



## COUNCIL

Wednesday, 22 September 2021

### CABINET MEMBERS' REPORT AND OUTSIDE BODIES REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT TO COUNCIL

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To receive the Cabinet Members' Report and the Outside Bodies Representatives' Report to Council, for information.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards in the District
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Steve Gallant Leader of the Council

## CABINET MEMBERS' REPORTS TO COUNCIL

<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor James Mallinder, Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment
<b>Contact Details:</b>	<a href="mailto:james.mallinder@eastsuffolk.gov.uk">james.mallinder@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</a> Tel: 07810 815879

I attended the AONB Joint Advisory Committee, a general discussion of AONB business took place esp focus on coming out of Covid and the implementation of the Farming in protected landscapes prog. Where it seems the government will be looking at subsidising our landowners to improve their land management. The AONB is looking to re-focus and I hope very much they can engage our communities with the relevance of ecology and the climate emergency.

I was pleased to attend the Suffolk Local Access Forum, where, although a lot of work is Suffolk based, this committee reports back direct to Suffolk County Council, who administer our footpaths. I articulated concerns of accessibility and maintenance of footpaths across our urban and rural areas of East Suffolk and I am hoping new housing developments in particular look at engagement to our open spaces.

As East Suffolk's representative on the Green print Forum steering committee I have a personal interest in its concerns and take a listening and advising role. Although I am pleased to see us focus on farming and food for our next conference - taking my title of 'Framing today, fit for tomorrow', environmentally it is not sustainable to constantly air freight food into the UK and we need to focus on seasonality and eating local produce. Farmers need to stop excessively spraying and implement a more sustainable management of land working with nature not against it.

We also endorsed the allocation of grants awarded under Nature First and the Award details are available here : <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Environment/Green-Issues/Nature-First-Small-Grants-Scheme/Nature-First-projects-funded-summer-2021.pdf>

The Greenprint forum is a community volunteer lead organisation and East Suffolk only has a supporting role.

I am delighted to confirm I will continue as chair of the Suffolk Waste Partnership. This is a critical year as we will hopefully see the outcome of the environmental bill, currently proceeding through Westminster. A recent council presentation highlighted the questions and challenges that lay ahead. An exciting time to define waste collection for our residents. And I am also keen to push the narrative although it is important to deal with our waste correctly, ultimately we need to reduce our waste. All services have performed well through covid restrictions. I continue to push SCC to allow 7 day opening of recycling centres.

<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Stephen Burroughes – Cabinet Member with responsibility for Customer Services, ICT and Commercial Partnerships
<b>Contact Details:</b>	<a href="mailto:stephen.burroughes@eastsoffolk.gov.uk">stephen.burroughes@eastsoffolk.gov.uk</a> Tel: 07783 357940

- **Customer Services**

As Covid restrictions have eased we have looked back with amazement at how we coped during the various stages of lockdown and the lessons we have learned. With cases coming through customer services it is essential that we work hard to ‘get it right first time’ and make ‘every contact count’. At the start of the pandemic, we had to move quickly when lockdown took place, and everyone was instructed to work from home – big problem – how would we provide an immediate shift in service so the service didn’t collapse. The reaction was immediate, and we provided the specialist IT and resources within the home setting to enable our residents to continue to access our teams and to provide a comprehensive and ‘business as usual’ position in maintaining our service. This worked amazingly well, and I can’t thank everyone enough for making this major logistical challenge a huge success.

What have we learned from the pandemic, and how has this changed our strategic priorities? Our key strategic theme has always been to provide a single point of contact, a ‘one’ front door approach. By embracing and adapting the way we work such as through our ‘digital champions’ and the work we have put in around channel shift and doing things differently. How do we see things now? The restrictions in people’s movements have significantly changed the way residents interact with the council. Footfall has dropped considerably with a move away from face-to-face enquiries to a steady migration to online activity, more self-service, with an increase in those signed up to ‘My East Suffolk’ creating an online account to manage the services they receive from East Suffolk. This has accelerated channel shift and access to services, not only improving outcomes, but providing ownership to residents. Clearly one size doesn’t fit all, and we will always provide help and support for those who are unable to access online service or who have specific needs.

Finally, but important, is our preparation for receiving individuals and families escaping the upsetting situation in Afghanistan and who would be looking to set up home and provide for their family in East Suffolk. The customer service teams are already prepared for this scenario in readiness for this with translation services, triage services and signposting to our housing teams, and help with any support required. A friendly face and kind words can go a long way to help people feel at ease.

- **ICT & Digital**

Where would we be without our IT and technical support? As mentioned above, as a result of the impact of 2020, everything swung into action and accelerated to meet our digital requirement and focus on service progression. Our teams predominantly work quietly behind the scenes making sure the council can carry out its functions and supporting every element of service delivery. East Suffolk and its predecessors were well on the way to evolving the way we all work and how our systems perform, introducing new and dynamic software and staying at the front of the pack when it came to service development. As with Customer Services, the pandemic just speeded everything up. The success of online meetings has put us in a good position with much more day-to-day business continuing to be carried out online equating to increased productivity, greater public engagement

and transparency, reduced number of journeys and costs and a resulting impressive reduction in carbon emissions.

