaching staff whose students are taking part in this event may observe — but may not participate in — the proceedings. At the discretion of Cllr Dr Speca, other educators or special guests may also observe the event.

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Councillor and officer roles at the meeting of the Council

Councillors come together at Council meetings to discuss matters (key topics or issues facing East Suffolk people or places) and take decisions. In relation to some matters, all Councillors are able to agree the way forward. However, in relation to other matters, there will be a range of different views, and different Councillors may want the Council to take different actions. When there isn't agreement and matters are voted upon, the option supported by the most Councillors in attendance at the meeting will be implemented.

The Chair

The Chair leads the meeting through the agenda to ensure that it runs smoothly. The Chair is an elected Councillor from a political group but when they are carrying out the role of Chair they are independent and neutral. The Chair of East Suffolk Council, Anthony Specca, will chair the Model Council meeting. The Chair decides when councillors can speak on a matter and interprets and enforces the Council Procedure Rules. The Chair announces the result of matters voted on.

The Monitoring Officer

The Monitoring Officer is employed by the Council. The Monitoring Officer is responsible for ensuring the Council acts lawfully in its decision making. The Monitoring Officer counts the votes at council meetings.

The Democratic Services Officer

The Democratic Services Officer is employed by the Council. The Democratic Services Officer advises the Chair if any Councillors are not in attendance at a meeting (Apologies). The Democratic Services officers writes down what Councillors says at meetings (takes the minute) and records the results of votes.

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Model District Council Procedure Rules

1. Meetings of the Council

- 1.1. The meeting will take place at the Riverside Offices in Lowestoft on 9 February 2024.
- 1.2. Unless the majority of Councillors present vote for the meeting to continue any meeting that has lasted for 90 minutes will adjourn immediately. Remaining business will be considered at a time and date fixed by the Chair.

2. Quorum (the minimum number of councillors who must be in attendance for the meeting to take place)

- 2.1. The quorum of the meeting will be 14 Councillors.
- 2.2. During any meeting, if the Chair counts the numbers of Councillors present and declares there is not quorum, then the meeting will adjourn immediately.

3. Order of Business

- 3.1. Apologies
- 3.2. Chair's Announcements
- 3.3. Questions from Councillors
- 3.4. Motions on Notice
- 3.5. Close

4. Motion on Notice

- 4.1. A Motion on Notice is a request to Council for a decision to be made or action to be taken.
- 4.2. A Motion on Notice must be delivered in writing or by e-mail to the Monitoring Office.
- 4.3. Motions must be about matters for which the Council has responsibility, or which affect East Suffolk.
- 4.4. Motions must be proposed by one Councillor and seconded by another Councillor.

5. Amending a Motion

- 5.1. An amendment to a motion must be relevant to the motion and be to remove and/or add words.
- 5.2. An amendment to a motion must be proposed by a Councillor and seconded by another Councillor.
- 5.3. If an amendment is supported by the majority of councillors, the motion is duly amended as proposed.

6. Rules of Debate

- 6.1. No speech by any Councillor may exceed 2 minutes.
- 6.2. A Councillor who has spoken on a motion may not speak again, except to speak on an amendment.
- 6.3. The mover of a motion has a right to reply at the end of the debate on the motion.

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7. Point of Order

7.1. A Councillor may raise a Point of Order at any time.

7.2. A Point of Order is a complaint to the Chair that the correct procedure is not being followed by a councillor (for example, a councillor has been speaking for 5 minutes, when under these Procedure Rules they can only speak for 2 minutes).

8. Voting

8.1. Any matter put to the vote will be decided by a show of hands of those Councillors voting and present.

8.2. If there are equal numbers of votes for and against, the Chair will have a second or casting vote.

9. Councillor's Conduct

9.1. When a Councillor speaks at Council they may stand if they wish.

9.2. No Councillor may use offensive expressions concerning any other Councillor.

10. Interpretation of the Procedure Rules

10.1. The ruling of the Chair as to the interpretation and application of the Procedure Rules shall be final and no debate shall be permitted upon such decisions.

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Biographies of Councillors and Officers

Cllr Dr Anthony Specca FRGS FRSA, Chair of East Suffolk Council

Cllr Dr Specca is an educator and politician with a passion for democracy and the youth voice. In May 2023, the residents of Bungay and Wainford elected him as their Green Party representative on East Suffolk Council, and his fellow councillors elected him as their Chair. He strongly believes that the Chair serves not only as the Civic Head of East Suffolk, but also as its democratic champion. He seeks to steer Full Council as an impartial but dynamic president, so that Opposition can contribute as effectively as Administration, and so that all Councillors can take part. He has also initiated a review of East Suffolk Council's Constitution to strengthen its democratic soundness, and to improve its accessibility to Councillors and the public.

Cllr Dr Specca was formerly a civil servant with the Government of Nunavut in the Canadian Arctic, before becoming a teacher and university lecturer in the UK. He coordinates Model United Nations at his school, and he also designs and runs some of the world's only Model Arctic Council programmes for schools and universities. Model District Council is a centrepiece of his Chairship, which he is delighted to be able to offer to schools across our District with the help of a dedicated and expert officer team. He hopes that it will be just the start to amplifying the youth voice in East Suffolk.

Chris Bally – Chief Executive, East Suffolk Council

Chris Bally is the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service for East Suffolk Council. East Suffolk Council serves a population of just over 250,000 across an area of 487 square miles. The Council has a net revenue budget of £49m and employs around 1,000 staff.

Prior to joining East Suffolk Council, Chris was Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Corporate Services at Suffolk County Council for 5 years, having held various roles in the County Council since 2008. Chris' background is the leadership of corporate services in local government including finance, HR, procurement, property, legal, Digital/IT and corporate policy and communications and he had led various transformation, collaborative and partnership projects across Suffolk. Prior to joining the County Council, Chris worked for Tendring District Council and the Audit Commission across London and the South East of England.

Rhammel Afflick, BEM – Keynote Speaker

Rhammel Afflick has been working for the British Youth Council since 2011 as a consultant and later joined the team full time in February 2015. He is now the Head of Advocacy and Communications for the British Youth Council, responsible for the planning, production and curation of digital and social content, the development of our brands and the coordination of our media enquiries. Rhammel is also currently

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Trustee and Director of the charity, Police Now, which focuses on recruiting a diverse range of people into policing with a particular focus on recruiting Black, Asian and minority ethnic people.

Rhammel is a British writer and political activist. He is best known for his campaigning on race, knife crime and LGBT+ rights and he was Director of Communications for Pride in London from 2019 to 2021.

Beth Derks – Honorary Lecturer at the University of East Anglia (UEA)

Beth Derks, now an Honorary Lecturer at the University of East Anglia (UEA), is passionate about giving young people a voice, and the insight, skills and confidence to instigate positive social change. She set up The Future Leaders project at the UEA, and developed a Public Speaking method, called 'Dare to Speak up' and runs workshops in these at Universities, high schools and at festivals. She is also a Human Rights trainer, in training, for the Model International Criminal Court.

Today she will share tips on communication skills needed to make collaborative decisions in local, regional, national and international governing bodies.

Councillor Caroline Topping – Leader of East Suffolk Council

Cllr Topping has been a District Councillor for over 8 years and she was re-elected onto East Suffolk Council on 4 May 2023. Cllr Topping is a Councillor for the Green Party and is a Councillor of the ruling GLI Group. She was elected as Leader of the Council on 24 May 2023 and represents the Beccles and Worlingham Ward. Cllr Topping is also a Councillor of Suffolk County Council and was elected in May 2021. She is a Councillor of the Green Party and represents the Beccles Division.

Cllr Topping was also a Beccles Town Councillor for 13 years and was the Town Mayor for 2013-15. She joined Beccles Town Council as a natural progression from being volunteer in her community since the age of 18. She strongly believes that volunteering in your community, being part of it, giving back and being proud to be a member of it is really important and that is why she is a councillor representing our communities, the people and the environment. She was also the Youth Champion on Beccles Town Council for several years and want to make sure our young people are engaged with, listened to and provided for. Cllr Topping has had an interesting and varied career including being an office manager, sales and marketing, freelance writer, exam invigilator and she was a Youth Offending Services Panel Member. She also has a degree in Criminal Psychology.

Councillor Craig Rivett – Leader of the Conservative Group, East Suffolk Council

Cllr Rivett was first elected as a Conservative District Councillor in 2016 and he was re-elected to East Suffolk Council on 4 May 2023 for the Carlton Colville Ward. He is the Conservative Group Leader. Prior to the 2023 elections, he was East Suffolk Council's Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development.

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He was first elected as the Conservative Suffolk County Councillor for Carlton Colville and Pakefield Division in 2017, was re-elected in 2019 and he is also the Deputy Cabinet Member for Childrens Services. Cllr Rivett was born and raised in the Lowestoft area. He has had an interesting and varied career including working as a Manager at Royal Mail.

Cllr Peter Byatt – Leader of the Labour Group, East Suffolk Council

Cllr Byatt was first the elected as a District Councillor in 2010 and he has been the Leader of the Labour Group since 2018. He was re-elected to East Suffolk Council on 4 May 2023 for the Kirkley and Pakefield Ward.

Cllr Byatt was also elected as a Suffolk County Councillor for the Pakefield Division and served from 2013 to 2015. He has had an interesting and varied career including as a teacher, a policeman and in the coastguard.

Kate Blakemore – Strategic Director, East Suffolk Council

Kate Blakemore is a Strategic Director and she leads on corporate services, supporting services such as Human Resources, Procurement and Democratic Services.

Kate began her career in local government as a Student Environmental Health Officer at Great Yarmouth Borough Council, where she successfully completed a degree in Environmental Health, alongside a number of professional exams. Following several promotions, Kate became Head of the Environmental Services section and then she lead the Council's transformation programme to help address some significant financial challenges. During this time, Kate became involved with change processes from a systems thinking perspective and she then studied a Masters degree in Systems Thinking in Practice in her own time. Kate was then promoted again to Strategic Director in 2017 and also completed an MBA.

Chris Bing – Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer, East Suffolk Council

Chris Bing is the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer. As Monitoring Officer, Chris has a statutory duty to ensure the Council acts lawfully and to promote the highest standards of conduct in public life.

Chris trained as a Solicitor in local government, qualifying in 2008. He has a degree in Politics, and postgraduate qualifications in Law and Management.

Nicole Rickard – Head of Communities and Leisure, East Suffolk Council

Nicole has worked for the Council for nearly nine years and leads on Community Enabling, Community Partnerships, Community Safety, Anti-Social Behaviour, Health and Wellbeing, Community Help, Leisure, Safeguarding and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Communities and Leisure staff are out and about in

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communities, working with individuals, families and community groups, including support around the rising cost of living.

Nicole started her career in the voluntary sector with a charity working in rural areas, before moving to Leicestershire County Council in 2000 where she had three different roles which culminated in heading up the Policy and Partnerships Group which included research and insight, performance and community forums. While she was at the County Council she led an innovative three day Youth Citizens Jury. She has a MSc in Public Leadership and Management from Warwick Business School and a degree in English Literature.

