



## FULL COUNCIL

Wednesday, 27 September 2023

<b>Subject</b>	Cabinet Members' Report and Outside Bodies Representatives' Report to Council
<b>Report by</b>	Councillor Caroline Topping Leader of the Council

Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
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Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is <b>NOT</b> in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not applicable
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	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' Reports to Council

<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Caroline Topping, Leader of the Council
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### **Democratic Services**

Since the May elections, we have supported new and returning members to undertake their role.

The early retirement of the Democratic Services Manager, Karen Cook, in May 2023, provided an opportunity for us to review the current structure of the team. We consider the new structure will optimise use of resources, raise the profile of the civic, member development and scrutiny functions and better meet business needs, the needs of the Chair, councillors, officers and the public we serve.

Lorraine Fitch is the new Democratic Services Manager and has joined us from a management position at the social enterprise, Turning Point. Lorraine also has previous experience working for another district council in Suffolk.

Nicola Wotton, the former Deputy Democratic Services Manager, has taken up a new role within the team as Member Support and Civic Manager. In this role, Nicola will support the Chair as Civic Secretary, manage the Democratic Services Officer with responsibility for scrutiny and member development and the Political Group Support Officers. Nicola has taken over the Civic Secretary function from the Executive Support Officer, Louise Lennard, who I would like to thank for her 14 years dedicated service to the Chairs of both East Suffolk Council and Suffolk Coastal District Council.

### **Legal Services**

We have recently been involved in several interesting and high-profile projects.

In May 2023, we successfully applied to the High Court for an injunction ordering Tingdene (North Denes) Ltd to remove the unauthorised development from land at North Denes. The site has now been cleared.

In August 2023, we secured an Order requiring the occupants of council land north-east of Hamilton Road in Lowestoft to vacate the land and remove their vehicles. The land has now been vacated.

In September 2023, we completed the Landguard Trust documentation including the Memorandum of Understanding, the staff transfer agreement and the lease of the nature reserve.

We have also completed the leases to East Suffolk Services Limited (ESSL) in respect of depots at Rotterdam Road and Ufford Park and the waste transfer station at Leiston, as well as providing legal support in the contract work associated with ESSL.

<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor David Beavan, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing
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### **Tenant Services**

Housing Officers have been focussed on meeting new councillors and carrying out estate walkabouts with them to discuss local areas of concern and also been completing Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans for those living in our general needs blocks of flats. The information gathered identifies who and what assistance is required in the event of an emergency.

Significant work to address breaches of the Rent Standard identified in 2022 is ongoing. Three temporary Rent Officers have been recruited and are supporting the existing Rent Officers by covering their day-to-day work so they can concentrate solely on the rent audit and refund process. This will continue for several months. There will be a positive impact on rent arrears figures once the task is complete since any refund due to tenants will be used to clear any existing arrears in the first instance.

Our Financial Inclusion Officers continue to support tenants in the cost-of-living crisis by helping them reduce bills and living costs. We are also actively checking that our tenants are claiming every benefit they are entitled to.

### **Private Sector Housing**

The new Safe Suffolk Renters team is now in place and ready to commence its first inspections. Initially we will concentrate on privately rented homes in Raglan Street, Lowestoft, an area of deprivation and low-income households with over 50% of properties rented. There will be an engagement event looking to understand the challenges tenants and landlords face in the current housing market, then ongoing advice and support to help residents cope with Winter challenges.

The Warm Homes team is now actively processing applications for the latest Government energy efficiency programme - the Home Upgrade Grant. This scheme targets households with a total income of less than £31k per annum living in energy inefficient homes that are not connected to mains gas. Funding can be used to deliver insulation improvements, heat pumps, solar systems etc. We have already received hundreds of enquires and are processing these as fast as possible. The scheme will run until March 2025.

### **Housing Needs**

We have continued to experience high levels of demand due to external pressures such as the cost-of-living crisis, an increase in private rents affecting local affordability, changes in welfare benefits, the freeze in Local Housing Allowance etc. In trying to address some of these issues, we are actively working with 523 households under 'Prevention' or 'Relief' duties. The number of applications on the Gateway to Homechoice register is currently 4,526. These figures change daily but they give an indication of current demand.

We are soon to launch 'East Suffolk Lettings', a new scheme approved by Cabinet in July to increase access to the Private Rented Sector and minimise use of temporary

accommodation. The new scheme offers landlords a financial incentive to work with us to offer lower rents. This is a fantastic opportunity for us to help more people achieve a sustainable and affordable solution.

We have been successful in receiving funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (the Department) under the Homelessness Prevention Grant allocation (£630,285 for 2023/24 and £660,398 for 2024/25) all of which goes to address homelessness pressures in the district. We also continue to deliver numerous services and projects across the district under the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) grant funding. We were awarded £2,434,258 for the period 2022/25 and this helps us with initiatives such as the Safe to Stay Hub, Housing First Model and outreach support as part of an integrated system to take account of the health and social care needs of people in our community.