The service underpins everything the council does in terms of supported service delivery, constantly developing and evolving functionality and performance.

- **Commercial Partnerships**

We currently enjoy very good services from our commercial partners. Firstly, East Suffolk Norse (WN & SCN) who deliver a range of essential core services to this council, such as waste collection, grounds maintenance, street cleansing, some FM services, and much more covering different service requirements. We are working with ES Norse to continually improve and evolve services addressing issues where there are sticking points and areas for development and improvement. The JV with ES Norse is a significant enterprise and equates to 60% of our Corporate Revenue Spend totalling over £24m (£18m on contract, and £6m off contract). Again, the Norse brand is a strong one, and residents identify with that. East Suffolk council has a 20% stake in the JV and have seats on the board which meets quarterly (myself and Andy Jarvis) where we monitor performance, value for money & financial obligations, digital investment and future work streams and service development. Are we robust in our approach to ensure that the residents of East Suffolk receive a good professional service? You bet, I see my role to question, challenge, and champion, and I don't shy away from asking those searching questions.

Again, similarly with both Places Leisure and Everyone Active, we are spoilt by having amazing partners operating our Leisure Centres across the whole district. This has been a challenge over time, but we are now in a very strong position by investing heavily in upgrading our facilities and are now able to provide state of the art facilities which are the envy of others. Swimming numbers during the summer for example have been good with many now wanting to improve their fitness and getting back into shape, and the contracts we have in place with our providers allows for great choice and flexibility.

Clearly there have been huge financial challenges during the pandemic around reduced incomes for operators with all centres being closed or only able to offer limited services which has impacted on balance sheets. Staff were able to be furloughed and the operators were also able to take advantage of the govts very generous support packages, and various business interruption schemes which has been a life saver for many. Without that support things could have turned out very differently and it is obvious that this will take some time for operators to fully return to profitability.

As always, I am happy to provide greater detail, take questions offline or via email or provide further information if required.

## Outside Bodies Representatives Reports

<b>Local Government Association General Assembly</b>	
<b>Representative:</b>	Councillor Steve Gallant – Leader of the Council
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- The Local Government Association (LGA) is the national voice of local government, working with councils to support, promote and improve local government. It is a politically led, cross-party organisation that receives funding from member councils to ensure local government has a strong and credible voice with national government. Amongst other things, it seeks to influence critical legislative, financial and policy decisions, press for more powers to be devolved from Whitehall, shape emerging government thinking, support councils to share best practice, drive innovation and negotiate fair pay and pensions. There are currently 335 English member councils along with 22 Welsh authorities.
- This year's General Assembly was held on 6 July as part of the annual LGA Conference which, for the second year running, was held virtually.
- The business of the General Assembly is governed by the LGA's Articles of Association with the first item of business being the election of a President for 2021/22. The Assembly elected Baroness Grey-Thompson as President who replaced Lord Kerlake. Four Vice-Chairs and nine Deputy Chairs were also elected for the same period and these postholders make up the LGA Board.
- An amendment was made to the Articles of Association in light of the increase in virtual and hybrid meetings to enable greater voting flexibility at meetings of the General Assembly.
- The Financial Statements for the year 2020/21 were considered in detail. These had been reviewed by the LGA's Audit Committee on 8 June 2021 and approved by the LGA Board on 9 June 2021. They have received an unqualified (clean) audit opinion from their external auditors with the core financial results remaining in line with the LGA's long-term financial strategy. The LGA has healthy cash reserves, although the book valuations under the accounting disclosure rules have worsened for both the two Pension Scheme deficits and the net building asset values.
- The Assembly received an annual report on the work of the LGA's Audit Committee. The responsibilities of the Audit Committee are to review the financial statements, monitor the processes for managing risks, internal controls and corporate governance arrangements, oversee the appointment of auditors and consider issues of probity and conduct. The main focus of the Committee's work in 2020/21 was to review the audited accounts and agree and review the findings and recommendations of the internal audit programme for the year. The consolidated accounts show that the LGA (and its related bodies) made an operating deficit of £3.3m after interest and tax. Overall income decreased by 0.9% from £64m to £63.5m. The two main properties owned by the LGA in London, Layden House and 18 Smith Square, have both decreased in value by £1.4m and £3.25m respectively due to the condition of the

market. The overall pension fund deficit reported in the accounts has increased by £8.8m from £93.1m to £101.9m. There were no issues relating to probity and conduct to be investigated and reported in 2020/21. The 2020/21 audit opinions are summarised below:

<b>Internal audit assignment</b>	<b>Internal audit opinion</b>
Key Financial Controls	Substantial Assurance
UKMBA	Substantial Assurance
Debt Management	Substantial Assurance
Governance and Risk	Substantial Assurance
Procurement and Commissioning	Reasonable Assurance

- The last order of business was to consider a Motion calling on the government to ensure the adequate representation of local government at COP26 in order to promote the significant contribution, leadership and efforts of local councils in reducing toxic carbon emissions across the UK and to champion the innovative and rapid progress being made at a local level to tackle climate change. As well as this, it encourages councils to continue their work to address climate change by:
  - Promoting further signatories to the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration. This declaration confirms the commitment of local and regional authorities to develop sustainable food policies and calls on national government to put food and farming at the heart of the global response to the climate emergency at COP26.
  - Promoting greater participation from local councils to the UK1002, the network for UK locally elected leaders who have pledged to avoid the worst impacts of climate change and switch to clean energy as soon as possible.
- This Motion was debated and unanimously approved.
- The Motion acknowledged the steps that local authorities across the UK are taking to combat climate change, cut carbon emissions and protect the environment, including through the following measures:
  - Declaring a climate and biodiversity emergency with action now being taken by nearly three-quarters of all local councils.
  - Announcing extensive commitments, often with detailed action plans, to reach net zero carbon by 2030, surpassing the government commitments of 2035.
  - Implementing broad community level action on climate change such as green bonds, warmer homes schemes, sourcing electricity demand from renewables and developing new parks, open spaces and active travel measures.
- Further work relating to this will be taken up by the LGA’s Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board.

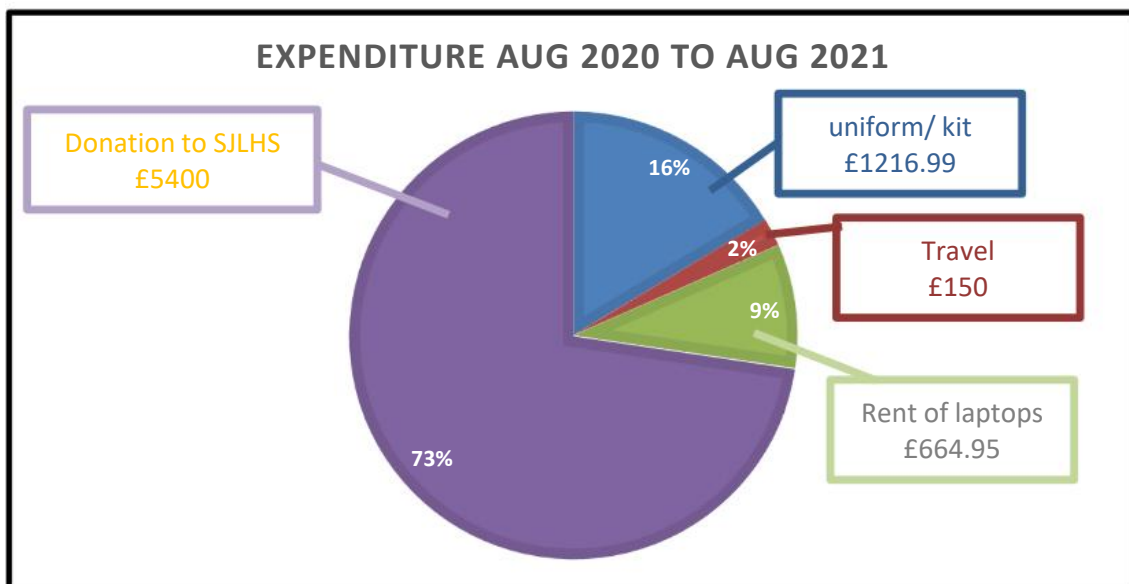
Fauconberge Educational Foundation	
<b>Representative:</b>	Councillor Caroline Topping
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Although the Fauconberge Educational Foundation has not met in person, it has been very active and has been corresponding via email. An update and budgetary information has been provided by Tom Trevitt, Clerk:

Initially the Fauconberge Educational Foundation was set up to provide bursaries enabling children to receive education that otherwise would have been beyond their means. Until recently, we have supported local young people of eleven years up to age eighteen to get the most from the opportunities available. We have helped with uniform and kit, with travel and with laptops for college students. But needs change, and we have altered our terms of reference so as to include all pupils of school age, rising fives through to eighteen years.

We foster links with local schools because the school is well placed to assess where need lies. Our Beccles based Trustees are also very aware and *connected* in this respect.

In lockdown, the Foundation was able to provide new laptops to support home learning and be a link between the school and the Green Councillors' in their appeal for pre-loved equipment. This support was very much appreciated by the high school, not just for the hardware, but for the encouragement of moral support in a time of severe challenge.