Sam Kenward – Communities Officer for Framlingham, Wickham Market, Kelsale and Yoxford and surrounding villages, East Suffolk Council

Sam Kenward is the Communities Officer for the Beccles, Bungay and Halesworth area. He has co-led on youth engagement and has been actively working to involve young people in decision making and he has helped to lead on Waveney Youth Council, Youth Takeover Days, Free Summer Activities for Young People and Youth Voice across the District.

Sam has always been interested in linking Councils with young people and he was a Member of both Waveney Youth Council and the UK Youth Parliament from 2010 to 2014. He was also elected to Beccles Town Council in May 2015, at the age of 18, where he served as the Youth Champion for three years engaging with primary and high schools in the area to speak directly with pupils. Sam gained a First class degree from the UEA in Politics.

Nicola Wotton – Councillor Support and Civic Manager, East Suffolk Council

Nicola Wotton is the Councillor Support and Civic Manager, where she supports Cllr Dr Speca in his role as Chair of the Council and manages his civic diary. She also has overall responsibility for Councillor Development (Councillor Training) and Scrutiny.

Nicola has worked in a variety of roles in local government and was the Democratic Services Manager for Waveney District Council for several years. She has also worked in the NHS and at Norfolk Police Authority. Nicola has a BSC (Hons) degree in Human Geography and the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CILCA) qualification.

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The Riverside Building, 4 Canning Road, Lowestoft

The Riverside building has been open since May 2015 and it took around 2 years to build.

Riverside and the nearby Marina Centre in Lowestoft are both jointly owned by East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council. The budget to build Riverside and refurbish the Marina Centre was £13.65 million. The site was chosen to help rejuvenate South Lowestoft, as there was a significant amount of unused land along the river. The Essex and Suffolk Water offices have since opened close by, as has the Children's Centre.

Riverside has good transport links, as it is near to the railway station and Tom Crisp Way. The new Gull Wing Bridge (third crossing) is being constructed very close by (look out of the window when you are at Riverside), which will provide easy access to North Lowestoft and beyond. The Gullwing Bridge it is due for completion in 2024.

You may notice that when turning off Waveney Drive, to head towards Riverside, you enter Colin Law Way. The road is named after Colin Law, who was the Leader of Waveney District Council for many years. He sadly passed away, not long after the Riverside building opened.

At Riverside, Suffolk County Council staff are based on the first floor, whilst East Suffolk staff are based on the second floor. The ground floor is primarily for smaller meetings rooms, the Conference Room, the Reception area and café.

First Aid

Should you need First Aid, please inform one of the Secretariat or other East Suffolk Council officers. They will inform Reception and who will summon a First Aider to assist you.

Fire Alarms

There is no fire alarm test planned for today, so should the fire alarm sound, it will be for real. In the event of a fire, please follow the instructions that will be issued to you and congregate in the South Car Park near the Children's Centre. The Fire Exits in this room are clearly marked. Please do not re-enter the building until you are informed it is safe to do so. You will be escorted by the East Suffolk Council staff at all times, so they will guide you to safety.

Facilities

Toilets are available on the ground floor, near to the Reception desk.

Tea/coffee/water and biscuits will be available throughout the day and lunch will be provided at around 12.00 noon.

The café is also open, providing a range of items, until around 2.30pm on a Friday.

If you need any assistance or have any queries, please just ask one of the Secretariat or East Suffolk Council officers who will be present throughout the day.

Travelling to Riverside

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By train, bus and foot Riverside is on the route of the 101 First Buses service which runs every 10 minutes during the day. The stop for Riverside is on Waveney Drive. The timetable and route can be found at www.firstgroup.com. Abellio Greater Anglia runs trains directly from Norwich and Ipswich to Lowestoft. You can find the timetables you need at www.abelliogreateranglia.co.uk. The train station is less than a mile from Riverside (around 20 mins by foot) and is also served by the 101 bus.

By bike Defined cycle routes in and around the town are available at www.greensuffolk.org (search for 'cycle routes'). There is covered cycle parking for visitors.

By car or motorcycle The visitor car park is in front of the Registrar's Office at 2 Canning Road - NOT Riverside. There is then a short walk across to the main building. If the visitor car park is full there is on-street parking in the vicinity. Motorcycle and Blue Badge visitor parking is within the grounds of the main Riverside building which is accessed via a barrier. Visitors will need to press the intercom to speak to the reception staff to enable access to the disabled parking spaces.

Directions by road from the west/southwest Follow A146 to Oulton Broad, then take second exit at roundabout following directions for Riverside Business Park. Continue for about a mile, staying left over two mini roundabouts. Continue until you see the sign for Riverside and turn left. Follow the road to the end and then turn right, at the end of the road it bears left and then you will see the gravelled visitors car park on the left.

From the south Approach Lowestoft on the A12 and at the end of Tom Crisp Way, take the first exit at the roundabout, signposted Oulton Broad / Riverside Business Park. Take the first left on the roundabout (continuing straight over) and continue until you see the sign for Riverside and turn right. Follow the road to the end and then turn right, at the end of the road it bears left and then you will see the gravelled visitors car park on the left.

From the north Head south towards Lowestoft on the A12, then follow signs for the A1117 across three roundabouts. At the fourth, by Normanston Park, take the third exit, (directions for South Beach, Docks, Station.) At the retail park roundabout take the third exit, then the second exit at the mini roundabout. Following signs for Ipswich A12, go straight on through two sets of traffic lights, then over the Bascule Bridge, and a further roundabout (with the Dunelm store on your right). At the final roundabout, take the third exit signposted Oulton Broad / Riverside Business Park. Continue until you see the sign for Riverside and turn right. Follow the road to the end and then turn right, at the end of the road it bears left and then you will see the gravelled visitors car park on the left.

On arrival When you arrive at the building please report to Reception where a member of the Democratic Services Team will greet you, issue you with an ID badge and show you into the Conference Room

Riverside reception Telephone - 01502 521500 Email - riverside.reception@easternfms.co.uk

Participants Guide

Glossary

| Term | Explanation |
|--|---|
| Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council | <p>The Chair and Vice-Chair are elected in May each year at the Annual Meeting of Full Council. The Chair (or Vice-Chair in his/her absence) provides civic and ceremonial leadership for the Council. Once elected, the Chair rises above party politics in chairing meetings of Full Council, ensuring that the Council's constitution is upheld at those meetings.</p> <p>The Chair also acts as the Council's representative at formal or public engagements during his/her year of office. The Chair of the Council wears a chain of office when carrying out civic duties but does not have any formal robes.</p> |
| Chair's Casting Vote | Chair's casting vote - if there are equal numbers of votes for and against, the Chair will have a second or casting vote. There will be no restriction on how the Chair chooses to exercise a casting vote. |
| Chief Executive | The Chief Executive is the most senior officer (paid staff) in East Suffolk Council and they are responsible for leading and managing the Council. |
| Constituents | These are the people that live in each Ward (area) that the Councillors are elected to represent. |
| Constitution | The Constitution is the 'rule book' that the Council must follow, to make sure that actions and decisions are taken legally. The Monitoring Officer will help to explain the rules to ensure they are followed correctly. |
| Councillor | A Councillor's main role is to represent their Ward (area) and the people who live in it. Councillors provide a bridge between the community and the council. They are an advocate for local residents, signpost them to the right people at the Council and keep them informed about issues that affect them. Councillors are elected for a 4 year term of office. |
| District | Suffolk is divided up into smaller areas called Districts and each of those Districts has a District Council to provide services for that area. The East Suffolk District covers a large area, from Lowestoft in the North to Felixstowe in the South. |
| East Suffolk Council (ESC) | East Suffolk Council provides local services to the East Suffolk area such as bin collections, environmental health, council tax collection, planning applications, licensing, leisure centres and housing. The Councillors make decisions about how the Council's budget will be spent and the aims and objectives for the Council. |
| Full Council | Full Council is made up of all 55 Councillors that make up East Suffolk Council and they meet every other month. The meetings are chaired by the Chair of the Council. They consider items of business such as setting the budget and council tax, petitions, questions from Councillors and the public. |

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| Group Leaders | <p>Each Political Group has a Leader, who is in charge and is the main representative and spokesperson for that political group.</p> <p>Councillor Topping is the Leader of the GLI Group (and also Leader of the Council)</p> <p>The GLI Group includes Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent Councillors.</p> <p>Councillor Rivett is the Leader of the Conservative Group</p> <p>Councillor Byatt is the Leader of the Labour Group</p> |
| Leader of the Council | <p>The Leader is the head of the largest political group represented on the Council. They are the most senior Councillor and they lead on the decision-making process and direct strategic policy and budget setting. Councillor Caroline Topping is the Leader of the Council.</p> |
| Monitoring Officer (MO) | <p>The Monitoring Officer is responsible for the legal governance of the Council. They ensure the Council acts lawfully and promotes the highest standards of behaviour for Councillors and officers. They also provide support to the Chair of the Council at Full Council meetings. The Monitoring Officer will also investigate when things are not done properly. Chris Bing is the Council's Monitoring Officer.</p> |
| Motion | <p>A Motion is a request for Full Council to make a decision or to undertake an action. This request must be about matters for which the Council has a responsibility, or which affects the East Suffolk district.</p> |
| Petitions | <p>A petition is a written document, which is signed by a large number of people, that asks somebody in a position of authority to do or change something.</p> <p>If enough signatures are received (over 1,200), the Petition must be considered at a Full Council meeting.</p> |
| Political Groups | <p>There are 55 East Suffolk Councillors and the GLI are in charge of the Council. The political groups are as follows:</p> <p>There are 28 GLI Councillors (which is made up of Greens (16), Liberal Democrats (11) and Independents (1)).</p> <p>There are 15 Conservative Councillors</p> <p>There are 12 Labour Councillors</p> |
| Political Group Support Officers (PGSOs) | <p>Each political group (GLI, Conservative and Labour) has a Political Group Support Officer to assist them with their work and responsibilities. They help arrange their group meetings, do research and assist with questions and motions for Full Council meetings.</p> |
| Proposer | <p>A proposer is someone who puts forward a Motion for consideration by Full Council. (please see above for the definition of a Motion).</p> |

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| Secunder | A seconder is someone who supports and agrees with the Motion put forward by the proposer. (please see above for definitions of Motion and proposer). |
| Suffolk County Council (SCC) | Suffolk County Council is responsible for the following services across the whole of the Suffolk: Education, Transport, Social Care, Planning, Libraries, Waste Management, Trading Standards, Fire and Public Safety. |
| Voting | The Chair of the Council will ask Councillors to vote on a recommendation or Motion by a show of hands (raising their hands). He will ask Councillors to raise their hands if they are voting for, against or abstaining (deliberately note voting). Officers will count the vote and inform the Chair of the results, which he will then announce to the Councillors. |
| Ward | A Ward is the area and people (Constituents) in it that a Councillor is elected to represent. There are 29 separate Wards in East Suffolk. Some Wards are large and need 3 Councillors to represent them eg Beccles and Worlingham Ward. Others are much smaller and only need 1 Councillor to represent them eg Kessingland Ward. |

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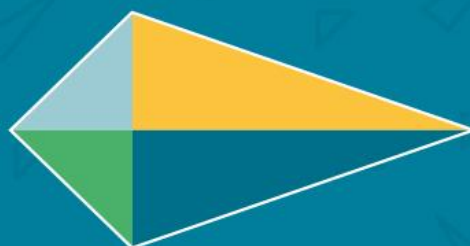
Your Notes



RESEARCH GUIDE

Model District Council

9 February 2024



EASTSUFFOLK
COUNCIL

RESEARCH GUIDE

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East Suffolk Council - A Snapshot of the District

Area

East Suffolk has a population of 246,058 (ONS, Census 2021) and covers an area of 125,979 hectares (1,260km²), has 79km of coastline and comprises a mix of urban and rural areas with Lowestoft and Felixstowe being the largest towns. There are also a number of historic towns and a large number of villages. In total, the district has 175 town and parish councils.