In August this year and following a review of the service by the Department, it was confirmed that further funding would be awarded under RSI to allow us to focus on people's needs and working with those that have a history of rough sleeping. A total of £36,278 has been awarded through to 2025 and we will be working with the Department to deliver a focused plan that makes best use of funding over the coming months.

### **Housing repairs and maintenance**

We continue to be busy with compliance works, mainly around fire stopping in three retired living schemes and St Peter's Court. We are also in the process of recruiting a new inspector who will focus solely on damp and mould reports.

In the coming weeks a portacabin will be delivered to the depot at Rotterdam Road to enable staff to work safely onsite and better support site-based staff.

### **Housing investment**

In recent months we have made significant progress in moving from development and acquisitions to looking more widely at the Housing Revenue Account investment programme with the long-term goal of creating a more sustainable housing portfolio.

We have continued to progress the day-to-day operational functions alongside business improvement projects including work towards the creation of a Housing Design Guide and an Asset Management Strategy for the Housing Revenue Account. We have also been supporting two key strategic regeneration sites: Kirkley Waterfront and the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood.

Development programme summary – for the current financial year, 22 properties are due to complete via Section 106, acquisitions, new build and redevelopment. Of these, 19 will have an affordable rent.

Capital programme summary - stock condition surveys have commenced and will allow us to produce Energy Performance Certificates. This initial project will cover 27% of the stock, with the information being used to forecast and allocate future budgets. We have completed a desk top survey of our homes with regard to Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RACC) and have concluded that the risk is very low. The stock condition surveys will highlight any potential RACC in our sheltered homes.

Property programme summary – a new area of focus with standard processes implemented to ensure decision making around property assets is data driven and robustly scrutinised.

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## **COMMUNITIES**

### **Community Partnerships**

All eight Community Partnerships have met at least once since the election in May. Some are reviewing their priorities, whilst others are focussing on identifying additional projects to address their existing priority themes. All councillors are urged to attend and contribute to their Community Partnership since your input is vital. The date of the annual Community Partnerships Forum at Trinity Park is 22 March 2024.

The Community Partnership Board continues to develop a programme of Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) pilots to test the viability of DRT as a solution to tackle social isolation and loneliness. The services are aimed at those who do not own a car and/or do not live within reach of public transport. Key target audiences include young people and also those who own a car but would be willing to leave it at home for local journeys given a reliable transport option. Key outcomes of the programme include:

- Katch DRT pilot launched 11 April 2023. The service has operated six days a week for 6 months serving residents in and around a route between Framlingham, Parham, Hacheston, Wickham Market, Campsea Ashe, Tunstall, Snape and Snape Maltings. In total 904 passengers have used the service.
- Buzzabout DRT initial pilot operated two days a week from April 2022 to 31 August 2023 with a total of 758 passengers making use of this service. The pilot has been extended for another twelve months for two days a week from 5 September 2023 serving residents in an extended area around St Olaves, Lound, Somerleyton, Blundeston, Gunton and areas of Lowestoft.
- Katch now has an app that passengers can use on their mobile device to book a trip in advance or when out and about. The Flexiroute App was launched on 11 April and will also be operational on the Buzzabout pilot extension by the end of September.

### **Ease the Squeeze Cost-of-Living Programme**

In late August we received our 1,000<sup>th</sup> referral for help with the rising cost-of-living. The referrals are triaged by Community Help Officers and any requests for support with money are passed through to our Financial Inclusion Officers – these two teams make up our new Community Help Hub.

The Financial Inclusion team took on 21 new cases in August, noteworthy is that five of these are owner-occupiers. Help was requested with accessing benefits/benefits checks, budgeting, and obtaining grant funding. One brilliant outcome from cases closed in August was a Pension Credit backdate of £1,583.

We have the long-awaited go ahead to use the Low Income Family Tracker to plan targeted preventative campaigns. The team is well established in our new outreach venue, Number 28 Community Hub in Bungay, and we are considering viable options for other outreach locations around East Suffolk.

The 2023/24 Winter Ease the Squeeze Warm Welcomes programme launched earlier this month with a deadline for applications of 22 September. All 'Warm Welcomes' are expected to open by 30 October.

### **Right to Bid**

The next virtual 'Assets of Community Value' briefing for Town and Parish Councils will take place on 27 September and will cover legislation, good practice examples, funding opportunities and ensuring that applications work in the spirit of the legislation – bringing important local assets into community ownership. See [How the Right to Bid Works » East Suffolk Council](#).

### **Disability Forums and advice services**

Waveney Disability Forum members have engaged with the Lowestoft Seafront Vision proposal, Jubilee Parade and the Gullwing Bridge build. The Suffolk Coastal Disability Forum has engaged with Felixstowe's Seashore Village. Great feedback has helped to ensure that all developments are accessible. Disability Advice North East Suffolk are hoping to expand their office on Rotterdam Road, Lowestoft and relevant councillors have been approached to support the expansion through their Enabling Communities Budgets.

