

Economic Development and Assets Update

Assets

Progress on Felixstowe's Iconic Seafront Café is progressing well. Recently steel work has been installed. We hope for an opening in Summer 2021. In light of current COVID restrictions, included are recent photographs of the build (photos: Warren Page)



Economic Development

Following the Government's announcement of further support to business we have opened the Local Restrictions Support Grants. This scheme is aimed at those businesses forced to close and will provide grants of up to £3,000 covering the current 4-week lockdown period.

The Economic Development team are working in conjunction with Cllr Maurice Cook and the Finance team to make available the discretionary grant scheme; Additional Restrictions Grant targeted at those businesses which do not have a rateable value or whilst not forced to close have been severely impacted by the closure of other businesses. Application to the grants are available at:

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/business/covid-19-business-grant-funding/>

Kick Start

Kickstart is a Government Initiative aimed at young people (18-24) who claim Universal Credit. It has been introduced to support young people not in employment / made redundant due to the impact of the Covid-19. Organisations that register to become a “Gateway” with DWP will administer the process and link interested employers of any size/ sector to a young person who will receive a 6 months, newly created work placement at 25 hours per week and receive the national minimum wage. Kickstart will be in place until Summer of 2022.

A Kickstart scheme application from a Gateway organisation must be for a minimum of 30 placements. The Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, East Coast College and Suffolk New College are registered along with others as Gateway organisations in Suffolk. Each Gateway organisation receives £300 per employer registered and £1500 per young person who is placed with an employer. Funding covers the set up costs of creating a quality placement. Colleges have an agreement to put in place employability skills and this is being finalised. ESC is working with SCC to provide further wrap round support – the ‘Suffolk Approach’

Following a recent meeting with ESC’s HR Team and DWP we are exploring how ESC can interface with the Kickstart scheme. The process to inform ESC departments and gauge interest will be undertaken by HR and is underway. The ED team will have a referral role to help promote through the Business Associations/ Networks and via direct approaches to business.

Energy Projects

Scottish Power Renewables

EA1N and EA2 are both currently at examination. I gave the District’s position at an initial hearing in October. (This is in addition to our already submitted Relevant Representations). Following the initial hearing they will move into Issue Specific Hearings. We continue to review and respond to the examination within the set, tight deadlines.

We continue to press all stakeholders to the importance of seeking as much coordination as possible on energy projects. This is particularly important due to the government's 2050 net zero targets and recent statements from the Prime Minister wanting the UK to be the Saudi Arabia of wind power. Currently the government are consulting on this with BEIS' Offshore Energy Transmission Review. After considerable time pressing government and others to the need for a strategic approach to these projects, we can see that they too have come to a realisation that the current approach is not fit for purpose, now or in the future. Equally National Grid acknowledged in their Decarbonising Action Plan that they do not consider:

“individual radial offshore transmission links for this amount of offshore generation are likely to be economical, sensible or acceptable for consumers and local communities.”

We have responded to the BEIS review, our response is available at:

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Offshore-Windfarms/Letters/NGESO-Consultation-Response-271020-Redacted.pdf>

Nuclear

Sizewell C

Between November 18th and December 18th we will see a further consultation by EDF seeking to refine and improve their proposals in advance of examination next year. Information at www.sizewellc.co.uk. We know that these will seek to address issues such as transport and the environment. Time will be tight to consider the changes and respond: including receiving feedback from residents and parishes. We will be holding an event with parishes on 26th November.

The Sizewell B Relocated Facilities application which included the proposed removal of Coronation Wood, issued by East Suffolk Council, was challenged at the High Court. Lord Justice Holgate considered the case and found that the decision of the Strategic Planning Committee to grant planning consent was lawful and the claim was dismissed. The Claimant sought to challenge the High Court's decision in the Court of Appeal, which I can now confirm was also rejected.

In addition to my duties as Cabinet Member I am this Council's representative on NuLEAF (Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum) and NNLAG (New Nuclear Local Authorities Group): recently we received a brief on Small Modular Reactors (SMR) from Rolls Royce. In short these are scaled down nuclear power stations and look to be roughly 10 years away from seeing a possible SMR in the UK.