East Suffolk is an attractive place to live and work, attracting tourism and visitors and combining a strong economy with a natural and built environment. However, nine neighbourhoods in Lowestoft are within the 10% most deprived in the country and unemployment levels in two wards are double the regional average.

The district also includes the Port of Felixstowe, which is a major gateway for Britain to Europe. The district is also increasingly becoming a major energy supplier to the whole of Britain.



Political Leadership

East Suffolk Council was created in 2019. It is a district council.

Suffolk has three tiers of local government, Suffolk County Council, five district councils and 175 Town and Parish Councils. The County Council delivers services such as education, waste disposal and social services across the whole of Suffolk, whereas locally, East Suffolk Council operates a range of services including building regulation, burials/cremations, community safety, the administration of council tax and business rates, environmental health, electoral administration, licensing, sports facilities, housing, street cleaning and refuse collection.

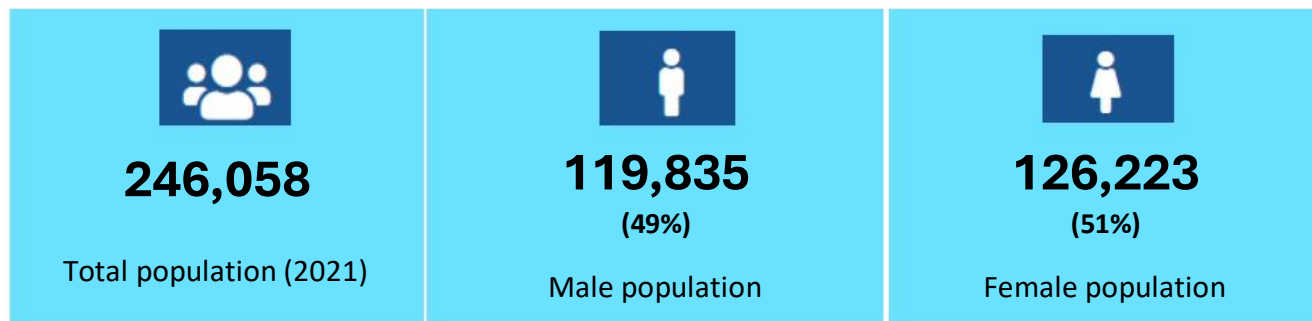
East Suffolk Council has 55 Councillors, covering 29 Wards. Elections were held in May 2023 and the political makeup of the Council is now as follows:

| | | | | |
|-------------------|------------|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Conservative (15) | Green (16) | Labour (12) | Liberal Democrat (11) | Independent (1) |
|-------------------|------------|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------|

The Green Party, Liberal Democrats and Independent councillors have formed a political group, known as the GLI Group, which runs the Council.

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Population

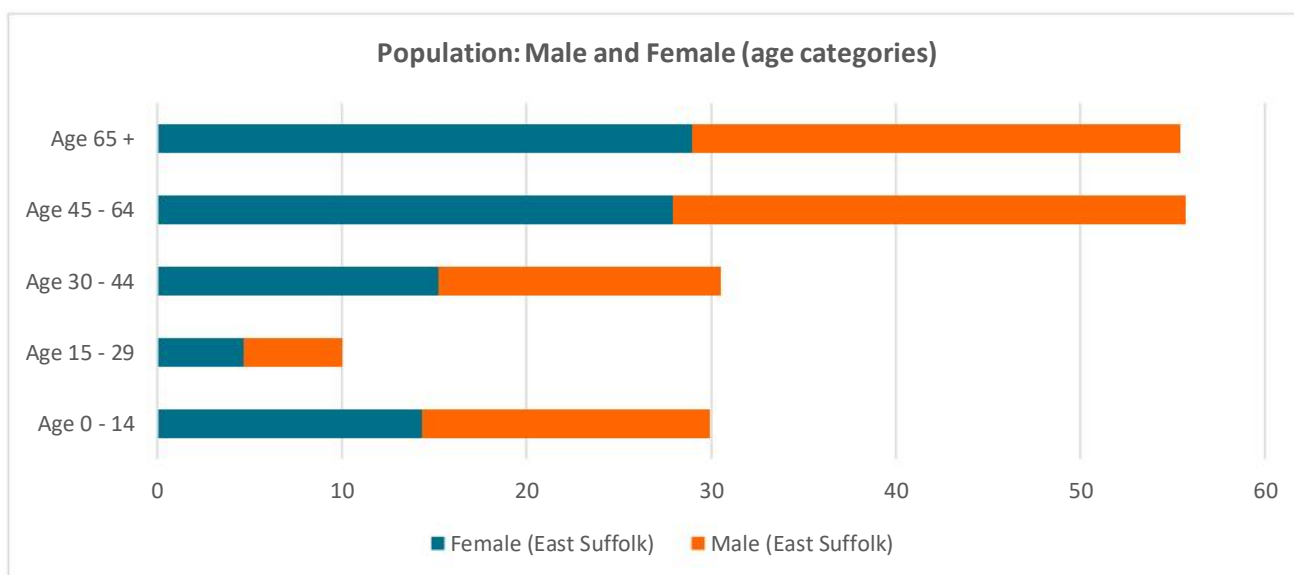


*ONS population Census 2021

The total population of the district (ONS Population Census 2021) is 246,058. There are 49% (119,835 males) and 51 females (126,223).

Population by broad age groups:

This chart illustrates the breakdown of the population of East Suffolk by broad age groups:



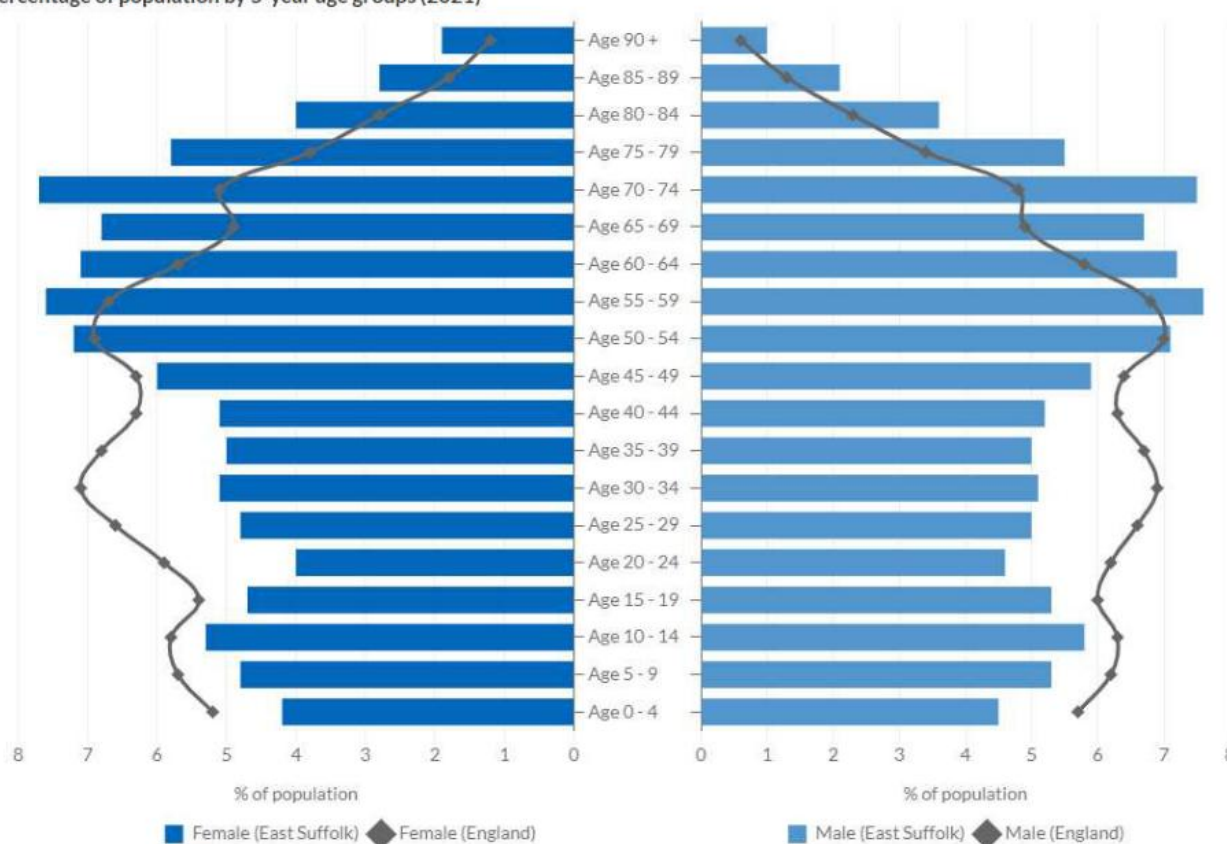
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The population of East Suffolk has grown by 2.6% over the past decade. In the same period the Suffolk population grew by 4.4%.

There are 28% over 64 years olds in East Suffolk which is higher than Suffolk (24%) and England (18%). 57% are aged between 15 and 64 years and 15% are under 15 years old – this is lower than both Suffolk and England.

The following chart displays the percentage by 5-year age groups, with the highest category for both males and females being age 70 to 74.

Percentage of population by 5-year age groups (2021)



Source: ONS, Census 2021

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Intergenerational Political Equality

Intergenerational political equality can be defined as the view that there should be political fairness between different generations.

In England, people under 18 cannot vote in local and national elections. However, many young people still have views on issues which are important to them, and they want their voice to be heard and their interests recognised and respected.

Youth Councils

Some young people engage with local, regional and national programmes in which they elect their peers to represent their views and take part in campaigns and votes on youth-focused issues. This includes the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) [British Youth Council | UK Youth Parliament \(byc.org.uk\)](https://www.byc.org.uk), run by the British Youth Council, which is made up of approximately 600 elected youth members. UKYP runs the annual Make Your Mark vote, where young people vote on the issue UKYP should campaign on for the following year.

