

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – ANNUAL REPORT 'SNAPSHOT'

2022 - 2023

Cllr Stephen Burroughes - Framlingham Division



April 2022

Violence Against Women and Girls funding announced

Suffolk County Council has announced £350,000 of funding to support the ambitions set out in the Suffolk Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2022. This fund has been provided by Suffolk County Council to support the work of the strategy in preventing violence, supporting victims, pursuing perpetrators and strengthening the system. Organisations will be able to apply for this funding to support initiatives that are synonymous with the objectives of the strategy and aim to stop violence against women and girls.

The fund is to be launched in partnership with Suffolk Community Foundation. Any organisations wishing to make an application can do so by visiting [Suffolk Community Foundation](https://www.suffolkcf.org.uk) or contacting them on grants@suffolkcf.org.uk or 01473 602602.

Organisations can make an application for funding for up to £5,000 for pilot projects or up to £50,000 for projects which have already been piloted. These grants are available for up to 3 years.

Suffolk has launched its 3-year strategy for Violence Against Women and Girls, in line with the Government's plan to reduce and prevent this type of crime, improve collaboration between services and ensure perpetrators are brought to justice. The strategy has been prepared collaboratively by the Safer Stronger Communities Board (SSCB) – consisting of representatives from Suffolk County Council, district and borough councils, Suffolk Constabulary, Suffolk's Police & Crime Commissioner, community safety partnerships, health and probation services, the Norfolk & Suffolk Criminal Justice Board and Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership.

150 miles of new road surfaces in Suffolk

Suffolk Highways begins its programme to resurface and surface dress 150 miles of new roads across 173 different sites across the county this year.

The two separate programmes provide new surfaces for vehicles to travel on, with the treatments expected to last between 5 and 20 years; depending on the type of treatment and volumes of vehicles using the roads amongst many other factors.

Road resurfacing is a process where the old surface is either overlaid with a new surface or removed to a certain depth and a new surface is applied, whereas surface dressing is a preventative process that is used to seal and improve the surface of the roads, slowing down the deterioration of the road surface and improving its skid resistance. The rapid speed of this process means that disruption to road users, local businesses and emergency services is minimised. The process involves an application of hot bitumen emulsion, followed by a layer of stone chips. Sites may be patched and prepared in advance of the surface dressing.

Following several trials across the UK, it has been demonstrated that the removal of some road markings can have a positive effect on road safety by reducing vehicle speeds. Therefore, road markings may not always be replaced like for like. This approach also supports the need for Suffolk Highways to reduce its ongoing maintenance liabilities.

As part of the surface dressing process, it is essential that once the road is reopened to traffic, the 20mph speed limit is adhered to, this avoids damage to vehicles and the slow-moving traffic further embeds the chippings. The road is swept at regular intervals to remove any excess chippings.

- First sweep: within 24 hours after completion of the works
- Second sweep: within 7 days after works are completed
- Third sweep (if required): within 14 days of works being completed.

For further details, including the programmes of work, please visit the [road resurfacing](#) and [surface dressing](#) pages. Both programmes are subject to change due to the operations being weather dependent. Therefore, they will be updated regularly.

May 2022

Council on course to plant 200,000 trees

Suffolk County Council has planted 198,547 trees across Suffolk in just the last two years (at an average of 272 per day). Much of this was possible thanks to £400,000 of the council's own Suffolk

2020 Fund, to protect and encourage biodiversity in the county. In one year, 198,547 average adult trees could absorb the equivalent CO2 emitted by:

- 8,845,898 miles travelled in a typical petrol car
- 903 typical household gas boilers running for a year
- 199 Suffolk residents each year

The planting includes 12 miles of new mixed native species hedgerows across 15 county farm holdings, delivering new wildlife habitat, ecological corridors and enhanced landscapes. The council worked with many partners to make the tree planting a success, including The Woodland Trust, Suffolk Tree Warden Network, county farm tenants, landowners, local authorities and communities, and contractor Giles Landscapes.