<b>East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board</b>	
<b>Representative:</b>	Councillor Judy Cloke
<b>Contact Details:</b>	<a href="mailto:judy.cloke@eastsuffolk.gov.uk">judy.cloke@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</a> Tel: 07825 386561

The Board consists of Elected Members, who are mostly landowners within the catchment and members appointed from Ipswich Borough, Mid Suffolk and East Suffolk Councils, as well as two jointly appointed members, Cllrs Cackett and Patience. The East Suffolk Members are Cllrs Ashdown, Bird, Cloke & Herring. Officers from the overarching Water Management Alliance also attend and give reports. The WMA is an alliance of Drainage Boards from South Holland in Lincolnshire to East Suffolk and which is associated with Pevensey and Cuckmere.

Notes of the meeting which took place via Zoom on 14 June 2021:

The Board's Standing Orders have been amended to allow for having hybrid meetings from 7 May 2021 – the legislative stature of IDBs is different from Local authorities.

One directly elected member of the Board has not attended 2 meetings ( 6 months )and one member from Ipswich Borough has not been attending either, no reason has been given for their absence. The clerk is to contact Ipswich Borough Council.

150m of an ordinary water course is to be adopted by the board in Kettleburgh, in agreement with the Parish Council.

The Catchment engineer reported that extensive work on Leiston drain is being hampered by the lack of maintenance from the EA, the Board offered to carry out the work, but the EA declined, Cllr Bird offered to get involved if needed.

Replacement/ refurbishment of the Gedgrave pumping station has been brought forward. Grants have been awarded for work on the Deben & Iken and for de silting at Sproughton, the IDB is working with the Environment Agency.

There have been emergency works undertaken at Thorpeness and Pakefield.

The Chief Engineer showed members photographs of some pumps they are keeping in reserve if emergency work is required, apparently they have been very effective at Burnham Market.

The Internal Audit was successful and the Auditor was reappointed. The IDB was slightly over budget because of the issues at Gedgrave.

The likely loss of red diesel in April 2022 will double the fuel costs, this needs to be included in the Risk Register. The Board is keen to encourage Bio fuels, but some engines don't like them.

There is a Chairman's allowance of £3k pa, which she does not claim.

Hopefully the next meeting will be in person on 1 November.



<b>The Police and Crime Panel</b>	
<b>Representative:</b>	Councillor Mark Jepson – Assistant Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health
<b>Contact Details:</b>	<a href="mailto:mark.jepson@eastsoffolk.gov.uk">mark.jepson@eastsoffolk.gov.uk</a> Tel: 07825 720601

The Panel met on the 16 July 2021, where it re-elected Cllr Mark Jepson as Chairman for the period until May 2022. Cllr Peter Gardiner was elected Vice Chair.

In addition, East Suffolk is represented by Cllr Tracey Green who replaced Cllr Debbie McCallum.

The Panel is in the process of appointing a new independent member following the sad passing of Len Jacklin earlier in the year. Len will be known to many Councillors particularly in the north of the District.

At the next Police and Crime Panel meeting on the 8 October the Panel will consider the PCC's Annual Report and the Police and Crime Plan 2021-25.

If any Councillor requires further information regarding the activity of the Panel please contact Cllr Mark Jepson.

<b>AONB Amenity and Accessibility Fund</b>	
<b>Representative:</b>	Councillor James Mallinder, Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment
<b>Contact Details:</b>	<a href="mailto:james.mallinder@eastsoffolk.gov.uk">james.mallinder@eastsoffolk.gov.uk</a> Tel: 07810 815879

The Amenity and Accessibility Fund, managed through the Coast and Heaths AONB, aims to improve the environment and natural character of the area by conserving habitats and species and improving sustainable access to the area. A Dry Fuel Store (DFS) for spent nuclear fuel has been constructed by EDF Energy at Sizewell B power station, near Leiston. To offset the impact caused by the delay of the release of that part of the Sizewell B site, East Suffolk Council agreed to establish an Amenity and Accessibility Fund.

The Fund benefited from an initial one-off payment of £120,000 made by EDF Energy when the DFS construction started, and then further annual payments by EDF of £20,000 for a period of 60 years or until the date of the commencement of decommissioning of the DFS.

A total of £20,847 was awarded to ten projects.

**1 Gill Moon £1,000**

Part of the Landscape: A workbook and series of workshops designed to help participants connect with the landscapes of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty through mindful and contemplative photography.

**2 The Suffolk Punch Trust £3,829.80**

Main Visitor Entrance Improvement Programme: This project is to improve security and visual amenity of a section of the boundary, by clearing existing overgrown hedging and fencing, and tree cutting, followed by the erection of a length (150m) of new fencing and native species hedging.

**3 Autism and Nature £3,498.30**

An Audiovisual Social Story Book: To produce an audiovisual social story book, with the participation of pupils from Thomas Wolsey Ormiston Academy, to foster a deeper level of engagement with the landscape of the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty for children with autism, profound and multiple learning disabilities and medical needs across Suffolk.