Youth Social Action

Young people across the UK are increasingly leading social action projects through a range of organisations including the National Citizen Service [NCS | Grow Your Strengths | National Citizen Service \(wearencs.com\)](https://www.nacs.org.uk). Youth-led social action projects have been promoted by the Step Up to Serve #iwill campaign and partners. Many youth social action campaigns have achieved positive outcomes on a number of local and national issues including mental health and sustainable development with youth-led projects raising funding for a range of charities across the UK.

Digital participation

Young people are increasingly participating in internet-based social action. For instance, many are finding their civic voice on digital platforms through online petitions, blogs, vlogs and charity sites. There is a growing trend towards interaction with elected representatives and political organisations via social media platforms.

Petitions

Alternatively, young people could create a petition, which is a formal written request for politicians to do something or take action. Young people can encourage others to sign their petition and if they get a significant number of signatures, then the politicians must respond.

For example, a petition will be debated by East Suffolk Council's Full Council, if it is submitted to them and attracts over 1,200 signatures.

Nationally, you can start and sign petitions on the petition.parliament.uk website. If a petition gets 10,000 signatures the government will respond, if it gets 100,000 signatures, it will be considered for debate in Parliament.

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MPs, peers and local councillors engagement

Elected and non-elected officials across the UK also engage with their young constituents to build their views into both local and national decision making. Engagement examples have included online surgeries on social media platforms targeting young people, hustings in schools and youth groups ahead of both local and national elections, and constituency summer schools for young people to gain knowledge of campaigning and collaborating with their peers on local issues. Parliamentarians are also hosting youth panels in constituencies to help shape policy making and involve young people in conducting research, evaluating a public service or running a local project.

Benefits of Youth Engagement

A young population that is engaged in democracy is beneficial to both young people and society as a whole.

When young people are politically engaged they:

1. feel they are listened to and can make a difference.

This can help to improve decision-making and local communities – young people are experts on what affects them and can provide innovative solutions to problems.

2. feel more confident in expressing their point of view and challenging others' perspectives.

This can help to build trust in political systems – a lot of mistrust in political systems stems from a lack of understanding of the work MPs, peers and local councillors do; if young people have a better understanding of how they work for them, this will increase their trust in them.

3. develop skills and experience, e.g. public speaking, problem solving and developing arguments.

This can help to develop the next generation of leaders – if young people are engaged early they will see themselves as agents of change and will be more inclined to see themselves as future leaders.

4. can express their needs and ideas for change

This can help to develop a more inclusive democracy where more people take part – if people understand the importance of exercising their rights they will be more inclined to do so.

5. have a better understanding of how political structures work.

This can help to bring about innovative changes and improvements through youth-led action – young people will approach issues with a different perspective from older generations and may be better placed to find solutions.

Views against having a Youth Council

Some people may believe that Youth Councils are unnecessary. They may argue that young people still have a lot to learn and so their views should carry less weight. They could also argue that young people do not contribute to the economy through paying taxes. They may believe that the right to be heard, like the right to vote, should be limited to adults over 18 only.

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Youth activists in the news

Youth activists have been the backbone of many social movements — including movements around climate change, racial justice, gun violence, gender rights and LGBTQ+ rights.

Malala Yousafzai

Malala was 15-years-old when she was targeted for advocating for girls' right to education in Pakistan. A gunman tried to kill her as she walked home from school. Malala survived the attack and she and her family moved to the UK, where she launched the Malala Fund, a non-profit organisation that advocates for girls' education.

In 2014, at the age of 17, Malala became the youngest person in history to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her work and the United Nations launched the 'Malala Day,' in honour of the activist's fight for universal education.

Greta Thunberg

Greta has become one of the world's best-known climate change campaigners.

In summer 2018, aged 15, Ms Thunberg held the first "School Strike for Climate" outside the Swedish parliament.

Greta has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize every year between 2019 and 2023. In 2019, she became the youngest-ever Time Person of the Year.

March For Our Lives Organisers, gun control activists

Students affected by the 2018 mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida, were quick to mobilise and demand action from elected officials, saying enough is enough.

They organised [March For Our Lives](#) and now, hundreds of local March For Our Lives have emerged, fighting to end the gun violence epidemic in America.

The Halo Collective, UK's first hair code

In 2020, a group of young black activists launched the UK's first hair code designed to prevent discrimination based on hair style or texture. The Halo Code asks organisations to commit to celebrating natural hairstyles, rather than penalising students and employees. Unilever was the first employer to adopt the Code.

Jerome Foster and Elijah McKenzie-Jackson

In 2022, youth climate and LGBTQ+ activists Jerome Foster and Elijah McKenzie-Jackson urged the organisers of COP27 to reconsider hosting the climate conference in Egypt due to the country's hostile laws towards the LGBTQ+ community.

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Youth voice at district level – do we need an East Suffolk Youth Council?

At present, we have a range of different ways for young people to express their voice in the district.

Youth Voice

- Youth Voice [Youth Voice » East Suffolk Council](#) is a district wide forum with a difference.
- Using our post boxes or online tool, young people can submit their concerns for the local area, and ideas on how to improve it. We want solutions!
- Specific questions are occasionally posted for young people to have their say on, following us on Instagram will make sure you keep up to date.
- Once a term, all the responses are collected and sent in one report to Community Partnerships (there are eight of these across the district), key decision makers and external partners, all of whom can turn their words into actions.
- All the actions and updates will then be included in the report for the next term, so they know their views have been listened to and responded to.
- Real time updates are posted on our Instagram @eastsuffolkyouthvoice

Waveney Youth Council

- We bring together young people in Waveney to provide young people with a voice and to represent young people [Waveney Youth Council » East Suffolk Council](#)
- Young people from the attending schools provide updates on what is happening at their schools and in their communities
- They also identify priorities they would like to influence and campaign around for young people
- Past priorities have included accessible transport and young people's mental health
- We have also hosted question time events with decision makers and published a newsletter by young people and for young people

Youth Take Over Day

- Youth Take Over Day is 1 day a year where we invite the schools to work with us on a topical project or theme.
- Beginning in 2008, groups of students were invited to our Riverside Office for the event, where they would engage with Councillors, different departments and relevant external partners we would invite to give the students a full experience.
- In 2023, the theme was 'design your own campaign'. Held at Riverside and East Suffolk House with students from 3 different schools worked, young people came up with campaigns for issues they care most about – campaigns included better road safety, increased arts provision and work following flooding in Framlingham
- Previous themes have included designing a shopping centre in north Lowestoft, reducing social isolation and loneliness in older people and environmental/climate change impact

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Key Questions to consider?

- Would an East Suffolk Youth Council be a good idea or would there be overlap and duplication with the existing ways young people can already engage with each other and decision makers in East Suffolk, Suffolk and nationally (outlined above)?
- What could an East Suffolk Youth Council do? How would it work?
- What other groups or networks could be set up or developed to engage young people?
- Do you have any other ideas about how the voice of young people in East Suffolk could be heard and acted upon?
- How would whatever you propose ensure that the voice of young people from all parts of our community can be heard – particularly those most likely to be excluded

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How to prepare to participate and some further reading:

In advance of 9 February, we would encourage you to carry out some independent research into local democracy and youth voice. The following links may assist:

- Look at our website and develop a sense of the make-up of our council: <https://eastsuffolk.cmis.uk.com/eastsuffolk/councillors.aspx>
- Look at previous Full Council agendas to look at examples of motions: <https://eastsuffolk.cmis.uk.com/eastsuffolk/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/796/Committee/4/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>
- Look at the profiles for different wards in the district: [East Suffolk Wards » East Suffolk Council](#)
- Look at some data for the district and specific electoral wards – you might want to see what the data looks like for young people on certain topics: [Microsoft Power BI](#)
- Look at the work of the British Youth Council and Youth Parliament - [British Youth Council | UK Youth Parliament \(byc.org.uk\)](#)
- Guidance from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) about how to set up an effective Youth Council [file \(nalc.gov.uk\)](#)

Several Councils have created their own Youth Councils – some examples are below:

- Blaby District Council - [Youth Council \(blaby.gov.uk\)](#)
- Bristol City Council - [Bristol City Youth Council and Youth Mayors](#)
- Cornwall County Council - [Cornwall Youth Council | Let's Talk Cornwall](#)
- Durham County Council - [Youth Council - Durham County Council](#)
- Epping Forest District Council - [Epping Forest Youth Council - Epping Forest District Council](#)
- Harlow District Council - [Youth Council | Harlow Council](#)
- Medway Council - [Medway Youth Council | Medway | England](#)
- London Borough of Bromley - [Bromley Youth Council](#)
- London Borough of Camden - [Camden Youth Council - Camden Rise - Camden Council](#)
- London Borough of Havering - [What is the Havering Youth Council? | Havering Youth Council | The London Borough Of Havering](#)
- Salford City Council - [Youth Voice in Salford • Salford City Council](#)
- Southend Youth Council - [Home | Southend Youth Council](#)
- Stroud District Council - [Stroud Youth Voice](#)

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Glossary

| Term | Explanation |
|--|---|
| Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council | <p>The Chair and Vice-Chair are elected in May each year at the Annual Meeting of Full Council. The Chair (or Vice-Chair in his/her absence) provides civic and ceremonial leadership for the Council. Once elected, the Chair rises above party politics in chairing meetings of Full Council, ensuring that the Council's constitution is upheld at those meetings.</p> <p>The Chair also acts as the Council's representative at formal or public engagements during his/her year of office. The Chair of the Council wears a chain of office when carrying out civic duties but does not have any formal robes.</p> |
| Chair's Casting Vote | Chair's casting vote - if there are equal numbers of votes for and against, the Chair will have a second or casting vote. There will be no restriction on how the Chair chooses to exercise a casting vote. |
| Chief Executive | The Chief Executive is the most senior officer (paid staff) in East Suffolk Council and they are responsible for leading and managing the Council. |
| Constituents | These are the people that live in each Ward (area) that the Councillors are elected to represent. |
| Constitution | The Constitution is the 'rule book' that the Council must follow, to make sure that actions and decisions are taken legally. The Monitoring Officer will help to explain the rules to ensure they are followed correctly. |
| Councillor | A Councillor's main role is to represent their Ward (area) and the people who live in it. Councillors provide a bridge between the community and the council. They are an advocate for local residents, signpost them to the right people at the Council and keep them informed about issues that affect them. Councillors are elected for a 4 year term of office. |
| District | Suffolk is divided up into smaller areas called Districts and each of those Districts has a District Council to provide services for that area. The East Suffolk District covers a large area, from Lowestoft in the North to Felixstowe in the South. |
| East Suffolk Council (ESC) | East Suffolk Council provides local services to the East Suffolk area such as bin collections, environmental health, council tax collection, planning applications, licensing, leisure centres and housing. The Councillors make decisions about how the Council's budget will be spent and the aims and objectives for the Council. |
| Full Council | Full Council is made up of all 55 Councillors that make up East Suffolk Council and they meet every other month. The meetings are chaired by the Chair of the Council. They consider items of business such as setting the budget and council tax, petitions, questions from Councillors and the public. |