The Government's Changing Places (fully accessible toilets) funding has been allocated to Africa Alive, Kessingland which is great news.

### **Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF)**

Compliance visits have taken place over the Summer to check-in with providers and to see the HAF programmes in action. Data on the take-up of places over the Summer will be received shortly and an analysis of the Summer programme will be available in the Autumn - planning will then start for the Christmas period.

### **Youth**

Youth Takeover Day will take place on 17 November with schools attending either Riverside or East Suffolk House. The theme will be confirmed shortly.

A report on young people's experience of the cost-of-living crisis has been produced as part of the Youth Voice project and can be viewed [here](#). A new scheme for young people to shadow councillors and officers in order to find out more about what councils do and what people do in their respective roles is being scoped.

### **LEISURE**

#### **Alde Valley Academy/Leiston Leisure Centre – Sizewell C legacy 3G pitch**

A report will come forward to Cabinet in November for approval to support the building and operation of the pitch in partnership with the Academy and EDF. The funding will be provided by EDF and the facility will be used by the Academy, contractors and the community. It will need to be operational by January 2025.

### **Felixstowe Indoor Bowls and Felixstowe Cricket Club**

A planning pre application is being prepared by Pulse Design and Build to consider the proposed indoor bowls and cricket pavilion designs, with particular feedback on the indoor bowls facility, height levels and car parking sought. Once feedback has been received and the application amended as necessary, consultation with Deben Fields will take place.

### **Healthy Behaviours**

Work continues to prepare us for our new role providing support with Healthy Behaviours including adult weight management, smoking cessation and physical activity. A basic service will be provided from 1 October and then, over the following 6 months, this will be further developed and increased. More detailed information will be provided in the next report.

### **Decarbonisation of leisure centres**

The Government's Salix public sector funding scheme is due to open for applications from mid October. Guidance on applications has been provided and we are working with our leisure development partners to prepare applications for the Waterlane, Waveney Valley, Leiston and Deben Leisure Centres.

### **Tour of Britain Cycle Race**

The Tour of Britain held Stage 5 of its race in Suffolk on 7 September, starting and finishing in Felixstowe. The day proved hugely successful with thousands lining the roads in Suffolk.

## **TOURISM**

### **Suffolk tourism structure review**

We are working with all Suffolk councils to review the current tourism support structures. This follows a Government review of tourism funding and structures and the Suffolk devolution deal which has a commitment to form a Local Visitor Economy Partnership - one of the new structures recommended by the Government review.

### **Tourism asset development**

A key aim of the East Suffolk Visitor Economy Strategy is investing in our assets to support the visitor economy. Previous developments include Felixstowe Seafront Gardens and East Point Pavilion, Lowestoft. Current development projects include:

- Felixstowe Beach Village/Activity Park – located in the south seafront area, the activity park, which includes a range of open air facilities, opened in August and is proving very popular. Final completion of the Beach Village, which includes accessible beach pods for hire, beach huts, public realm and a Changing Places toilet block is expected in late September.
- Martello P Tower - project to reopen the Napoleonic tower and transform the surrounding area to create a year-round visitor destination on Felixstowe's south seafront. A funding Expression of Interest has been made to the National Lottery Heritage Fund with a decision expected shortly.
- Lowestoft Seafront Vision – part of the Towns Fund programme involving major public realm enhancements of Royal Green and Royal Plain including refurbishment of the popular fountains. A planning application has recently been submitted.
- Jubilee Parade Phase 3 – regeneration of a key public asset and surrounding public realm following the award of £4.3m from the Levelling Up Fund. This will create a new two storey building on the seafront adjacent to the Eastern Edge development

and includes a new seafront café with decking onto the beach, toilets, showers, a Changing Places facility, new concessions, new lighting and an accessible lift between the upper and lower promenade. A full planning application will be submitted by October with project completion expected in Spring 2025.

- T-Stats tourism data platform - T-Stats is an online database that helps track and understand the visitor economy. It can track accommodation, occupancy, visits to attractions, footfall etc as well as the impact of digital marketing and events. We are currently developing the platform and working with the Suffolk Coast Destination Management Organisation to recruit accommodation providers and attractions. Once operational, it will be able to support tourism investment decisions, monitor the impact of major infrastructure projects such as Sizewell C and inform project decisions/development.

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### **Licensing Services**

We have been training members of the Licensing Committee on licensing law, policy and the determination of licensing applications at Sub-committee hearings. The high level of enthusiasm from members has been welcomed.

We are currently consulting on our Statement of Licensing Policy and the outcome of the consultation will be reported to Licensing Committee in due course.

Since 1 May 2023, there have been 10 Licensing hearings dealing with 11 matters as follows:

- 4 x drivers
- 5 x premises of which 2 were reviews of an existing licence
- 1 x Temporary Event Notice
- 1 x film classification

We have attended outdoor events and festivals over the Summer, including the Suffolk Show and the Latitude Festival, to ensure that events are carried out pursuant to the conditions of Premises Licenses. We have also participated in Safety Advisory Group meetings to assist event organisers.