**4 Aldeburgh Food and Drink Festival CIC £764**

Aldeburgh Food and Drink Festival Fringe and Future of Farming Film: Engage with a diverse range of Suffolk businesses associated with food and drink, connecting our unique landscape with the businesses that work within it. The film is a way to extend the reach further by working with farms to tell their story directly to the public and be able to show the Suffolk countryside and the hard work that it does to produce the food that we eat.

**5 Art Safari £2,500**

Suffolk SketchFest: Suffolk SketchFest 2021 is a 3-day celebration of sketching the maritime heritage & wildlife of the River Deben Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty at Woodbridge with artist-led walks, demonstrations and workshops as well as virtual art workshops on the same themes via Zoom to a wider audience.

**6 Boyton Parish Council £1,800**

Wildlife Pond Network: Community-led establishment of a network of wildlife ponds in Boyton, resulting in improved conservation of aquatic plants and animals in the village and raised local awareness of freshwater species and their conservation.

**7 Art Branches CIC £2,840**

Pigments of the Imagination: Engaging a diverse range of people in the natural and cultural heritage of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty at Orford, particularly those in 'at risk' and 'hard-to-reach' categories, by enabling them to discover creative resources available to them.

**8 Waveney Bird Club £2,384.90**

Access for All Path: To build an access path for all physical abilities from RSPB's North Wall to East hide. The project is managed in phases. This application refers to Phase 5 (post-construction works).

**9 GreenSnape Community Group £1,730**

Greening Snape's Verges - Church Common Project: To transform land around the historic bus shelter on Church Common at the north entrance of Snape village to enhance the visual appearance, reduce incidences of littering and increase biodiversity.

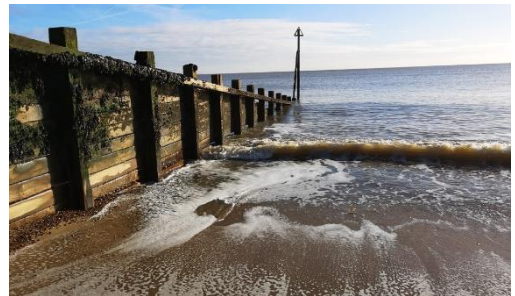
10 Arabella Marshall £500

A Wing and a Prayer: A programme of activities for all people, encouraging a deeper connection with art, the natural environment and local heritage, resulting from the successful glass art installation at Minsmere Sluice Chapel.

<b>Suffolk Coast Forum</b>	
<b>Representative:</b>	Councillor David Ritchie – Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management
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The Suffolk Coast Forum was formed in February 2012. The Forum aim was to bring together bodies with a statutory and non-statutory role to play in the management of the Suffolk coast and estuaries.

The outcomes from The Pitt Review (2008) were embodied in the Floods and Water Management Act 2010. This gave the Environment Agency a strategic role to overview all flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM). It also designated Suffolk County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority. There was a developing awareness of the concept of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and its value at both a national and local level leading to the integration of planning and coast and estuary management issues in Suffolk. In addition, there was the creation of the Marine Management Organisation who, like Natural England and the Environment Agency were part of the Defra family.



At this time Suffolk had well developed, community-led estuary management groups in the Blyth Estuary Group, the Deben Estuary Partnership and the Stour and Orwell Estuary Management Group. Shortly after the formation of the Suffolk Coast Forum, the Alde and Ore Estuary Management Group (now the Alde and Ore Community Partnership) was formalised. The first review of the Shoreline Management Plans covering East Suffolk were completed in 2012. Since then, the Deben Estuary Partnership, Alde and Ore Community Partnership and the Stour and Orwell Estuary Management Group have developed estuary management plans. These have subsequently been endorsed by Cabinet and are referenced in the current national Shoreline Management Plan Review.



### Overall aim

To take a partnership approach to flood and coastal erosion risk management on the coast and estuaries and closely related issues<sup>1</sup> in the context of an ICZM approach.

Specifically, to:

Be responsible for the management of Shoreline Management Plans (SMP) and decisions in relation

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<sup>1</sup> Issues directly related to FCERM include environment, landscape, land use, access and recreation, both on land and water. It excludes issues such as broadband, housing, transport.

to the SMP change process in Suffolk (taking over the role previously held by the SMP elected members forums)

### **Encourage and involve**

- Encourage 'bottom up' local governance arrangements appropriate to each Local Area to integrate with a wider Suffolk partnership.
- Deliver better FCERM with local communities than by managing issues individually
- Smooth and simplify the decision-making pathways on FCERM issues
- Decision making should, where possible, be both simplified and made at the lowest '*de minimus*' level. If statute allows, decisions should be transferred to or implemented flexibly to suit specific local situations.
- Seek to maximise FCERM funding opportunities through a wider range of development and sources.
- Seek to make best use of all available local resources to deliver FCERM in Suffolk.
- Inform and influence relevant plan and decision-making processes of all relevant bodies.