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| Group Leaders | <p>Each Political Group has a Leader, who is in charge and is the main representative and spokesperson for that political group.</p> <p>Councillor Topping is the Leader of the GLI Group (and also Leader of the Council)</p> <p>The GLI Group includes Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent Councillors.</p> <p>Councillor Rivett is the Leader of the Conservative Group</p> <p>Councillor Byatt is the Leader of the Labour Group</p> |
| Leader of the Council | <p>The Leader is the head of the largest political group represented on the Council. They are the most senior Councillor and they lead on the decision-making process and direct strategic policy and budget setting. Councillor Caroline Topping is the Leader of the Council.</p> |
| Monitoring Officer (MO) | <p>The Monitoring Officer is responsible for the legal governance of the Council. They ensure the Council acts lawfully and promotes the highest standards of behaviour for Councillors and officers. They also provide support to the Chair of the Council at Full Council meetings. The Monitoring Officer will also investigate when things are not done properly. Chris Bing is the Council's Monitoring Officer.</p> |
| Motion | <p>A Motion is a request for Full Council to make a decision or to undertake an action. This request must be about matters for which the Council has a responsibility, or which affects the East Suffolk district.</p> |
| Petitions | <p>A petition is a written document, which is signed by a large number of people, that asks somebody in a position of authority to do or change something.</p> <p>If enough signatures are received (over 1,200), the Petition must be considered at a Full Council meeting.</p> |
| Political Groups | <p>There are 55 East Suffolk Councillors and the GLI are in charge of the Council. The political groups are as follows:</p> <p>There are 28 GLI Councillors (which is made up of Greens (16), Liberal Democrats (11) and Independents (1)).</p> <p>There are 15 Conservative Councillors</p> <p>There are 12 Labour Councillors</p> |
| Political Group Support Officers (PGSOs) | <p>Each political group (GLI, Conservative and Labour) has a Political Group Support Officer to assist them with their work and responsibilities. They help arrange their group meetings, do research and assist with questions and motions for Full Council meetings.</p> |
| Proposer | <p>A proposer is someone who puts forward a Motion for consideration by Full Council. (please see above for the definition of a Motion).</p> |
| Secunder | <p>A seconder is someone who supports and agrees with the Motion put forward by the proposer. (please see above for definitions of Motion and proposer).</p> |

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| Suffolk County Council (SCC) | Suffolk County Council is responsible for the following services across the whole of the Suffolk: Education, Transport, Social Care, Planning, Libraries, Waste Management, Trading Standards, Fire and Public Safety. |
| Voting | The Chair of the Council will ask Councillors to vote on a recommendation or Motion by a show of hands (raising their hands). He will ask Councillors to raise their hands if they are voting for, against or abstaining (deliberately note voting). Officers will count the vote and inform the Chair of the results, which he will then announce to the Councillors. |
| Ward | A Ward is the area and people (Constituents) in it that a Councillor is elected to represent. There are 29 separate Wards in East Suffolk. Some Wards are large and need 3 Councillors to represent them eg Beccles and Worlingham Ward. Others are much smaller and only need 1 Councillor to represent them eg Kessingland Ward. |



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Your Notes



FULL COUNCIL
Wednesday, 27 March 2024

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Subject | Cabinet Members’ Report and Outside Bodies Representatives’ Report to Council |
| Report by | Councillor Caroline Topping Leader of the Council |

| | |
|-------------------------------|------|
| Is the report Open or Exempt? | OPEN |
|-------------------------------|------|

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is NOT in the public interest to disclose the exempt information. | Not applicable |
| Wards Affected: | All Wards |

Purpose of Report:
To receive the Cabinet Members’ Report and the Outside Bodies Representatives’ Report to Council, for information.

Options:
Not applicable.

Cabinet Members' Report to Council

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Cabinet Member: | Councillor Caroline Topping, Leader of the Council |
| Contact Details: | caroline.topping@eastsoffolk.gov.uk Tel: 07825 421117 |

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

On 9 February, the Council hosted a Model District Youth Council day where over 50 young people from local schools attended Riverside to play the roles of Councillors for a day. The event was a huge success and the young people moved a Motion to create a Youth Council in East Suffolk.

We continue to support Committees, Community Partnerships and other meetings, along with providing support to Members and officers on a day-to-day basis.

We are sad to announce that Matt Makin, Democratic Services Officer, will be leaving us at the end of May to join Peterborough City Council as a Senior Democratic Services Officer. Matt is going to be greatly missed and we wish him all the very best for the future.

LEGAL SERVICES

Our new Litigation Lawyer, Mandi Wilson, started with us in February and has been working with Housing, the Anti-Social Behaviour team and other departments, progressing various litigation matters.

We participated in the Corporate Services marketplace event at East Suffolk House on 24 January 2024 and enjoyed discussing a variety of legal issues with Members and officers. There were several entertaining discussions about the byelaws which exist, both within East Suffolk and around the country. Members of the team also assisted with the Model District Council event for local schoolchildren on 9 February 2024.

The lease renewal for 70 Shed at Port Health, Felixstowe is nearing completion and there has been ongoing property work on the Southwold Enterprise Hub and Zak's Café in Lowestoft. We have also been assisting Planning with various issues arising on the Sizewell C project as well as neighbourhood planning and Local Plan matters.

We have assisted Port Health with several agreements, including those with Belfast City Council and Tendering District Council and we also supported the Licensing team with a summary review hearing in relation to the Skye Lounge in Felixstowe.

Current contracts being negotiated include the National Parking Platform which will unify all our car parks onto one single platform, sponsorship for Art Trails in East Suffolk and sponsorship for Space East. We have also been providing advice on contracts for Felixstowe Socio-Economic Analysis and Land Use Strategy, advice on Enterprise Zone arrangements post Local Enterprise Partnership changes, an agreement with Lowestoft Town Council to provide project management services for the Marina Theatre refurbishment project and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund agreement.

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Cabinet Member: | Councillor David Beavan, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing |
| Contact Details: | david.beavan@eastsoffolk.gov.uk Tel: 01502 724904 |

HOUSING NEEDS

We continue to deliver housing advice and assistance to clients that are homeless or threatened with homelessness, or seeking social housing through the Gateway to Homechoice Register.

We continue to experience a high number of homelessness presentations and are currently working with 509 households under the 'Prevention' or 'Relief' duty.

The number of households in temporary accommodation has risen over the last quarter and we currently have 132 households in temporary accommodation and 24 placed under the Rough Sleeping Initiative. Of those currently under a statutory placement, 85 households are families with dependent children and 47 are single households.

Since April 2023 we have been able to prevent 513 households from becoming homeless and an additional 517 where homelessness has been relieved. This is an average of 103 cases per month with a positive outcome.

Rough sleeping figures continue to fluctuate but are still in single digits. We currently have 7 rough sleepers in East Suffolk, an increase of 2 since January. However, these are likely to be different people as some are accommodated and new ones are verified.

In January 2024 the Gateway to Homechoice team received 360 new applications. We currently have 4,559 active applications on the Register.

We have been successful in securing a £25k one-off top up of additional funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities under the Rough Sleeping Winter Pressures initiative. This funding will have to be spent in year and will focus on assisting with the following:

- Costs against Nightly Let for those placed off the street, single homelessness.
- Support for those in temporary accommodation that have been discharged from hospital or prison.
- Community based interventions by the outreach team, clothing, home set up, furniture etc.
- Rent in advance to allow those in the Rough Sleeper Initiative/Safe to Stay Hub beds to move on.

The funding focuses on the provision of 'off the street' accommodation and resources, private rented sector access and step-down provision for applicants leaving hospital and at risk of rough sleeping.

HOUSING REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

We are busy working on a new digital mobile working solution and how processes can be adapted and streamlined. The project is moving at pace with implementation expected in early June 2024. The Compliance team is also testing a new IT system to record property assets which are currently recorded on spreadsheets.

We are in the final stages of fire stopping works at one of our schemes and will shortly be going out to tender for the remaining fire alarm systems that need replacing.

The Caretaking team is now fully resourced and over the next 3 months will undertake a programme of scheduled visits to inspect the communal areas of our general needs blocks. An Electrical Contracts Manager has also recently been recruited to further support this team.

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING

Safe Suffolk Renters, the Government pathfinder programme led by us on behalf of all the Suffolk councils to tackle poor housing conditions in the private rented sector, launched its latest promotional campaign via social media, TV (ITVX and Sky) and local radio. The purpose is to raise awareness of the resources available through the Safe Suffolk Renters programme and separate adverts are targeted towards landlords and tenants. This is part of the 'empower and educate' phase of the programme.

The website [Homepage - Safe Suffolk Renters](#) has been developed into a more comprehensive resource and more work will follow.

We also organised a second conference, aimed primarily at landlords, which focussed on Damp and Mould. This topic was chosen in the aftermath of the death of Awaab Ishaak and the changes all those involved in housing need to make to try and prevent such a tragic incident from reoccurring. The conference looked at causes of dampness in the home and solutions and was attended by over 100 delegates.

We have also been awarded additional funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to build and strengthen partnerships with health across Suffolk. We are using data on housing conditions and cross matching it with population health data to help those living in the worst housing conditions who suffer with acute health problems. Conversations and pilot projects are being set up with the potential for significant savings across the whole system. There are many hurdles to overcome but the time seems right to tackle these and the funding received will facilitate this. More information can be found on the website [Homepage - Safe Suffolk Renters](#).

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Cabinet Member: | Councillor Sarah Whitelock, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism |
| Contact Details: | sarah.whitelock@eastsoffolk.gov.uk Tel: 07824 452388 |

COMMUNITIES AND LEISURE

At the Community Partnership Board meeting on 7 March, the Board approved four projects that originated from one or more of the eight Community Partnerships. These ranged from an E-bike loan scheme in two of our most rural Community Partnership areas, to mental health training with Suffolk Mind, expansion of the Lowestoft and Northern Parishes ‘Box Up’ leisure equipment loan pilot and training on online security through a new local social enterprise. The focus of the workshop session at the meeting was on how culture can help tackle inequalities within and between communities.

The third and final training session for Community Partnership Chairs, Vice Chairs and Communities Officers (run by Oliver and Company) was held on 13 March in Yoxford.

Lowestoft Rising, the multi-agency strategic partnership comprising of East Suffolk Council, Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Police/Police and Crime Commissioner, Norfolk & Waveney Integrated Card Board and voluntary/community sector representatives, comes to an end on 31 March. After more than 10 years of activity in Lowestoft to make it a ‘Better place to Grow up, Live, Work, Visit and Invest’, the partnership will end and the Change Manager will retire. The Lowestoft Place Board, Waveney Health & Wellbeing Partnership Board and the Lowestoft and Northern Villages Community Partnership are now all in place and will provide the ongoing drive to deliver the aims of Lowestoft Rising.