All the trees have been registered as part of the Queen's Green Canopy to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, and contribute to the continuing Suffolk-wide ambition of Creating the Greenest County.

June 2022

Suffolk leading the way in UK's water conservation

New scheme based in Felixstowe reuses over 800,000 tonnes of water. Since its launch in February 2021 a unique scheme to the UK, based in Felixstowe, has saved over 800,000 tonnes of water being lost to the North Sea - and reused it to grow Suffolk crops. Drainage water has traditionally been pumped away to the River Deben and North Sea, damaging saltmarsh along the way. Instead, it is now pumped back inland, conserving the saltmarsh and refilling 14 reservoirs, which six local farms are using to irrigate their crops.

Last week (9-10 June 2022) local landowners and national organisations were invited to visit the site, to hear first-hand from the scheme's operators, Felixstowe Hydrocycle, and from farmers who are benefitting from the scheme.

Organised by Suffolk County Council, working with the Environment Agency and University of East Anglia as key partners of the project, the event aimed to inspire more schemes to be trialled around Suffolk, the UK and Europe.

The Felixstowe scheme is one of only four being trialled across Europe, overseen by FRESH4Cs, a cooperation project between 10 UK, Belgian and Dutch partners. FRESH4Cs has received funding

from the Interreg 2 Seas programme 2014-2020 co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

The drainage water is sourced from the Kingsfleet near Felixstowe and travels along a 12km pipeline to local farms where it is stored in existing reservoirs ready for irrigation. The pipeline route has been carefully plotted to avoid areas of conservation and archaeological sites.

Extra funding agreed by Cabinet to fund new SEND places

Funding for second phase of £45 million five-year project agreed by Cabinet.

Suffolk County Council's Cabinet has today agreed an additional £15.9million to complete the funding for the creation of at least 879 specialist places for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

This money marks the second phase of a £45million five-year project to deliver specialist provision for SEND students in Suffolk. These places include units attached to mainstream schools and three new special schools.

So far, 500 new places have opened across the county, with another 325 due to open between September 2022 and September 2024 under phase 1. The additional money will enable the completion of phase 2 of the project, and the creation of between 54 to 72 new places, depending on design and planning.

The new SEND places support the growing number of children and young people in Suffolk who need specialist help at school. Between September 2021 and May 2022 there have been 1,333 referrals for specialist placements for children currently in mainstream schools. Plans for new SEND places under phase 3 will come before Cabinet from September. The newly-approved £15.9million includes £6million to complete phase 2, £4.6million to cover overspend and a grant from the Department for Education of £5.3million. The special schools include Castle EAST, a new communication and interaction school in north Suffolk; a new social, emotional and mental health school in west Suffolk named Sir Peter Hall; and a communication and interaction school in south Suffolk, Woodbridge Road Academy.

July 2022

County Councils unanimously agree “no” to damaging pylons proposal

Authorities in Essex and Suffolk have united to condemn the current proposals for a 180km network of 50m tall electricity pylons. Essex County Council and Suffolk County Council have passed motions at their full council meetings in July, to oppose the East Anglia GREEN proposal put forward by National Grid for a 180km network of electricity pylons between Norwich, Bramford and Tilbury.

Norfolk County Council is expected to consider the motion at its next full council meeting, following a planned debate yesterday (19 July 2022) being postponed.

The councils agree that the plan for pylons is destructive and outdated, and will cause irreversible damage to the countryside, wildlife habitats and local communities. A new electricity network is needed to transmit the ambitious 50 GW of offshore wind that the Government aims to be delivered by 2030, and to connect new projects like Sizewell C. So much of this ambition falls on East Anglia, to provide energy for much of the country.