### **Monitor, coordinate and collaborate**

- Strategic overviews to be retained by competent authorities to ensure that a coherent, balanced and legally compliant approach is adopted.
- Ensure that FCERM and directly linked plans (SMPs, estuary plans, marine plans, local spatial plans, AONB plans, coastal access, Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, etc) are co-ordinated and managed in the spirit of ICZM, ensuring local activities are complementary and duplication reduced.
- Monitor actions / activities along the coast and estuaries providing support / impetus to help resolve outstanding issues.
- Oversee the delivery and monitoring and proposed changes to the Shoreline Management Plans.
- Integrated and mainstreamed into existing and developing institutions and processes including the development of community-based planning.
- Co-ordinate the most effective use of scarce resources across its membership.

### **Scrutinise, learn and share**

- Scrutinise new legislation, co-ordinate responses and views on a county wide perspective and actively seek to promote the Suffolk coast to Regional / national bodies (see below)
- Share information and promote good practice and become a recognised authority on coastal issues.
- Liaise with Suffolk Flood Risk Management Partnership to co-ordinate and eliminate duplication to all aspects of FCERM and to inform members of the RFCC on Suffolk's inland and coastal priorities.
- A positive ICZM approach is to be taken by all parties utilising the best of the learning from elsewhere.
- Share information on an ongoing basis amongst the group and externally. Make use of wider expertise and contacts where available to inform the partnership.

### **Membership**

Covers a range of local, Suffolk, regional and national decision making and influential bodies. Membership and Terms of Reference of the Group will be reviewed annually at the first meeting of the calendar year.

The membership of the Suffolk Coast Forum will be:

- Local authority portfolio holders (or agreed substitute) and officers from East Suffolk Council, Ipswich Borough and Babergh District Councils
- Senior officers from Environment Agency, Natural England, Marine Management Organisation
- Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Manager
- A representative from each of the four Estuary Partnerships
- Internal Drainage Board representative
- Suffolk Coast Advocating Resilience
- Chairman of the Anglian (Eastern) Regional Flood and Coast Committee
- 2 'open chairs'

The result of Estuary/Coastal groups being equal partners in the Suffolk Coast Forum should be:

- Increased credibility and wider influence locally and nationally
- Greater local input into determination of priorities
- Extend local involvement in decision making
- Pioneer ideas and share learning with other partners
- Improved links to and influence the delivery of Suffolk, regional and national initiatives
- Raise and resolve issues that affect the individual local areas
- Share expertise and resources to achieve joint objectives
- Improve communication between local areas
- Improved understanding of local issues by authorities and agencies

Identified below are which organisation take lead responsibility for making the link with the Suffolk Coast Forum. In this way it is possible to keep the Forum to a workable number and make best use of resources of within the partnership.

Environment Agency nationally and Defra	Environment Agency/East Suffolk Council
East Anglian Coastal Group	East Suffolk Council
New Anglia LEP	East Suffolk Council
LGA Coastal SIG (and officers Group)	East Suffolk Council Portfolio holders / officers (officers)
Inshore Fishing Conservation Authority	Suffolk County Council
Marine Protected Areas (inc MCZ)	Natural England / Marine Management Organisation
Suffolk Flood Risk Management Partnership	Suffolk County council
Spatial Planning	East suffolk Council
Marine Planning	East Suffolk Council/ Marine management organisaton
SMPs	Environment Agency/East Suffolk Council
Greenest County Partnership	Suffolk County Council
AONB Partnership	AONB Manager

## Recent work

Below is a selection of the work that the Forum have been involved in supporting the development of, reviewing and commenting on between 2019-2021.

### **Response to COVID 19 – continuing to support coastal communities during the pandemic**

Part of the Forum's role is to provide a vital step in the development of Shoreline Management Plan reviews. These are often critical to the development of options for coastal communities at risk. At the start of the COVID 19 pandemic urgent comments and recommendations were needed on Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) reviews for Bawdsey and Slaughden. This was ahead of the widespread use of Zoom and TEAMS meetings and before local authority committee meetings became commonplace.


Forum members agreed by email that remote, virtual voting would be a sensible way forward to support the continued programme of activity for the SMP reviews. Coastal partnership East, who provide the secretariat for the Forum, arrange for the virtual meetings to be set up, using a workshop style approach. The programme progress was not inhibited, and communities remained reassured that progress could be made despite the restrictions imposed.

The approach of virtual meetings and where necessary voting has continued through the restrictions. It has been agreed that we will continue with a combined programme of virtual and face-to-face meetings in the future, looking to minimise the impacts of travel.

## Norfolk and Suffolk Coast Conference

The Forum held its first coast and estuary community conference in 2012 and have held them annually ever since. The audience has grown from around 60 delegates and funded through public sector contributions to more than 250 delegates (2019) and entirely funded through private sponsorship. Those attending include communities and community organisation, statutory and non-statutory authorities, District and County Council Members and officers, businesses, landowners, environmental groups and more recently students from around Suffolk with an interest in careers in coastal management.