We have also responded to several enquiries in relation to opening times and times for the sale and supply of alcohol in the lead up to the World Cup final in August.

Taxi and Private Hire Licensing is due to be reviewed by Scrutiny Committee at its September meeting. Preparing the committee report has proved to be a valuable exercise for us, enabling us to review and reflect on the service provided.

### **Food and Safety**



We have met our targets for the delivery of food controls for the year 2022/23. These figures will be reported in more detail via the annual Food and Health & Safety Service Plan which will be brought to Full Council later in the year.

In August, we launched a project promoting the importance of gas and electrical safety checks for catering and hospitality venues and will be undertaking checks on all premises within East Suffolk.

### **Port Health**

We have been actively involved with policy shaping and design activities including the development of the future Border Target Operating Model. Publication of the final version is expected shortly and we are continuing to work towards delivery as detailed in the paper on today's agenda.

### **Health and Safety**

The Corporate Health and Safety team has been focused on supporting team leaders across the organisation to effectively manage health, safety and welfare. Health and safety management audits have been completed and areas where further support is required have been identified. Incident investigation awareness training has been delivered to the majority of managers and an annual cycle of programmed health and safety related tasks is being reintroduced.

<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Paul Ashton, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Corporate Services – Digital, Customer Services, HR and Assets
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### **Digital and Programme Management**

A major achievement for us in the last quarter was the programme management, migration and rollout of services to our new trading company East Suffolk Services Ltd. This included formation of the IT environment underpinning the new company, the transfer of data and processes and setting up all working environments to ensure there was no service disruption for the go live date. This work, combined with the work put in across a wide range of council services, ensured a smooth transition and was testament to the efforts of everyone involved with this project.

The digital service is measured by several Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), predominantly to understand satisfaction with online services and performance of our digital environments. This remains a high performing service and although we have been monitoring our provision to understand the effect of bringing the support of ESSL into the council fold, we are pleased to report that there has been no detrimental impact as a result of taking on this additional commitment. Our focus for the coming quarter is a review and ratification of our busy Digital Work Plan to ensure it meets the needs and aspirations of all services across the authority.

### **Customer Experience**

As part of the ongoing development of KPI reporting, the need for a dashboard providing insights on customer satisfaction was agreed. Within this sits an indicator on overall customer satisfaction, data for which is being built up in part through a customer satisfaction survey. This is now underway with an external provider contacting customers who have previously opted in to third party research. So far over 700 customers have provided us with information about their experiences with us, but we aim to obtain feedback from 1,200 customers by 29 September 2023 to ensure any data is statistically robust. This data will then be used to populate a customer satisfaction KPI dashboard.

Initial scoping, including the development of a Project Initiation Document, is underway to outline how we will undertake an organisational wide approach to interacting with our customers, with the aim of developing a Customer Experience Strategy early next year. This will help standardise our approach to customers regardless of how they contact us, for example through our call centre, via the website, or a direct approach, with the aim of building on our approach of putting the customer at the heart of all we do.

### **Human Resources**

We have been heavily involved in supporting the staff who transferred into ESSL on 1 July 2023. This involved the Transfer of Undertaking Protection of Employment Rights (TUPE) of 441 employees alongside uploading their payment details onto our Oracle payroll system to ensure a seamless transfer.

Work is also underway via various focus group sessions with staff to inform how our People Strategy will be updated since the current Strategy expires in 2024. Clear themes are starting to emerge including areas such as health and wellbeing and recruitment and retention. The updated Strategy will be presented to Cabinet in due course.

### **ASSETS**

#### **Developments, acquisitions and disposals**

- The contract to build the Nexus development in Lowestoft is ready to sign. This development will provide accommodation to support the renewable energy sector.
- Barnard's Way housing depot development is moving towards the RIBA stage 4 design stage. This site will provide purpose built accommodation for Housing Services and will free up space at the Rotterdam Road depot for ESSL operations.
- The redevelopment of public conveniences in Aldeburgh is also progressing, with designs moving to RIBA stage 2.
- South Beach, Lowestoft - work is progressing on the third phase of the Jubilee Terrace development. This project will add a terrace, new Changing Places and toilets, a new café and other retail units to the site currently occupied by Zak's Café. A cliff engineering assessment has been completed and work on a planning application is ongoing. A recent consultation event was well attended and the concept was well received by the public.
- Power Park, Hamilton Road, Lowestoft - Cabinet approved the purchase of a retail site on Hamilton Road which is progressing to completion. The site provides accommodation on the Power Park, with future redevelopment potential to support the offshore energy sector. Cabinet has approved a letting for another unit on the Power Park that was acquired by us in February 2023. The new tenant provides

support operations to the energy sector and this lease will allow the company to grow its renewables business.