The councils fully support the need to generate this renewable and low carbon electricity, to meet local and national Net Zero ambitions. However, they believe that more suitable, sustainable and modern alternatives for the network have not been properly investigated and presented, such as undersea cable routes around the coastline of East Anglia. Formalising their long-standing positions on the East Anglia GREEN proposal, the two councils join a group of 13 MPs who recently signed a letter criticising the consultation, along with a growing public petition with thousands of signatures. National Grid completed the East Anglia GREEN non-statutory consultation in June and later this year, it is anticipated they will publish a report outlining the key themes from the feedback received and explain the next steps. They expect the first statutory consultation to take place in early 2023.

Council looks to protect Suffolk following Sizewell C decision

Suffolk County Council will now focus its attention on protecting Suffolk, ensuring that the county sees the maximum benefits from Sizewell C project.

Today (20 July 2022) the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy granted the Development Consent Order to build and operate a new nuclear power station, Sizewell C. The council remains disappointed that a number of key issues have not been fully resolved, but is now looking ahead to the boosts for the local economy and protecting the local environment.

Whilst the council has been successful in securing many improvements to the scheme, it had raised several concerns where the impact on the natural environment could have been improved:

- The blight of the additional pylons at the main site
- Unnecessary and damaging outage car park at Goose Hill
- Sizewell Link Road should be removed after construction to prevent lasting damage to the environment.

The council has been instrumental in recent changes made to the proposals, which will see Suffolk benefit from nearly £200m of investment to mitigate the impact on communities, the environment and infrastructure. Assurances have also been secured to see a far greater quantity of construction materials will be delivered by rail and sea, reducing the number of lorries on the county's rural roads.

Following the decision to grant the Sizewell C Development Consent Order, there is now a six week period in which judicial review challenges may be made. Subject to any legal challenges, Suffolk County Council will work with EDF Energy, local communities and local authorities, to ensure that the scheme is constructed accordingly and that opportunities for Suffolk are maximised.

[New routes added as Suffolk County Council issues updated HGV map](#)

A new map for hauliers plotting routes for journeys across Suffolk has been drawn up. The Suffolk County Council Lorry Route Plan now incorporates new developments and roads, schemes such as Air Quality Management Areas, and changes in road safety on lorry routes. Changes to the map include utilising new by-passes and link roads at Beccles, Eye and Haverhill to divert traffic away from town centres, and downgrading of routes at Leiston and Stowlangtoft. The new edition also features, for the first time, routes in Ipswich. The map, compiled following a three-month consultation with all parish and town councils in Suffolk, was last updated in 2011 although a minor review was held in 2017. While hauliers are not compelled to use the routes it does help them identify the best roads for their journey. It also discourages them from taking routes that can cause disruption, road safety concerns and environmental concerns to local communities.

Councillor Smith advised that parishes who feel that local HGV weight restriction traffic orders were not being adhered should sign up to the [Suffolk Lorry Watch](#) scheme. This is run by Trading Standards, in partnership with Suffolk Highways, who ensure weight restriction orders are enforced. These orders are in place to protect old or weak structures and minimise use of a route unless access is necessary.

August 2022

[Council to boost electric vehicle charging across Suffolk](#)

The council submitted a bid of £1,362,000 to the Department for Transport, as part of the Local EV Infrastructure (LEVI) pilot scheme. Suffolk's residents and visitors will see further improvements to the county's electric vehicle (EV) charging network, following Suffolk County Council's successful bid to fund more charging points.

With additional contributions such as commercial funding, the project will see a total investment of around £2.75m. The new LEVI funding will allow the council to develop the county's EV charging network by:

- PV solar power and battery storage upgrades to approximately 10 existing sites
- Installing community EV charging, PV solar power and battery storage at over 30 further sites in urban and rural areas
- Identifying key commercial sites for 7kW, rapid and ultra-rapid chargers, which will benefit the local community

Suffolk County Council has led the way in electric vehicle charging, following the launch of Plug In Suffolk in 2019. It was the UK's first 'fully open' public EV fast charging network and has seen other local authorities around the country follow that model. Plug In Suffolk has now installed 100 charging points around the county, with an emphasis on installations in rural locations and supporting households without off-street charging capabilities. This project contributes to Suffolk's commitment to be Net Zero by 2030. The Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan identified that decarbonisation of vehicles in Suffolk was a key aspect of meeting that target.