In 2020 a move was suggested to hold a joint conference with the Norfolk Coast Forum. An approach was then made by the Anglian (Eastern) Regional Flood and Coast Committee to suggest that they also become a conference partner. The pandemic and uncertainty of technology at the time meant that a 2020 conference was not possible. However, this year an inaugural virtual conference is being held on 7<sup>th</sup> October. Using conference technology which has rarely been used in the UK and including a state-of-the-art virtual careers fair, the conference programme includes a wide range of speakers and topics focusing on climate resilient coasts and estuaries.



With thanks to  
Conference Sponsor:  
**Balfour Beatty**

The Norfolk and Suffolk Coast Forums, in partnership with the Anglian (Eastern) Regional Flood and Coast Committee, invite you to their first joint conference.

This will be a virtual event. The programme will be a mix of 'live' and on-demand events with an exhibition area and careers fair to highlight opportunities to students considering a career in flood and coastal change management.

Book here: [www.coasteast.org.uk/norfolk-suffolk-coast-estuary-conference](http://www.coasteast.org.uk/norfolk-suffolk-coast-estuary-conference)

## National SMP Refresh

The Shoreline Management Refresh is being led by the National Environment Agency Team, linking into regional and the local level.

The refresh is seeking to:

- develop consistency across the plans nationally
- improve reporting processes
- improve public information
- check they remain current since adoption
- help to guide next steps in SMP delivery
- enable the SMPs to be living documents

Although the refresh is not a widespread SMP Policy Review, the Forum have had the opportunity to question and interrogate content and the developing action plan will be presented to them later this year.



## Development of a Supplementary Planning Document

A Coastal Adaptation Supplementary Planning Document is being prepared by East Suffolk Council, Great Yarmouth Borough Council, North Norfolk District Council and the Broads Authority. Coastal Partnership East is supporting this process and it is intended that each planning authority will be able to individually adopt Coastal Adaptation SPDs which all have appropriately corresponding content and guidance. The Scope of the SPD has been agreed and drafting of sections has begun alongside



identifying and selecting appropriate case studies. The timescale for preparation is dependent on other factors due to Planning Authorities currently progressing through the Local Plan adoption process.

## England Coast Path

The England Coast Path is a proposed long-distance [National Trail](#) which will follow the coastline of [England](#). When complete, it will be 2,795 miles (4,500 kilometres) in length. When complete, the England Coast Path will follow the whole coastline of England.

The trail is being implemented by [Natural England](#), who are responsible for ensuring that England's natural environment is protected and improved. It also has a responsibility to help people enjoy, understand and access the [natural environment](#). Although various National Trails already existed along England's coast, the first stretch of the official England Coast Path was opened at Weymouth Bay in Dorset in 2012.

In December 2014 the UK Government, announced that more than £5 million of additional funding was being committed over the following 5 years, to complete the Path by 2020, a decade earlier than would have otherwise been possible. Progress has slowed because of Covid-19 and because of a European court judgement in April 2018 regarding environmentally protected sites. Natural England now hopes to have all stretches approved and work underway by the end of 2021.

The Forum, through a series of presentations by Natural England, have interrogated and commented upon proposals through the process of reviewing access along the Suffolk coast.

## Shoreline Management Plan Reviews

The Forum have commented on a number of recent Shoreline Management Plan Reviews from 2019 to 2021.

Review	Status
Bawdsey SMP Review	Stage 1 review only – no policy change
Slaughden SMP Review	Stage 1,2 & 3 (public consultation) – recommended policy change to Managed Realignment agreed by Forum and approved by Cabinet/RFCC
Corton Village SMP Review	Stage 1,2 & 3 (public consultation) – recommended policy change to Hold the Line agreed by Forum and approved by Cabinet/RFCC
Corton (North Corton) & Gunton SMP Review	Outline of programme provided to Forum – further progress to report
Pakefield SMP Review	Outline of programme provided to Forum – further progress to report

## Major Projects

The following major coastal projects have been presented to the Forum for review and comment:

**Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project** – a £67m project to reduce the risk of flooding from the sea, river and extreme rainfall. This project has already reduced the risk of river and surface water



flooding to over 120 homes. When the tidal defences are complete it will reduce the risk of flooding to over 1500 home and 800 businesses. More information can be found at

[www.lowestoftfrmp.org.uk](http://www.lowestoftfrmp.org.uk)

**Norfolk Suffolk Coast Transition Programme** - A consortium, led by East Suffolk Council (ESC), with North Norfolk District Council (NNDC) and Great Yarmouth Borough Council (GYBC) has made a successful bid to Defra's 'Innovative Resilience Fund' to deliver the Norfolk & Suffolk Coast Transition Programme. The value of this award is approximately £8.4m. Norfolk and Suffolk have some of the fastest eroding coasts in Europe, with over 2,500 homes at direct coastal risk and thousands more properties and businesses directly and indirectly affected by loss of property, infrastructure and utilities.