- Oulton Broad - works have commenced on the installation of a new pontoon in Oulton Broad. This replaces the former 'Colman's Jetty' that was in a poor state of repair. The pontoon increases the capacity of Oulton Broad for yachts and dinghies and will be managed by the Harbourmaster. We are awaiting installation dates for the rebuilding of the footbridge over the Landspring Drain.
- Felixstowe - the transfer of Landguard Nature Reserve to the Landguard Partnership has been completed.
- Refurbishment of two public conveniences in Felixstowe is now complete with one more due to start next week.
- Lowestoft seafront - over the Summer, we worked with the Suffolk Coast Destination Management Organisation on a campaign promoting Lowestoft and the Eastern Edge beach huts. Thanks to the promotion, over the First Light Festival weekend, occupancy increased to 72%. Currently 11 huts have been sold and we continue to market the remainder.
- Seashore Village, Felixstowe – work is almost complete and we have received our first secured interest to purchase a new hut in the village, subject to contract.

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### **UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)**

We have been allocated £2.75m from the national UKSPF for the period 2022/23 – 2024/25 to invest in initiatives that will address inequality and contribute to levelling up across three investment priorities: Communities and Place, Supporting Local Business and People & Skills. The complementary Rural England Prosperity Fund provides £1.1m for investment in small businesses and community infrastructure in rural East Suffolk.

We have developed investment plan programmes for both funds. Progress against delivering these programmes includes:

- The Council acting as lead contractor on the Suffolk wide procurement of the new Growth Hub business support programme, which started delivery on 16 August.
- An East Suffolk Start-up Support Services programme with 137 enrolments to date.
- Business Energy Efficiency Grant Scheme providing grants of up to £15k for net zero adaptations.
- Grant schemes aimed at increasing the vibrancy of East Suffolk's market towns launched in early 2023. To date 28 grants have been awarded totalling £248k aimed at increasing footfall and dwell time through investment in public realm, town centre promotion and events.
- Initial work has begun on a local and countywide skills improvement programme which will be launched in 2024/25.

- Launch of the rural programme including the Rural Business Investment Fund and Business and Community Hub Fund. To date, 6 grants have been awarded totalling £97k.

### **Town revitalisation programme**

We continue to work with 12 towns across the district enabling them to identify their opportunities and challenges and deliver their priorities through locally developed actions plans. The programme is currently focusing on:

- Supporting towns to access the UKSPF High Street Improvement Grants scheme and Events, Art and Culture Grant scheme.
- Working with the Communities team on Dementia Friendly Towns (status achieved for Bungay) and exploring a wider programme that focuses on the broader inclusive towns agenda.
- Supporting multiple projects across the district including events development, marketing, wayfinding, asset development, capacity building, training, digital trails, markets support and visitor information.

### **Revive and Thrive Business Conference**

Along with the East of England Energy Group, we are hosting a business conference at the ORBIS Energy Centre on 3 October to promote opportunities in Lowestoft for energy sector investment. The conference will highlight the recently completed Lowestoft Employment Land Use Study, investment opportunities on the Power Park and the wider Lowestoft regeneration programme. Businesses attending will have the opportunity for 1:1 sessions with us to discuss their investment plans and receive business support advice.

### **Lowestoft Towns Deal programme**

We secured £24.9m from the Government's Towns Deal programme and together with additional funding from us and external partners, this £67m scheme is delivering five key projects to transform Lowestoft High Street. Key updates include:

- Cultural Quarter – concept design proposals have been submitted for pre-planning application advice with positive feedback received to date.
- Post Office gallery redevelopment – project submitted for full planning permission. Temporary art has been installed within the building windows. An application to the Arts Council's Capital Investment Fund for £600k is due to be submitted early October.
- Station building restaurant redevelopment – currently negotiating the purchase of this key gateway building from Network Rail.
- Planning application submitted for the Seafront Vision which involves a major public realm enhancement of Royal Green and Royal Plain.
- A £3.3m bid has been submitted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for the Lowestoft Town Hall project which was developed in partnership with Lowestoft Town Council (as building owner and project lead). A decision is expected in mid/late September.

### **Leiston Place Board**

This forum of local stakeholders will be established in October to provide strategic oversight of the delivery of the town centre masterplan, community and economic resilience and supporting the town in mitigating the impacts and realising the opportunities of the Sizewell

C development. We will be represented on the board by Cllrs Whitelock and Graham who are both local ward councillors.

### **North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood development**

We are delivering a masterplan for housing and new leisure, employment and education facilities. Key elements include integration and a strong connection with the surrounding town and countryside. Recent updates include:

- A co-design workshop series with statutory consultees is underway with participants from Suffolk County Council and wider Suffolk based groups. A workshop series with adjoining landowners is running in parallel to ensure regular feedback.
- Ecology Consultant appointed to undertake specific survey and assessment work to support the future planning application.
- Engagement Officer role, which will lead local stakeholder engagement, currently being recruited to.

### **Parking review**

A review of on-street parking provision across East Suffolk is underway, which is being carried out on a town-by-town basis. Felixstowe was chosen as the pilot town and work there should be complete by the end of October. This will include a further session on the proposals with the Town Council, business groups and others.

Beccles has been identified as the second location and contact has been made with the Town Council.