September 2022

[Suffolk Roadsafe Partnership rolls out ANPR devices to target speeding motorists](#)

Speeding motorists are to be targeted with a mobile number plate recognition system to be rolled out across Suffolk. Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) will be rotated around sites where there is a problem with speeding or rat-running on roads with a 20 or 30mph speed limit.

The devices, 10 in total, will display the speeds of drivers to them as they approach, encouraging them to slow down. If they continue to ignore the speed limit the ANPR camera will take a picture of them and record the date, time, speed, vehicle registration and a photo of the vehicle. In certain cases, persistent offenders will be reported to Suffolk Constabulary and, while no one will be prosecuted as a direct result of the devices, they may be visited by a police officer who will speak to

them about their driving. The information shared with the police may also influence the deployment of speed enforcement vans to problem areas.

This project is part of the Suffolk Roadsafe Partnership between Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Constabulary. Suffolk County Council provided £400,000 from the 2020 Fund to support a two-year trial. A grant of £30,000 has also been awarded by the Road Safety Trust to evaluate the project and establish whether the camera scheme is effective in reducing speeding.

October 2022

£7.8 million redevelopment of Foxhall Recycling Centre to begin

Work on a major expansion of the Foxhall Recycling Centre near Ipswich is set to begin. RG Carter Ltd has been appointed by Suffolk County Council as contractor for the £7.8 million project, with work scheduled to start on October 17. The new design will increase capacity for cars on site, reduce queuing and improve access from Foxhall Road, and provide greater capacity to meet future growth. The site will have a raised level construction, giving better access to the containers for users without the need for stairs. Containers can also be emptied without the need to close the site.

The funding includes £794,414 from East Suffolk Council through the Community Infrastructure Levy collected from new housing developments in the East Suffolk area. Work is scheduled to complete in early 2024 and the site will remain open to the public during construction. RG Carter will work alongside [Concertus Design and Property Consultants](#) on the scheme.

The project will be conducted in phases to keep the centre operational throughout the build, but at certain times this may result in fewer booking slots being available to the public. The Re-use shop will change location in the new layout and will need to be closed for a period early next year to allow this to take place.

The project will also see the installation of a feeder lane from Foxhall Road, making access into the site safer. Of the 11 recycling centres around the county Foxhall accounts for 19% of recycling and waste, collecting more than 12,500 tonnes a year.

Next round of new SEND places agreed by Cabinet

The Council's Cabinet has this afternoon agreed a new wave of funding to continue its programme to provide places for children and young people with SEND.

The £3million agreement marks the start of Phase 3 of the Capital Programme to create three additional specialist units providing 42 additional places for students with special educational needs and disabilities. This follows Phase 1 of the programme which created 825 new places across Suffolk and Phase 2, which was signed off in June 2022, and will create up to 73 new places. So far, £45million has been allocated by Suffolk County Council to deliver the new places for Phase 1 and Phase 2 - £15million of which has been provided by the Department for Education.

In addition, Cabinet also agreed to support the Department for Education's High Needs Provision Capital Funding (HNPCF) for 2023/24 of £7million to be spent on the development of units attached to mainstream schools to support students with social, emotional and mental health problems and speech, language and communication needs. This will create up to 168 new spaces, and is an addition to previous funding agreed from the Department for Education in 2022/23 for up to 78 new places.

The third item signed off today was Cabinet's support for the application for funding for two free schools from the Department for Education. One of these will be in east Suffolk and support children with severe learning difficulties and the second will be built in Sudbury for those with autistic spectrum disorder and complex social, emotional and mental health problems. If the bids are successful, both schools will teach children and young people from across Suffolk.

In total, Suffolk will deliver up to 1,317 new places for children and young people with SEND by 2025/26.