39 Holiday Activity and Food programmes have been funded for the Easter holiday. These programmes will provide just over 3,600 places for Free School Meals families – this is up from just over 3,100 places last Easter. Lowestoft has most programmes (16) followed by Beccles (6), Woodbridge (5) and Felixstowe, Saxmundham and Kesgrave (3 each). The programmes include a mix of provision including sport, filmmaking, cooking and STEM. We are offering an activity book (similar to what we did at Christmas) with a competition. Bookings went live on 4 March with programmes beginning on 2 April 2024.

The play consultation for Beccles, Felixstowe, Framlingham, Kesgrave and Wrentham closed on 1 March and we had over 2,000 responses. The next steps are to create reports for each area and share the findings with the relevant Town/Parish Councils to enable them to submit applications for any additional funding from the Neighbourhood and Local Community Infrastructure Levy. Once funding has been secured, we can then go out to tender to get designs for each of the play areas.

Along with Cllr Reeves, officers from the Communities team have been working with HMP Warren Hill, SSAFA (the Armed Forces Charity) and the Royal British Legion to support 22 veterans from HM forces who are serving long custodial sentences. Prisoners have so far sought information regarding housing availability on release from custody, benefits, food banks and other sources of assistance. We have provided an information folder outlining the assistance they can expect from councils, the Government and military charities, with

contact details. We have also provided cost of living support to families living at Rock Barracks.

Having pulled together £7k from a range of sources (including Ease the Squeeze and Councillor Enabling Communities Budgets), the Lowestoft and Northern Parishes Community Partnership is planning to continue Warm Welcomes from April until the end of September at the Seagull Theatre, Gunton Community Hall, St Andrews Church Hall, Over 60s Club and ReUtilise.

TOURISM

The Suffolk Coast Destination Management Organisation held its annual conference on 7 March which was attended by over 120 delegates representing East Suffolk's visitor economy businesses and stakeholders. The event was co-sponsored by us and Sizewell C. An update was provided on the Sizewell C Tourism Mitigation Fund which is designed to minimise the impacts of the development on our visitor economy. We also provided an update on the other nationally significant energy infrastructure projects which are either in development or proposed along our coast as well as a summary of our recent and planned investment in the district's tourism economy. This included our district-wide investments in locally, regionally and nationally significant events, place branding and the capital investment programme in our two largest resorts of Felixstowe and Lowestoft.

Other sessions focussed on how local tourism businesses can make the best use of data analytics and search engine optimisation to better understand their existing and potential customer behaviours. There was also a promotion of Wolf Way, a new Suffolk-wide cycle route which takes in most of the Suffolk coast.

It is worth noting that Cabinet approved a further 3 year funding package for the DMO of £182k. This comes at a crucial time when the DMO will be a key partner in mitigating the impacts of the Sizewell C development on the district's visitor economy.

The Sizewell C Tourism Working Group was established at the beginning of 2024 once the Development Consent Order was triggered. Ahead of the development of the first annual implementation plan, which will set out how tourism mitigation funds will be spent, several proposals are coming forward to the second Working Group meeting. These include:

- Funding for the T-Stats platform which we have been piloting for the past 12 months. T-Stats is an online database that can track accommodation, occupancy, visits to attractions, footfall, car parking, passenger, transport, digital marketing performance, as well as the impact of events and the weather.
- Funding longitudinal visitor perception surveys to understand the impact the development is having on visitor perceptions during the course of the construction stage.
- A significant destination marketing campaign proposed by the DMO to grow the district's £680m tourism economy to mitigate potential losses which may occur during the construction phase.

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LICENSING SERVICES

Since 24 January 2024, one Licensing hearing has been held which considered a review of a premises in Felixstowe which had had its licence revoked due to an allegation that it had been associated with serious crime or disorder.

We await the date for a driver's further appeal to the Crown Court. This followed our successful defence in the Magistrates' Court. Given that this matter is still under appeal, no further public comment can be made but we will be kept informed as to the outcome.

Following the Scrutiny of taxi licensing and the subsequent creation of a second Licensing Enforcement Officer post, a candidate has been appointed to the role. It is anticipated that they will commence work with us in June 2024.

We are in the process of consulting on a proposed new Street Trading Policy and, in particular, which streets, if any, should be prohibited streets.

We were also part of the successful Corporate Services marketplace event at East Suffolk House on 24 January 2024 and thank you all for your support.

HEALTH

Development of Feel Good Suffolk (FGS) is ongoing, with recruitment taking place to ensure we have the resource to meet the high demand we are seeing in the East. We've recently recruited an additional FGS Advisor and an Area Coordinator role which will be shared across East Suffolk, Babergh and Mid Suffolk to coordinate and support our operational teams. We are also currently advertising for an FGS Development Officer which will support the ongoing development and delivery of FGS services in East Suffolk. Following a soft launch in October, preparations for a full launch are taking place ahead of April, when our Healthy Weight groups will become available and promotion of our services will increase.

The most recent Waveney Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board focussed on an innovative idea to bring together the various 'friendly' community initiatives (dementia, age, young people, mental health, compassionate) into one East Suffolk 'inclusive communities' framework. The idea was well received by the Partnership who spent some time working on key themes and structures which the Communities team will now develop further, ideally working with a local university.

Lowestoft Communities Officers, working with Lowestoft Rising and the Waveney Voluntary and Statutory Partnership, have received funding for 3 x free Mental Health First Aid courses for those working in the public and voluntary/community sector. The 2 day courses will be run by nationally accredited Mental Health First Aid trainers but delivered in Lowestoft at the Carlton Marshes Nature Reserve. With two courses taking place in March and a third potential course in May (to tie in with Mental Health Awareness Week), we should have

trained 48 people in the voluntary/community sector. In addition, a bespoke version of the course will be run in July for 16 teaching staff across Lowestoft.

The funding will also allow Waveney to have its own Befriending Scheme, run by Communities Together East Anglia, to help provide telephone and face to face support to those who are most isolated in the community. Trained staff and volunteers will take referrals from across Waveney and match them up with suitable support. The longer term aim being to connect those people with existing venues like Warm Welcomes to help them build a more social interaction.

I was pleased to be part of the annual workshop to refresh the Felixstowe Peninsular Community Partnership priorities earlier this month. More than 50 people attended the session at the Trimley Sports and Social Club and fully participated in agreeing a new set of priorities. This was followed by a Health and Wellbeing Fair in Harvest House in Felixstowe, organised by the Community Partnership, on 14 March, which brought together a wide range of groups who can support residents with their mental and physical health and wellbeing.

The Be Well Bus is a mobile one-stop shop for health and wellbeing support in the Ipswich and East Suffolk Alliance area. All residents are encouraged to visit the Bus (no appointment needed) as it travels around towns and villages at prearranged dates and times. On board you will find a knowledgeable team made up of people from lots of different health, care and community organisations, including Social Prescribers. Depending on people's needs, the staff on the bus will either offer help and advice there and then or signpost to an organisation best placed to help. For more information visit the Be Well Bus timetable [Be Well Bus timetable announced for Ipswich and east Suffolk - NHS Suffolk and North East Essex ICB](#).

Councillors are welcome to position themselves on the bus as an opportunity to speak with residents about local issues, something which has already been happening in some areas.

CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY TEAM

The Corporate Health and Safety Team has been focused on the Annual Cycle tasks each month. February was risk assessment month. Each manager was asked to review their team's risk assessments in relation to the activities that staff undertake but also to consider risks that arise as a result of their activities. For example the Asset Management Team need to think about any risks that members of the public might be exposed to when using ESC buildings and land as well as the risks that the team members might be exposed to. January was the month when all staff should have submitted Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessments. Just under half the ESC workforce submitted DSE assessments and from that a number of issues have arisen that need further investigation by the Corporate Health and Safety Team before they advise managers on any actions that might be necessary to ensure that the employee's health is not adversely affected as a result of their working environment.

FOOD AND SAFETY TEAM

We have had recent involvement with a number of workplace health and safety issues. Two businesses were issued with notices prohibiting activities where there was a risk of serious

personal injury. These related to a risk of a fall from height and a risk associated with a gas appliance. Both these risks are now being controlled. We have also been involved in the investigation and control of a chlorine gas leak at a swimming pool in a hotel leisure complex.

In February, we hosted a food sampling training session at East Suffolk House provided by the UK Health Security Agency Laboratory. Food Enforcement Officers from across Suffolk attended and it was very well received.

We have contributed to a national survey investigating the microbiological quality of cooked ready-to-eat sliced meat from retail premises. We have submitted 45 samples to the UK Health Security Agency Laboratory. The survey ends on 31 March 2024. The Agency will collate the results and prepare a national report.

We are working very hard to complete food safety inspections. The annual return to the Food Standards Agency detailing inspections completed within 2023/24 will be submitted by 26 April 2024. The details of this return will be included in the Food and Health & Safety Service Plan 2024/25.

SUFFOLK COASTAL PORT HEALTH (SCPHA)

On 7 March, twenty new high-risk products of Non-Animal Origin were added to the list of products requiring specific documentation and health checks when imported into the UK. This includes rice from India and enoki mushrooms from South Korea. We are actively collaborating with various agents who import these products to devise safe sampling methods. The rice is a particular challenge because it is typically imported into the UK in bulk lined containers posing significant safety risks to us when opening container doors.

The next significant date is 30 April, marking the go-live date for the Border Target Operating Model. A concerted effort is underway to recruit personnel for positions at Harwich Port. Some of these recruits will likely transition from roles in the African Swine Fever project team, which concludes at the end of March.

Currently, we have five staff members on secondment to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs providing crucial training, advice and support. This arrangement is immensely beneficial as it enables the transfer of accurate knowledge and best practice while ensuring that Port Health concerns and requirements remain a top priority in decision-making processes.

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HUMAN RESOURCES

Strategic Recruitment Partner - following on from a Cabinet decision in December to go out to tender for a Strategic Recruitment Partner to support our recruitment needs, this procurement is now live until 12 April. This Partner will provide strategic and operational support in the appointment of both permanent and temporary roles across a variety of services and levels to meet our staffing needs for up to five years.

Managing performance – we manage performance (which includes the annual setting of objectives) using the My Conversation process. This process has been updated following feedback from an all-staff survey and workshop with a cross sectional representation of staff. As our service planning process is completed, objective setting for all staff will commence from April onwards with Human Resources aiming to ensure a 100% completion rate for all employees is achieved.

DIGITAL, PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT AND CUSTOMER SERVICES

Marina Centre move

In order to help facilitate the Lowestoft Cultural Quarter project, we will be vacating the Marina Customer Contact Centre in the Lowestoft town centre in September to allow for partial demolition of the existing building. A large amount of work has been undertaken over the last few months to identify suitable alternative accommodation for a front-facing customer services presence in the town centre in order to continue providing essential face to face services in that location, in particular for those who may be more vulnerable or unable to use other channels. We are looking to take a report to Cabinet in April/May on this issue.

Customer Service Principles

In the January report, we told you about our Demand Listening exercise. Further work has been undertaken in developing our new set of Customer Service Principles including consulting with Cabinet, the Corporate Leadership Team and other stakeholders to delve into the question ‘What is important to the customer?’