We will be submitting the proposals to Suffolk County Council as soon as agreement has been reached on a town-by-town basis. Timescales from that point on will be led by the County Council and it is not unusual for it to take over a year to implement changes and to conclude the legal process.

We have supported many events over the last few months including the Aldeburgh Carnival, First Light Festival, the Men's Tour of Britain and Love Felixstowe with specific parking requirements and road closures.

Resurfacing works are to be carried out to the Whapload Road car park in Lowestoft.

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### **ENERGY**

The Energy Projects team has been continuing to engage with project promoters on nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs) within or off the coast of East Suffolk, in addition to projects outside East Suffolk, these include:

<b>NSIPs connecting within or off the coast of East Suffolk</b>	<b>NSIPs outside East Suffolk</b>
Sizewell C new nuclear power station – consented	Bramford to Twinstead network reinforcement - examination
East Anglia One North offshore wind farm – consented	Norwich to Tilbury network reinforcement – pre-application
East Anglia Two offshore wind farm - consented	Hornsea Three offshore wind farm - consented
East Anglia Three offshore wind farm - consented	Hornsea Four offshore wind farm - consented
LionLink Multi-purpose Interconnector – pre-application	Norfolk Vanguard offshore wind farm - consented
Sea Link network reinforcement - pre-application	Boreas offshore wind farm - consented
Nautilus Multi-purpose Interconnector – pre-application	Sheringham and Dungeon Extensions – awaiting decision
Five Estuaries offshore wind farm – pre-application	
North Falls offshore wind farm – pre-application	

In addition to engaging with NSIP promoters, we also continue to engage with representatives from local communities and groups including Together Against Sizewell C, Stop Sizewell C, Suffolk Energy Action Solutions and Substation Action Save East Suffolk. Relevant Parish Councils such as Friston, Theberton and Aldeburgh cum Thorp are also being included in information streams, briefings etc.

### **Sizewell C Nuclear Power Station**

We are preparing for increased activity on the project, working with Sizewell C to ensure that the relevant requirements and Deed of Obligation commitments have been adhered to or agreed prior to work taking place. In addition to determining applications to discharge requirements, Sizewell C has also submitted various planning applications to undertake works, some of which fall outside the scope of the Development Consent Order. We also continue to engage with various Government officials on the delivery of the project alongside other NSIPs seeking to address cumulative concerns.

A refresher day with Suffolk County Council is being held at the end of the month to ensure everyone is up to speed and working in a coordinated fashion. In addition, to facilitate easy access to relevant and important information on the project for all stakeholders, we are developing an information portal.

### **LionLink Multi-purpose Interconnector and Nautilus Multi-purpose Interconnector**

Following National Grid Venture’s (NGV) consultation on the LionLink project last year, we submitted a response which can be accessed [here](#). NGV has advised that they will be holding further consultation from 8 September for eight weeks. We have been engaging with NGV on this consultation and will be reviewing the published material and providing a response before the deadline. We have also been providing input through expert topic meetings to help shape the Environmental Impact Assessment.

We continue to engage with NGV on the Nautilus project to understand the feasibility of a connection for this project outside of East Suffolk.

### **Sea Link – network reinforcement**

In National Grid Electricity Transmission’s (NGET) latest update on the project, they have committed to holding their statutory consultation later this year. We have been engaging with NGET in relation to the consultation and responded to the Statement of Community

Consultation produced by the promotor. NGET has also held several expert topic meetings which we have input into.

### **Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm and North Falls Offshore Wind Farm**

The statutory consultation for Five Estuaries was held between March and May this year, with the statutory consultation for North Falls held slightly later between May and July. Responses were provided highlighting our concerns regarding the impact of the offshore turbines on an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Our Five Estuaries submission can be found [here](#). The North Falls response can be found [here](#).

### **East Anglia One North, East Anglia Two and East Anglia Three Offshore Wind Farms**

The East Anglia Three project has commenced and we are currently reviewing the draft requirement discharge documents ahead of submission of the final documents for discharge to facilitate the delivery of the cable works in 2024.

Engagement with Scottish Power Renewables on the pre-commencement works associated with the East Anglia One North and East Anglia Two projects continues, involving both the discharge of requirements attached to the Development Consent Order and determination of a planning application for a temporary works compound.

### **Norwich to Tilbury network reinforcement**

A response was provided to the consultation held by NGET on the Norwich to Tilbury overhead line project between June and August this year and our response can be found [here](#).

### **Compensatory habitat**

It has also been necessary to engage with promoters of offshore wind projects in Norfolk and Lincolnshire in relation to compensatory measures required by their Development Consent Orders. This engagement has involved feeding into examinations, attending stakeholder groups and determining/being consulted on planning/marine licence applications.