The next step for Phase 3 is for schools across Suffolk to express an interest in having a specialist unit and, following these expressions of interest, the most suitable sites will be chosen. This programme for improved provision is informed by the SEND Sufficiency Plan 2022-25.

New special schools opened in Suffolk include Castle EAST, a communication and interaction school in north Suffolk; a social, emotional and mental health school in west Suffolk named Sir Peter Hall; and a communication and interaction school in south Suffolk, Woodbridge Road Academy.

November 2022

£2.5 million saved on energy costs as LED streetlight project nears completion

A project with the aim of replacing all 43,400 streetlights across Suffolk with sustainable, longer-lasting, and cost-saving LED bulbs nears completion.

It has saved more than £2.5 million pounds so far. The change to LED streetlights supports Suffolk County Council's aim to reduce carbon, light pollution, and bring down ongoing maintenance costs for the council, all whilst providing the best value to residents. It was expected that the council would reduce costs by around 76%, however, the target was exceeded, with 77.64% savings made to date.

In June 2021, Bouygues Energies and Services were announced as the partner to deliver the project to upgrade 43,400 Suffolk streetlights with new, reduced energy LED lanterns. The total number of upgraded streetlights is currently at 40,692 excluding any of the Ipswich Borough Council, or Town/Parish council owned streetlights. There are approximately 1,700 upgrades outstanding, which includes any remaining heritage lantern upgrades. It is hoped that around 1200 of the remaining lanterns will be completed by the end of the year. Prior to the commencement of the project, Suffolk Highways contacted towns and parishes to provide them with the opportunity to have their parish-council owned street-lighting upgraded at the same time. All heritage-style lanterns are also being upgraded as part of the project.

The upgrade of the lighting system will include a further rollout of SCC's central management system which will allow lights to be switched on or off and dim individual or groups of lights. This smart technology will increase the control the council has over its power consumption which will further reduce costs. The system will also automatically flag any lights that are not working which reduces the need for night-time inspections.

Suffolk County Council adopts new Streets Guide for building more sustainable, people-first developments

Ground-breaking new guidelines for developers to help them design sustainable and low-carbon neighbourhoods have been launched by Suffolk County Council. The [Suffolk Design: Streets Guide](#) is the first document of its kind to prioritise walking and cycling in the routes people will use - and the infrastructure required to make them safe and attractive - over the needs of private vehicles.

The guide can also be used by highway engineers, drainage engineers and Public Rights of Way officers in responding to planning applications and in the technical review and approval of new highways infrastructure. While not compulsory, the guide has been prepared with Suffolk's other authorities using [government policies, guidance and best practice](#).

It replaces the Suffolk Design Guide for Residential Areas, last updated in 2000, and has been drawn up with [Stantec – a global leader in sustainable design and engineering](#). In 2019, every local authority in Suffolk declared or acknowledged a climate emergency. The design of streets has a significant role to play in the reduction of carbon emissions by prioritising walking, wheeling, cycling and access to

public transport, as well as managing the effects of flooding through effective sustainable drainage systems.

By placing greater priority on designing for people as pedestrians - whether wheeled or walkers - and cyclists, the council is contributing to its ambitions for reducing carbon.

Suffolk Archives receives national accreditation

Suffolk Archives Service has received its Provisional Archive Service Accreditation from The National Archives. Representatives from The National Archives visited The Hold on Ipswich Waterfront on Friday 11 November, where they met staff from Suffolk Archives and were given a tour of the new archives and heritage centre building. The Hold is a partnership between Suffolk County Council and the University of Suffolk and was partly funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Members of partnership organisations, heritage groups and volunteers from across the county also attended the celebratory event, which showcased the work that has been achieved in transforming and diversifying the archives service.

The visit comes just over a year since the building was officially opened by His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester and provided an opportunity for Suffolk Archives to be officially presented with their Provisional Archive Service Accreditation.

The accreditation defines good practice and agrees standards for archive services across the UK. It allows archive services to participate in a scheme supporting the ongoing development of their service against a nationally agreed standard.