A Strategy, including these developed Principles, will be taken to Cabinet in the coming months.

Service Planning

A new round of service planning for 2024/25 has been kicked off across all service areas, feeding into the objectives of Our Direction. A robust framework has been established to govern the new Strategic Plan, which includes the development of new Key Performance Indicator dashboards and Action Plans.

Cyber Security

We have completed our self-assessment exercise against the National Cyber Security Centre Framework. During February the Local Government Association was on site undertaking a type of peer review to specifically look at our Cyber Security based on the self-assessment framework. Members and officers were interviewed as part of this process and we are currently awaiting our final report which will be shared in due course.

At the end of February, we teamed up with the Fraud team to deliver a Cyber Fraud and Cyber Security Member development session. We talked about the measures in place to protect us as against cyber-crime but also the dangers we still face and how everyone can play their part in recognising threats. We were joined by Suffolk and Norfolk Police to talk about the dangers of Cyber Fraud in our personal lives too. The recording of this interesting and informative session and the accompanying slides can be found on the Member Development Teams channel.

General update

In January, Customer Services was brought into the Digital and Programme Management service area and we are pleased to report that good working relationships have been established across the teams and joined up work on customer service delivery through all channels (face to face, telephone and online) is a key factor in this being a successful move. Digital service delivery remains consistently above target, with around 81% of Service Desk calls resolved within the first day and 93% within a week. Satisfaction with online services remains consistent also, with a rating of 4.33 out of 5 stars (from 936 respondents in January). We will be doing further work in the coming year on understanding customer satisfaction on a wider scale.

ASSETS

Developments, Acquisitions and Disposals

The Nexus breaking ground ceremony took place on 1 February and the foundations are now complete and works are progressing to programme.

Enabling works have also been completed at Jubilee Terrace, Lowestoft and the site was handed over to the Economic Development team earlier this month so that demolition can begin.

Building Services

The repair and refurbishment work to the footbridge of the Ravine in Lowestoft has been completed and both the bridge and road below are fully open. This has been a difficult and complex piece of work due to the age, construction and heritage listing of the bridge.

The restoration of the Aldeburgh Jubilee Shelter is now complete and safety repairs and installation of a new path are also complete at Cavendish Park, Felixstowe.

Repairs to the timber bridge in the public open space on Euston Avenue in Rushmere St Andrew are now complete.

Rent reviews and lease agreements

We continue to make significant progress with completing outstanding rent reviews and lease renewals. Since 1 October 2023, 78 lease events have been completed resulting in an annual rental increase of in excess over £130k.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

UK Shared Prosperity Fund Skills and Employment Programme

We are pooling part of our UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation (£136k out of a total programme budget of £473k) with the other Suffolk district and borough councils to deliver a county-wide Skills and Employment programme. Suffolk County Council, as the strategic lead for skills in the county, have been commissioned to appoint a provider to deliver two strands of skills and employment support to adults and young people.

Youth support will focus on those that are hardest to reach across the county and help them move successfully into the labour market. The service will provide intensive and flexible 1:1 support for young people aged 16-24 who are facing multiple and/or significant barriers. Focussing primarily on those who are not in employment, education or training, the service will support individuals to address barriers, develop 'soft' skills, 'hard' skills and gain basic qualifications. 'Personal development leads' will support the customer through an individual journey of development appropriate to their needs by utilising existing or new personal support, skills programmes and other activities.

We would like to see a multi-stranded approach to adult support which can work with individuals aged 18 or over who may be economically inactive or employed. The activity should include an initial assessment and a formal plan of action, which will signpost to other existing provision and include appropriate interventions/activities funded directly by this project.

The County Council will be the contract holder and together with the districts and borough will act as a consortium for service development, monitoring and reporting. It is expected that the supplier will have knowledge of existing providers and signpost to other funded services as relevant to ensure best use of funding and to reduce duplication.

Leiston Masterplan Progress

We are working closely with Leiston Town Council, the Leiston Community Land Trust and Place Board partners to progress the Leiston Masterplan. The proposed Market Square site will now be subject to a detailed design, feasibility and viability assessment. This will focus on our assets on Sizewell Road and our land ownership to the rear of these buildings and will test the viability of a mixed-use scheme incorporating residential, commercial and community building within a new focal point for the town centre.

Sizewell C are providing funding of £250k to progress the design, feasibility and viability work which is expected to be commissioned this Spring and completed by the end of 2024.

The proposed Market Square development, alongside other significant town centre enhancements such as the transport and traffic scheme, is supported by the Town Council (within their existing and emerging Neighbourhood Plans) and Community Land Trust.

Lowestoft Towns Fund ‘meet the buyer’ event

We hosted a ‘meet the buyer’ event at East Point Pavilion on 5 March. This provided an opportunity for potential local suppliers to understand more about the £67m Towns Fund regeneration programme and the construction contracts which will be let in the coming months. Presentations were provided by both the Regeneration and Procurement teams to around 80 local suppliers with the aim of ensuring as much contract spend as possible can be retained within the local area.

Formation of the Suffolk Business Board

With the closure of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership at the end of March and the integration of their functions into Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils, Suffolk County Council is recruiting business leaders to sit on the new Suffolk Business Board. The priority of the new Suffolk economy structure is to develop a new county-wide economic strategy and programme. The Business Board will represent the local business community in steering the development of the new strategy. Candidates for the Board are being sought who represent the diversity of the Suffolk economy, can demonstrate sector expertise, experience of leadership, credibility to champion the county and region and have the ability to convene and represent a collective view.

With the largest economy in the county, including economic assets of national and international significance alongside a resilient and diverse Small and Medium Enterprise base, it is important that East Suffolk is appropriately represented on this Board. Officers are making contact with business leaders in the district to ensure they are aware of this opportunity and encouraging them to apply to become a member of the Board. The Board will be very influential in the delivery of key economic programmes such as business support and skills development.

PARKING SERVICES

Parking Review

Felixstowe – we met with Felixstowe Town Council at the end of February and presented options for changes in parking regulations based on the feedback that we gathered in previous sessions. The next step is to summarise some options for the Town Council to agree, before going out to public consultation.

Beccles – the next meeting with Beccles Town Council is taking place in April where we will present options. The next steps will be as set out above for Felixstowe.

Bungay – we are currently reviewing our data on parking issues in Bungay and will be setting up a date to meet with the Town Council again in the coming weeks to discuss.

Framlingham – we are confirming with the County Council’s transport team regarding the works that has been mapped out for the town.

Once we have agreed the proposals for the above locations, we will focus on other towns with Halesworth next in line.

With the changes to Lowestoft town centre, we also want to focus on a review of Lowestoft town centre parking and signage.

National Parking Platform

We are working closely with Data Protection, Procurement, ICT and Legal Services to move forward with the National Parking Platform. This scheme will allow customers to use any payment platform (not just RingGo) when parking in our car parks. We are aiming to join the pilot in April. Four cashless parking providers have expressed an interest with a fifth provider joining soon.

Resurfacing

Chapel Lane in Wickham Market was resurfaced on 18 March 2024. We are obtaining quotes to resurface Angel Lane North in Halesworth.

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ENERGY

Sizewell C update

Sizewell C Co commenced the Sizewell C Development Consent Order (DCO) on 15 January 2024, one of the first formal steps on the road to delivering the new 3.2GW nuclear power station. The project was granted development consent in July 2022 and whilst some preparatory works have been taking place, formal commencement of the DCO only recently occurred. A large number of obligations in the DCO and associated Deed of Obligation had to be satisfied before commencement could be undertaken. Several governance groups also had to be established. Officers have been working with Sizewell C and other stakeholders ensuring that all the commitments are being met.

LionLink update

The promoters of the project, National Grid Ventures (NGV), have submitted their Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report, which will establish the scope of the environmental assessments and content of the Environmental Statement to be undertaken and submitted with the application for development consent in the future. The Scoping Request comprising the Scoping Report is submitted by NGV to the Planning Inspectorate who must provide a Scoping Opinion within 42 days of receiving the request. We have been consulted on this document and officers are now reviewing the reports and a response to the consultation is being drafted.

National Grid Electricity System Operator (NGESO) East Anglia Study

The Offshore Coordination Support Scheme (OCSS) run by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero awarded funding to the promoters of Sea Link, a National Grid reinforcement project, and Five Estuaries and North Falls (two offshore wind projects), to enable them to work together and explore the potential for coordination as part of the Offshore Transmission Network Review Early Opportunities workstream. The East Anglia

Study assesses the different ways to transfer electricity once it has landed from specific offshore windfarms and interconnectors off the coast of East Anglia to where it is needed. A letter was written to the Government raising concerns in relation to the implications of the funding awarded as part of the OCSS and to request greater transparency of the decision-making associated with outputs. We have engaged with this study and the final report was published on 12 March 2024. We are reviewing this report.

Other Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects

We continue to engage with the promoters of the projects affecting our district. It is anticipated that RWE will submit their development consent application for the Five Estuaries Offshore Windfarm shortly.

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PLANNING

Development Management

Following a consultation between December 2023 and February 2024, we have progressed a new draft Local Validation List document which is recommended to be adopted by the Strategic Planning Committee on 8 April. The Local Validation List is a key tool in ensuring that planning applications are accompanied by the correct detail, information, surveys, plans and assessments to properly inform good decision-making. The Local Validation List has to meet five key principles - Necessity, Precision, Proportionality, Fitness for Purpose and Assistance. Once adopted, the Local Validation List will be launched in a more interactive web-based form, in line with other recent digital advances in the service.

Policy and Specialist Services

On 6 March we began a consultation on the preparation of a Planning Position Statement for the Kirkley Waterfront site in Lowestoft, seeking views on what this document should contain. This large site, much of which is vacant, is identified for redevelopment in the Waveney Local Plan and the preparation of the Planning Position Statement will help to bring development forward. The consultation ends on 3 April.

On 5 March Cabinet approved the five year statutory review of the Waveney Local Plan, concluding that this remains effective and that an update is not necessary at this time. Alongside this, Cabinet also approved a new Local Development Scheme for East Suffolk, providing up to date information on the planning policy documents being prepared and setting out an indicative timetable for the future preparation of an East Suffolk Local Plan. This will be kept under review, pending the national reforms to plan-making which we are anticipating coming in from Autumn 2024.

Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain came into force on 12 February 2024 for major development planning applications, with smaller developments to follow from 2 April (some categories of development will be exempt).

The 2024 Quality of Place Awards will be opening for nominations on 2 April, inviting submissions of projects that celebrate high quality design in the district. We look forward to receiving this year's entries.

A series of Member training sessions provided by our Specialist Services team are underway in March and April, open to all Members and covering arboriculture, heritage, landscape, ecology and design and placemaking.