### **Consultations**

We have continued to work closely with Government and fed into various consultations on the NSIP reform proposals this year including:

- [ESC-Response-to-Draft-Energy-National-Policy-Statements-Consultation.pdf \(eastsuffolk.gov.uk\)](#)
- [ESC-Response-to-Community-Benefits-Consultation.pdf \(eastsuffolk.gov.uk\)](#)

## **CLIMATE CHANGE**

### **Suffolk-level climate change workstreams**

The Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan (SCEP) continues to be driven forward by several collaborative groups. At the political level, the Suffolk Portfolio Holders group plays a key role alongside the Suffolk Chief Officers' Leadership Team in making recommendations to the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders group on funding and delivery of the SCEP.

The Portfolio Holders group has now reformed and met in August, with Cllr Smith-Lyte representing us. Chris Bally also took up the role of climate change advocate on behalf of the Suffolk local authorities. The SCEP's programme of projects has recently been updated

and will be presented to the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders group for consideration in the Autumn.

### **Recruitment**

Our Climate Change & Sustainability team has grown recently with an intern (Sorcha Barnes) joining us over the Summer, a new apprentice (Jamie Bretton) and graduate-level apprentice (Amy Duran) joining in October. These officers will support our existing team of Paul Mackie and Daniel Wareing, particularly around externally-facing projects, communications and habitat monitoring alongside spending 50% of their time on their apprenticeship qualification studies.

### **Community engagement**

Daniel Wareing has continued his programme of community engagement, representing us at the GreenPrint Forum, Suffolk Waste Partnership and Suffolk Climate Change Partnership and also at a range of events including the Latitude Festival, environment events in Waldringfield and Campsea Ashe, the Men's Tour and Folk East. He has spoken with hundreds of attendees over the course of these events.

Cllr Smith-Lyte recently represented the Suffolk Portfolio Holders group at the LGA's regional Climate Change Group.

We have had initial discussions around updating our net zero plan with the aim of commissioning this work shortly. We have also started to look at opportunities to add some nature back to the area around Riverside.

<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Kay Yule, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management
<b>Contact Details:</b>	<a href="mailto:kay.yule@eastssuffolk.gov.uk">kay.yule@eastssuffolk.gov.uk</a> Tel: 07825 716370

### **Planning**

We have worked hard over the last few months to brief new councillors, Town and Parish Councils, developers and agents. Town and Parish Councils and Planning Developers Forums were held in July and the feedback was excellent. Follow up sessions for Town and Parish Councils will be held in the coming weeks on the Community Infrastructure Levy and help navigating the Public Access system in order to view planning applications.

We will have published our next quarterly newsletter by the time of this council meeting which provides a regular update on our work as well as changes at a national level. Previous newsletters can be found [here](#).

At a national level, there is potentially significant change about to emerge regarding the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and publication in the Autumn of the new National Planning Policy Framework. The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities wrote to Chief Planners in September setting out the Government's long term Plan for housing and next steps.

Fees for planning applications are to increase in April 2024.



We have prepared a bid to the Planning Skills Delivery Fund for increased capacity in our Specialist Services team to bolster our design, landscape and ecology offer.

### **Building Control**

Our Building Control team were part of the Planning Developers Forum in July. Their input is invaluable to understand what can be done to increase energy efficiency, safety and accessibility in new developments. Councillors will shortly be invited to a presentation from the Building Control Partnership Manager, Mark Harvey, on the process and complexities of the system and where the connection is between Planning and the Building Regulations.

### **Coastal Partnership East**

The annual Coast and Estuary Conference is taking place at Wherstead Park, Ipswich on 12 October. This conference has grown in recent years and now includes the Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex coast and is a great opportunity for sharing experiences and outcomes.

<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Vince Langdon-Morris, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money
<b>Contact Details:</b>	<a href="mailto:vince.langdon-morris@eastsoffolk.gov.uk">vince.langdon-morris@eastsoffolk.gov.uk</a> Tel: 07823 795299

### **Anglia Revenues Partnership ARP)**

Earlier in the year the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy launched a package of support to households with their energy bill costs. ARP was a critical delivery partner for both the Energy Bill Support Scheme Alternative Funding and the Alternative Fuel Payment Alternative Fund. The schemes went live in February and March respectively. Both schemes are now closed with final payments defrayed by the end of August in accordance with the scheme guidance. Across the two schemes, ARP supported the delivery of payments totalling £645,800 reaching over 2,000 households in the district.

<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Rachel Smith-Lyte, Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment
<b>Contact Details:</b>	<a href="mailto:rachel.smith-lyte@eastsoffolk.gov.uk">rachel.smith-lyte@eastsoffolk.gov.uk</a> Tel: 07825 421137

### **East Suffolk Services Limited (ESSL)**

From 1 July 2023, ESSL became fully operational providing the following services: recycling & waste collection, grounds maintenance, street cleansing, facilities management, building cleaning, parking enforcement, CCTV, home alarms, burials & cemeteries, cash collection and workshops including commercial MOTs.

The company was established to enable us to bring our frontline operations into a space that supports our corporate ambitions. Predominantly, this is about customers being at the heart of the services we care about and that affect them every day. Further, there are many opportunities for ESSL to support our aspirations to become carbon neutral.