New scheme 'Multiply Suffolk' to offer adults a chance to improve their numeracy skills

A new initiative named Multiply Suffolk, which will offer adults an opportunity to improve their numeracy skills, has launched in Suffolk. The scheme is for those who do not already have a GCSE grade C/4 or higher in Maths or equivalent.

Adults can sign up for free courses and activities including Money Management and Numeracy for Parents/Carers. Unaccredited, informal learning as well as Level 1 and Level 2 accredited learning is available to residents on either a part-time or intensive basis and are offered in flexible settings to fit around people's lives.

Multiply Suffolk has been created thanks to a £3.7m government investment from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund aimed at boosting opportunities for more people to progress and secure well-paid

jobs. SCC's Multiply Suffolk Team will work with subcontractors Realise Futures and Menta to deliver the scheme. Multiply Suffolk was officially launched during the adult learning engagement event at Trinity Park, Ipswich on 9 November 2022.

Funding awarded for projects to stop violence against Women and Girls

Almost £300,000 of funding has been allocated to six new projects which aim to support victims and prevent violence against Women and Girls. At the beginning of 2022 Suffolk, launched its [Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy for 2022-2025](#).

Alongside the strategy, Suffolk County Council released more than £350,000 of funding, to be allocated across two phases, so that bidding organisations could help progress the aims and ambitions that had been identified in the Strategy including preventing violence, supporting victims, pursuing perpetrators and strengthening the system.

The fund has been administered by the [Suffolk Community Foundation](#) with all decisions carefully considered and made by the county's Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Steering Group. The VAWG Steering Group includes representation from Police, Police & Crime Commissioner, Health, County Council, District & Borough Councils, Anglia Care Trust, Probation and representatives for Voluntary & Community Sector organisations representing victims and survivors.

The VAWG Steering Group are pleased to announce that the following organisations have been successful organisations and three-year projects have been awarded as follows in phase one:

Families Together Suffolk - To provide 1:1 emotional support through the keeping safe programme. The programme also offers practical support around patterns of domestic abuse and forming healthy future relationships. Families Together Suffolk (FTS) also run a Dads Group which allows them to build trusting relationships with those who attend and start conversations as men often have abusive partners too. Visit [Families Together Suffolk to find out more](#).

Fresh Start - new beginnings - To reach children and young people who are slipping through the net. The request will pay for an outreach worker to raise awareness of sexual abuse, sexual violence and exploitation of children and young people with staff and managers of supported accommodation, children's homes, and education facilities. In addition to this, Fresh Start New Beginnings will run workshops with CYP and families to raise awareness and help through the disclosure process. Visit [Fresh Start new beginnings to find out more](#).

Lighthouse Women's Aid - Grant request towards a newly developed children and families service for women and children suffering Domestic Abuse. The programme includes advice sessions

(including legal, debt and child contact arrangements); Emotional Literacy Support Assistants; Stronger families' programme. Visit [Lighthouse Women's Aid to find out more](#).

Suffolk Law Centre - The grant will help to fund a caseworker, supervisor, and paralegal to support domestic abuse survivors in Suffolk to access legal advice and representation. Visit the [Suffolk Law Centre website to find out more](#).

Terrence Higgins Trust - This grant will expand current Relationships and Sex Education service for children and young people to tackle VAWG problems through six, eight or twelve week programmes, one off workshops, weekly zoom meetings and drop-in clinics at schools and pupil referral units. The sessions will focus on healthy relationships, wellbeing, consent, empowerment, safety planning, signposting, support, and information. In addition to this, there will be professional training around these topics including online safety, safety planning, how to support young people in abusive relationships. Visit [Terrence Higgins Trust to find out more](#).