Recent national reports and enquiries have recommended that more is done to support coastal adaptation and resilience. The framework for transitioning our coast is now in place. The Norfolk and Suffolk Transition Programme will implement an ambitious resilience programme for the Norfolk and Suffolk coast, that delivers real adaptation and resilience options for our communities.

The programme will offer a complete suite of planning, engagement, technical, financial and policy tools to support coastal transition for Norfolk and Suffolk communities, which could also be applied to the rest of the UK coast. Tangible, measurable and sustainable changes will be delivered in these locations. This will enable them to physically adapt to climate and coastal change now and for future generations.

The programme will be implemented in four core pilot locations across the Norfolk and Suffolk coast, plus four additional 'twin' locations. The work will be delivered in close collaboration with communities, alongside a multi-sector and national group of partner organisations with a proven track record of delivering tangible change within their sectors. Locations in Suffolk include a pilot area in Thorpeness and 'twins' in Corton, Gunton and Pakefield.

The Forum have received an initial presentation about the programme and will be involved in on-going discussion and its development.

**Sizewell C** – the major projects team presented to the Forum and Coastal Partnership East supported, outlining information, issues and concerns from a coastal management perspective. A virtual workshop gathering those concerns was held with Forum members earlier this year and helped to feed in East Suffolk Council's response.

### **National consultations**

The Forum have been involved in discussing and commenting on the Marine Management Organisation South East Marine Plan national consultation and on the national approach to marine licensing.

<b>The Broads Authority</b>	
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## Annual Report of the Broads Authority

The Broads Authority is the organization which manages the entire region of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads, which is Britain's largest protected wetland and third largest waterway, with the status of a National Park. It is also home to some of the rarest plants, animals and birds in the UK. It was set up in 1989 with responsibility for conservation, planning and waterways.

There are 27 Board members comprising a representative from each of the local authorities which lie within the area covered by the Broads Authority, the remainder being appointed by the Secretary of State. The full Board meets six times a year and the Planning Committee meets every month. In addition there is the Heritage Assets Review Group (HARG) which meets four times a year, as well as the Navigation Committee, which focusses on the waterways themselves and everything connected with boats, the Audit and Risk Committee and the Broads Local Access Forum.

During the past 18 months, the running of the Authority has been considerably affected by Covid 19 and, until May, all meetings were held virtually. Recently we have met in various suitable venues in Norwich, including the Norwich Football Club members' room, but last week the Planning Committee was able to return to its home base.

The staff include a number of rangers who patrol the waterways and are responsible for collecting tolls from boat owners and for managing the upkeep of the landscape which requires constant maintenance. In 2020 the rangers were responsible for dealing with the aftermath of three tragic fatalities that occurred on the Broads. An enquiry into these accidents was held, the result of which was that in no way was the Broads Authority held to be liable.

All parts of Suffolk and Norfolk which lie within the boundaries of the Broads Authority, are under the jurisdiction of the Authority's own Planning Committee: thus, one road might lie within an area run by a local authority, but the next one would be covered by the Broads Authority, even though it lies within an area covered by a District Council.

The Authority has adopted a positive response to the Climate Emergency and has implemented the use of electric vehicles. The management of peat is also a major issue. Some of the country's largest stores of peat lie in the wetlands, and it is imperative that they remain under water as, if they were allowed to dry out, they would emit vast quantities of CO<sub>2</sub>. Thus, it is vitally important to maintain the correct water levels and for the peat to be managed carefully and always kept underwater.

The Broads Authority is a major supporter of the Carlton Marshes project, and has worked closely with Suffolk Wildlife Trust in the development of the new Visitor Centre, providing both funds and expertise. It enabled the purchase of land that had been converted to farmland which produced cereal crops in the 1970's and 80's. This had caused serious damage to the local ecology over the following decades, resulting in the marshes becoming a dust bowl. By recreating the natural

wetlands and carefully managing the water levels, not only did the land revert to its natural state which was created by the digging out of the Broads many centuries ago, but the flood risk to the village of Oulton Broad has been reduced. Rangers have been provided on both land and water. Now that the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads have been designated as a National Park, there is great potential to attract major tourism to the area, including ours, and this is already noticeable in the increased numbers of visitors to Carlton Marshes.

The Broads Authority has also financed the legal costs and placement of a bench on Fisher Row, which was recently purchased by Oulton Parish Council through an Enabling Grant given by Councillor Eddie Back.

A major long-term project entitled “Water, Mills and Marshes” is a scheme which is training young students from Norwich City College to learn all the traditional skills to enable them to restore some of the many old mills which are such a feature of Broadland, particularly on the Halvergate marshes which have the greatest concentration of such mills in the whole of Europe. A number of them are nearly completed, some with their sails replaced, and many more are due to be restored in the coming years.

**APPENDICES – None**

**BACKGROUND PAPERS – None**