The initial focus was to ensure a smooth transition period between the Norse contract ending and the ESSL contract commencing.

An Improvement Plan has been prepared by our Digital and Programme Management team and the ESSL Senior Leadership Team. This is a high-level plan which brings together all elements of the business that need improvement and looks to prioritise these. The initial period of the contract is described as a 'stabilisation period' and during this time, we will jointly agree priorities and areas of service development and improvement. Members had the opportunity to hear from the Managing Director, Cas Clements, at a briefing on 7 September.

#### **Waste Electrical Electronic Equipment (WEEE) collection trial**

We have applied for funding from Material Focus (a WEEE compliance scheme) to help residents recycle small electrical items. If the bid is successful, it will expand on the success of the collection trial which has taken place in the south of the district.

#### **New Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCVs)**

To coincide with the commencement of the ESSL contract, a total of 23 new RCVs were purchased and form part of the operational fleet. The purchase of the new fleet means that from July 2023 all council owned, or leased, RCVs collecting through the district run on Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil.

#### **Fleet procurement**

Work is underway for the procurement of a number of light fleet vehicles for use by ESSL. This will be a multiyear programme of replacement and we are working with ESSL to identify opportunities to convert some of the fleet to alternative fuels as soon as it is operationally viable to do so.

#### **Strategic Waste and Contract Management Team**

Two new members of staff have joined the Strategic Waste and Contract Management team as Waste and Street Scene Monitoring Officers. This enables us to have 'eyes on the ground' carrying out real time monitoring of services being carried out by ESSL across the district.

#### **Wasp Spider at East Suffolk House**

Last month a wasp spider was identified with its web within vegetation at the front of our offices. The sighting was confirmed by the county recorder for arachnids at the Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service, who also commented on the management of our wildflower meadow and the importance of this type of management for this and other species of spider.

The species is one of the largest species of spider found in Britain and is gradually naturally spreading its range northwards wherever it can be sustained by suitable habitat. It is visually quite striking.

#### **Green Flag Awards**

In July both Felixstowe Seafront Gardens and Woods Meadow Country Park in Oulton Broad were awarded the international quality mark for parks and green spaces. This is the eighth consecutive year that Felixstowe Seafront Gardens has received the Green Flag award.

The award has been given to Woods Meadow Country Park, a 19.7 hectare site, for the first time, following its creation in 2019. Woods Meadow was created to provide a welcoming and informal green space for local people to enjoy and which benefits their wellbeing. The former arable land has been transformed for the benefit of wildlife and provides opportunities for learning, volunteering and a wider appreciation of nature. It now features a wildflower meadow, protected trees and seven English Oaks which were planted in 2022 to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Planting began last year on a 5.8-hectare mixed native woodland whilst a restricted area known as the Hay Field provides a haven for ground nesting birds, especially skylarks.

### **Environment**

The East Suffolk Air Quality Annual Status Report was submitted on time to Defra. As part of Clean Air Day on 15 June, a series of walks were organised from council offices with the aim to break the 'driving short journeys' habit by encouraging people to see how easy, cheap and enjoyable making the journey on foot can be, swapping short journeys by vehicle to more active modes of travel to protect both their physical and mental health from the effects of pollution.

### **Habitat monitoring**

We have begun a programme of surveying and monitoring our 'Pardon the Weeds ...' and wilding sites on council land using an approach developed internally and verified by our Ecologist. You may have seen some of their recent finds including uncommon bee orchids and wasp spiders outside East Suffolk House. The programme will continue and will help inform the future approach to the programme plus provide data for the incoming biodiversity net gain duties.

The Environment Task Group has reformed under the new Administration and held its first meeting in July. The group is currently identifying priority topics of focus.

## **Outside Bodies Representatives' Reports**

Report on visit to Landguard and Felixstowe Conservation Trust	
<b>Representative:</b>	Councillor Jan Candy
<b>Contact Details:</b>	<a href="mailto:Jan.Candy@eastsoffolk.gov.uk">Jan.Candy@eastsoffolk.gov.uk</a> 07823 587492

I had an inaugural visit at the site with David Gledhill and Paul Grant on 27/07/23. It was very informative, and I had a tour of the Museum, the Fort and a short walk over the SSSI. I learned about future plans to merge all three venues – which I believe has now been finalised – under the same Trust which will suit and serve the Volunteers and Trustees much more effectively. We discussed how they obtain their funding, plans for growth and future funding options.

Local Government Association: Special Interest Group on Coastal Issues	
<b>Representative:</b>	Councillor David Bevan
<b>Contact Details:</b>	<a href="mailto:David.Beavan@eastsoffolk.gov.uk">David.Beavan@eastsoffolk.gov.uk</a> 01502 724904

I attended an interesting online discussion on bathing water quality where we all are urging different water companies to up their game urgently. I will be attending a three-day workshop in Skegness this month. It is very useful to compare notes with other coastal communities and hear how they are addressing common problems.

## Appendices

<b>Appendices:</b>
None

<b>Background reference papers:</b>
None