The Mix Stowmarket - To expand the diadem project; a group of up to 12 young people aged 13-23 where topics are discussed, including healthy friendships, the fine line between banter and bullying, safe romantic relationships, spotting the signs of exploitative relationships, coercion, consent, and body image. The project aims to increase confidence and self-esteem and will be offered to females, non-binary people, people with special educational needs, those from LGBTQIA+ community and the programme will be developed and offered to males to recognise their role in VAWG. The mix will also develop posters, short films (for use in schools and other venues) and 121 support. Visit [The Mix Stowmarket to find out more](#).

Successful projects for phase two funding will be announced in January 2023. Suffolk's Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy for 2022 – 2025 can be viewed on the [Suffolk County Council website](#).

December 2022

Historic half a billion pound devolution deal hands Suffolk regeneration and skills powers to level up

A landmark devolution deal, which puts money and power over building, regeneration and skills into the hands of leaders in Suffolk will be signed today.

Suffolk will be devolved power over their Adult Education budget, so they can shape provision in a way that best suits the needs of the local community and will receive immediate support to build new affordable homes on brownfield sites, as well as more capital funding to improve energy

efficiency

in

houses.

The deal will also see Suffolk County Council handed control over a £480 million investment fund – this will be guaranteed for the next thirty years. This will enable the county to drive growth and plan for the long-term with certainty as it looks to level up and unlock its full economic potential.

Suffolk will also get a directly elected leader of the council. This not only provides a single person who is accountable to the people of Suffolk but gives the county a local champion who can attract investment and be a stronger voice in discussions with central government.

The Levelling Up Secretary will today attend a ceremony in Bury St Edmunds with Cllr Matthew Hicks to officially sign the deal. Michael Gove will also visit Norfolk to sign a devolution agreement with Norfolk County Council, which will transfer further money and power out of Whitehall. The deals follow Cornwall Council who just last week signed their own devolution deal with the government, unlocking powers and long-term funding of £360 million.

With three new devolution deals signed in the last seven days, 50% of England will now be covered by a devolution deal and reaffirms the government's commitment in the Levelling Up White Paper to offer a devolution deal to any area that wants one by 2030.

The deal also sets out the government's plans to devolve more power to Suffolk County Council through:

- Investment: It will bring decades of funding worth £480 million to improve the lives of Suffolk's residents and spend on their local priorities.
- Housing: The deal will provide £5.8 million to regenerate brownfield land into beautiful, affordable homes and drive economic growth across the area; Suffolk will also receive greater compulsory purchase powers.
- Education: The agreement devolves the Adult Education Budget so they can shape provision in a way that best suits the needs of residents and the local Suffolk economy.
- Transport: An integrated transport settlement starting in 2024/25, to support the area to improve key transport infrastructure priorities.
- The Environment: The new deal will help Suffolk deliver on its ambitions to be the country's greenest county with £3 million to improve energy efficiency in homes.

These deals are just the first steps in transferring power away from Whitehall into areas that want them. The East Anglian agreements mean that six of 13 places invited to negotiate devolution deals in the Levelling Up White Paper have now signed agreements with government. Suffolk and Norfolk

join Cornwall – who signed their own deal just last week - York and North Yorkshire, and the East Midlands who have already signed devolution deals this year - these deals equate to another five million being covered by a devolution deal in 2022 alone.

The deal is now subject to local consultation, a council resolution to change their governance model so that electors directly elect the council leader, and elements, such as the transfer of new powers, require parliamentary approval to secondary legislation. The deal envisages the election of a directly elected leader in May 2024. Subject to the passing of the relevant measures in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, Suffolk and Norfolk would call the directly elected person the “elected leader” of the County Council.

January 2023

Council to protect frontline services and increase funding in budget proposal

Adult care services and children’s services will receive £47m more funding as part of Suffolk County Council’s £685m budget proposals, published today. Adult care services and children’s services will receive £47m more funding as part of Suffolk County Council’s £685m budget proposals, published today.

Despite an incredibly challenging economic climate, the council has been able to produce a balanced budget. This will protect the services that people rely on the most and continue to care for the most vulnerable, which accounts for 75% of the whole budget.