COASTAL MANAGEMENT

Lowestoft Flood Protection

No funding was allocated to the Lowestoft Tidal Barrier project in the Spring Statement on 6 March and so we informed the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs of our intention to withdraw the Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) application on 12 March with a view to formally withdrawing the TWAO on 28 March. If no funding is pledged before 28 March, the project will continue its full closure process. If funding is pledged after this date, it will not be viable to re-start the project due to the increased costs of pausing, the need to submit a new TWAO application and programme delays leading to an inability to access the navigation channel for construction. We met with Peter Aldous MP on 8 March to share the TWAO withdrawal timeline with him. The Environment Agency has been informed of the project's current status and timeline and Peter Aldous MP has also informed the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs of this.

Incident response

Coastal Partnership East has an out of hours incident reporting system in place (a SITREP report) and each morning a weather check is carried out that indicates whether we need to shut flood gates or put the Lowestoft Flood defences up. This mechanism is funded solely by the Council and we are in discussions with other councils regarding a contribution towards this system.

We have closed the Felixstowe flood gates on a number of occasions over the past few months. February and March have seen less extreme weather systems and storms compared to the previous three months. There are high astronomical tides from 8 - 12 April when the Suffolk coast will likely experience changes in beach levels, cliff erosion and movement in various locations.

On 8 March we submitted our review and technical advice to the draft outputs of the National Coast and Erosion Risk Mapping 2 project. This Environment Agency led national project is due to be launched in the Summer/Autumn months and will be housed on the same gov.uk website as the new Shoreline Management Plan Explorer.

Resilient Coasts

Work has begun on baselining communities' readiness to adapt across the Resilient Coasts pilot locations. We have worked with Hello Lamp Post and will place QR codes at each pilot location (Corton and Gunton, Lowestoft, Pakefield, Southwold and Thorpeness) where members of the public can interact with the AI based engagement tool to find out more about the coast and adaptation.

Resilient Coasts is also one of the major sponsors of the Suffolk Youth Climate Conference taking place in July and we will be hosting a stand and holding a workshop at the event. The Regional Flood and Coastal Committee will also be joining the team with a stand and a workshop.

Capital bid success

We submitted capital bids for a range of works last year for the 2024/25 financial year. Three projects gained funding.

Southwold North Wall toe works – Phase 2 – £2m

This project will look to install a new line of steel sheet toe piles in front of the existing toe piles. The existing piles have become exposed due to the reducing beach levels and the constant abrasion by the beach material has worn holes in them. As a result, material is being washed out from under the wall and, in turn, the promenade above causing large voids. Without these works, the sea wall and promenade would become unstable and have to be closed to the public and also to the seasonal beach huts that sit on the prom during the summer season. Planning work is underway with all works to be completed before the end of the 24/25 financial year.

North Denes health and safety surfacing works – £200k

This project looks to address the ongoing trip hazards along the entire length of the 1.5km North Denes promenade. The promenade surface is made up of large concrete slabs and each has expansion joints that, as a result of the now regular wave overtopping, loses material. This leaves longitudinal and crossways open channels that are a significant trip hazard to the promenade users. Over the years various materials have been used to patch but this is only a short-term fix. A product that was used over 12 years ago and is still holding fast today has been revisited and by working with the manufacturer, we have planned these works to be a “fit and forget” solution for the next 10 to 15 years plus. Once complete, this will be a significant cost saving for the Council.

Standalone aids to navigation markers – £300k

We have a large number of navigation markers marking the ends of timber and rock groynes. These markers are administered by Trinity House and are a legal requirement to warn maritime users of the underwater hazards. Typically the markers are fixed directly to the timber groynes but as they reach the end of their design life, they are unable to support the navigation markers and so fall into the sea. Recovery and reinstatement has significant challenges and in more and more cases we are unable to refix the markers. As a result, we run the risk of having enforcement action taken against us. This project will install standalone steel piles with a new navigation marker on top. The piles will stand independently to the groyne and will have a 25-plus year design life. As such, we will save maintenance costs. We have worked closely with Trinity House and have also been able to rationalise the marker field from Corton to Ness Point, further reducing the future number of navigational assets required. Once the new markers are in place, all existing markers will be removed and disposed of.

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Storm Babet funding support

Government funded schemes to support residents and businesses closed on 25 January 2024. Finance, along with other teams across the Council, worked with the Anglia Revenues Partnership and Suffolk County Council to distribute flood relief funds to affected residents and businesses as quickly as possible and in accordance with Government criteria. We administered the payment of:

- 264 Community Recovery Grants applications from residents totalling £132k. A total of £181,805.82 of Council Tax Discount was also applied to approved applications as per the scheme guidance.
- 34 Business Recovery Grants of £2,500, totalling £85k.

Year End and External Audit

Following the setting of the 2024/25 Budget, we are now moving into year-end and preparations for this have now started. April and May is an intense period as we prepare the draft Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 which has a statutory deadline for publication on our website of 31 May 2024. Despite the backlog in external audit nationally, the statutory deadline for local authorities to publish the draft accounts remains unchanged.

The backlog in the publication of audited accounts of local bodies in England has grown to an unacceptable level. The number of outstanding opinions peaked on 30 September 2023 at 918. As at 31 December 2023, the backlog of outstanding audit opinions stood at 771. Proposals have been put forward to address the national backlog which consists of three phases:

- Phase 1: Reset involving clearing the backlog of historical audit opinions up to and including the financial year 2022/23 by 30 September 2024.
- Phase 2: Recovery from Phase 1 in a way that does not cause a recurrence of the backlog by using backstop dates to allow assurance to be rebuilt over multiple audit cycles.
- Phase 3: Reform involving addressing systemic challenges in the local audit system and embedding timely financial reporting and audit.

We have responded to a consultation on these proposals.

Our External Auditors, Ernest and Young, provided an update to the Audit & Governance Committee on 11 March. This covered an update on their Value for Money work for 2021/22 and 2022/23, their approach to the audit for these years in light of the above proposals and to discuss their audit plan for 2023/24.

Marketplace Event - 21 February

The Finance team, along with the Anglia Revenues Partnership and Internal Audit, had stands at the marketplace event and showed great creativity in presenting their

services. There was a fantastic atmosphere in the atrium at Riverside with plenty of interactive activities. The event was well attended and enjoyed by all and provided a great opportunity for these services to showcase what they do.

Procurement

Work has begun on rewriting our Procurement Strategy with the aim of aligning the new Strategy with Our Direction 2028. In January, a well-attended and informative workshop for Members and officers was held to help define the priorities for procurement. The feedback given by those who attended was incredibly valuable and the Procurement Manager is now in the process of scoping out the new Procurement Strategy which will be brought back to Members for approval in due course.

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

We arranged face-to-face training on Anti-Social Behaviour for all those involved in the subject across the Council including Housing, Communities, Legal and other teams. This will lead to a better understanding of the subject and improve joint working.

We are working with ICT on a scheme to help identify fly tipping hot spots in each ward using mapping systems on SharePoint that are available to all Members.

Work is taking place with the Communications team to provide more and better information on dog control and signage across the district in an aim to be more dog friendly.

Implementation of the new Idox system started on 11 March and over the next few weeks the process will be finalised.

We are working with and advising the Planning and Regeneration teams in respect of the Battery Green proposals in Lowestoft including noise impacts and the Kirkley Waterfront scheme including contaminated land, air quality and noise.

The Gull Wing bridge is coming towards the end of its build and we have advised on noise and dust throughout its construction and very few complaints have been received. The final push requires extended working hours into Sunday daytimes.

We are providing a more active response to bonfire complaints, continuing to use a graduated enforcement approach and encouraging multi-agency working where appropriate. Recently we investigated complaints of a bonfire in Hollesley, identifying that a company had not obtained an exemption from the Environment Agency to burn wood. We arranged for this to be investigated resulting in a solution to the problem.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Greenprint Forum held a successful 'Nourishing Local & Sustainable Food' event on 28 February. We served sustainable food in a community venue and showcased local community groups. The event was near capacity with a number of landowners and farmers in attendance, which resulted in 'fruitful' discussions and new connections being made.

We are currently updating and expanding our Climate Action Framework, now titled the Environmental Impact Plan, to acknowledge that this will be the key document that summarises publicly how we are delivering on the Environment Impact element of 'Our Direction 2028' and our wider climate and sustainability work. The plan is to submit the document to Full Council in July. It is currently twice the size of the previous version!

We have recently met a number of Town Council representatives on climate change. There are opportunities for further support and collaboration where resource allow. We are looking at ways to build more peer-to-peer and Local Government Association support plus assisting Town Councils to identify the areas where they can make the greatest tangible difference. A key next step is convening a workshop for Town Council Clerks and colleagues to discuss the challenges and opportunities and move forward from there.

WEEE consultation

The Government is consulting on extended producer responsibility measures to improve the collection of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) for reuse, repair and recycling. They are looking for ideas on how WEEE can be prevented from entering the residual waste stream to stop precious metals being lost and to reduce fires caused by exploding batteries. The consultation asked for feedback on how distribution hubs and freight fulfilment houses should be held responsible for the electricals they place on the market, as well as traditional routes to market such as shops and online retailers. Work continues on the implementation plan for the kerbside collection of small electrical items in East Suffolk.

Food Savvy

We have supported the Saxmundham Community Fridge with Food Savvy giveaways to help residents reduce food waste. Volunteers from the Fridge have undertaken Food Savvy training so they can give advice on reducing food waste in the home at the same time as reducing food waste from the commercial sector by redistributing it. We also attended the Greenprint Forum on Food and Farming with Food Savvy messaging, giveaways and recipe cards and supported a whole school assembly and class activities at Coldfair Green Primary school in Knodishall. Around 150 children engaged with food waste reduction messaging and activities.

Waste and recycling education

We supported three tours of the Energy From Waste plant in Great Blakenham with approximately 60 children from Kesgrave Heath Primary School. The tours included talks on what to recycle at Suffolk's recycling centres and what happens to waste that is collected from our homes. The tours allowed the children to see what happens to residual waste collected from their homes and they were even allowed to move the crane arms used for mixing waste before it was loaded into the plant for incineration.

We have also supported residents in a supported living scheme in Lowestoft to improve recycling and reduce food waste.

Fly tipping process

We are working closely with East Suffolk Services Limited to streamline the current process of reporting and clearing fly tips. This includes bringing fly tips on housing land into the main reporting channel and the capture of data on clearance.

Street cleansing pilot

The pilot, which ran from November to February in Lowestoft and Felixstowe has now ended. A full review is being carried out and an action plan for the service is now being developed. Initial feedback from stakeholders has been positive on the cleanliness of the areas within the pilot zones. The previous service has now resumed prior to agreement on the specification for Street Cleansing going forward.

Community litter picks

Bookings for community litter picks continue to climb and during March, groups have joined in with the national Spring Clean campaign. We currently have 200 litter sticks and 100 hoops to loan out and these are being used to full effect. Positively, there may be additional funding for new equipment, to include gloves and high vis jackets, some on longer term loan.

Litter and Fido Bin Policy

The consultation on the Policy ended in January and, overall, there was a positive response. The Policy is now being taken forward and will be published and communicated. This covers the types of bin we will provide, our stance on BBQs and how the collection of third-party bins on land that is not our responsibility will be managed.

Appendices

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| Appendices: |
| None |

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| Background reference papers: |
| None |