Adult care services will have £34m more in their budget, and children’s services will have a further £13m. This will help with the extra expense needed to meet the huge increase in demands for services, as well as higher costs due to inflation.

The budget-setting has been achieved with input from the council’s partners, officers, departments and notably, Suffolk residents. Over 2,600 local people contributed to an online survey and focus groups, asking where they would spend more money, spend less money, and their views on Council Tax. The top service areas where people wanted to spend more, were social care services for adults and children.

Some of the service areas where people also said they wanted to see more money spent, will receive additional funding:

- £700,000 for SEND services to support new recruitment, which is on top of the £1.1m invested this year
- £500,000 for Highways: to use environmentally friendly weed treatments, and stop using glyphosate which can damage wildlife

- £110,000 for tree management: to support the ‘right tree right place’ policy, having an appropriate inspection regime and supporting the resulting tree management requirements.
- £45,000 for Citizens Advice: to support work during cost of living challenges

A budget gap for next year - the difference between what money is available and what needs to be spent - had already been identified, resulting in savings of £15.5m for next year. Under the proposals, the council’s budget would increase by 9.6% (from £625.3m to £685.3). Additional funds would come from a total 3.99% increase in Council Tax, and an increase in funds from the Government for adult and children’s social care.

Regarding Council Tax, the proposed 3.99% increase would be made up of a 1.99% increase in general Council Tax and a 2.00% increase dedicated to funding adult care.

This means costs for a household would look like:

- Band B property: £22.32 per week (85 pence per week increase from 2022-23) (Band B properties are the most common in Suffolk)
- Band D property: £28.70 per week (£1.10 pence per week increase from 2022-23)

The proposed budget will be discussed at the council’s Scrutiny meeting on 10 January 2023, then presented at the Cabinet meeting on 24 January, with the final budget debated and voted on at Full Council on 9 February.

Council’s net zero plans making progress

Suffolk County Council has reduced its carbon emissions by 15% (or 4,000 tonnes CO₂e) in the last two years, on its ambitious journey to net zero by 2030. The council has been keen to lead from the front with its ambition to reduce its own emissions and energy costs, while inspiring and supporting others to do the same.

It is one of only a few local authorities in the country to publish a ‘Carbon Budget’. This looks in detail at its environmental impact, to identify actions and costs needed to reduce emissions. Calculating the council’s carbon emissions is a complex process. Papers released last month, ahead of a Council Scrutiny Committee meeting on 9 January, explain the work that the council has been doing in the last year, as it works towards net zero by 2030. The council is reducing the emissions that it is directly responsible for, following a £12.8m ‘spend to save’ investment to decarbonise its buildings, making them more energy efficient and cheaper to run.

Changes it is making include moving its small vehicle fleet to fully electric by 2025, it has upgraded street lighting across the county, changed to a renewable electricity tariff, and is increasing the number of solar panels across its estate.

But one of the elements that will determine the council's progress to net zero, is the ambition shown by the businesses in its supply chain. Although these are not carbon emissions directly produced by the council, its suppliers and contractors still affect the council's target. The Carbon Budget will be presented at a Scrutiny Committee meeting on 9 January, and will then be discussed at the Full Council meeting on 9 February 2023.

February 2023

New highways services arriving in Suffolk as multi-million-pound contract awarded

Milestone Infrastructure, part of M Group Services, has been awarded Suffolk's new highways services contract, which will begin on 1 October 2023. Following an extensive procurement exercise, Suffolk County Council has confirmed Milestone will be its new contract partner for up to 20 years. The new partnership, which is worth in the region of £800 million - £1 billion, will be delivering highway projects and improvements across Suffolk, including but not limited to maintaining roads, pavements and rights of way, drainage, hedge trimming, construction of new road schemes, snow-clearing and gritting.

When searching for its new highways partner, the county council worked with leading industry analysts to understand the different types of arrangements that other local authorities have in place, to look at which specialist providers are in the marketplace, and to find out what aspects of contract agreement may work best for Suffolk.

For further information from my report or questions please contact me at:

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