

EAST SUFFOK ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2021 - 2022

Managing Director appointed to lead East Suffolk Services

The creation of a new trading company in East Suffolk - delivering crucial services such as waste and recycling collection, grounds maintenance and street cleansing - has moved a step closer with the appointment of its first Managing Director and confirmation of the organisation's trading name.

Cassandra Clements arrives from Babergh & Mid Suffolk Councils, where she is currently Assistant Director for Environment & Commercial Partnerships, to lead the newly created East Suffolk Services. She will be tasked with driving the highest possible standards of service delivery, while seeking the best possible value for money for residents, businesses and all local stakeholders.

This Local Authority Trading Company (LATCo) will operate as an 'arms-length' commercial business, separate to the Council, following the conclusion of the contract East Suffolk Council holds with Norse for the provision of operational services in July 2023.

Response to planning consent for major offshore windfarm projects

The Secretary of State for the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has awarded planning consents for Scottish Power Renewables East Anglia One North and East Anglia Two Offshore Wind Farms.

The projects will contribute up to 1.7GW of renewable energy, once constructed, and help towards achieving the Government's ambitions of 40GW of offshore wind by 2030.

The Council will now be responsible for discharging several of the requirements imposed on the developer via the Development Consent Orders, with the potential that the projects may commence construction in 2023.

Sale completed for former Melton Hill offices in Woodbridge

We have completed the sale of our former Melton Hill offices in Woodbridge, to the family-run Manningtree building firm, Rose. The company has a history of working in the town – most recently on the Queens Drive development of 33 new homes.

The site has been vacant for more than six years since the offices moved to Riduna Park in Melton.

Our wild spaces are back

Returning for its third year, our 'Pardon the weeds, we're feeding the bees' campaign is back, with over 100 wild spaces where grass and wildflowers are left to grow to help wildlife thrive.

This year, we are also encouraging town and parish councils to create wild spaces on their own land – these will be marked with special green 'Pardon the Weeds' signs.

New programme agreed to drive down number of empty long-term homes

An ambitious three-year programme has been agreed to drive down the number of long-term empty homes in East Suffolk. Long-term empty properties are defined as residential properties that have been empty for at least two years.

In East Suffolk, 280 properties in private ownership have been empty for more than two years. These will be prioritised for action according to type, location, duration unoccupied, and housing need in the surrounding area.

Delivering sustainable homes in East Suffolk

A new planning document has been adopted in East Suffolk to help guide the development of sustainable buildings in the district.

The new Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document provides planning guidance on a wide range of sustainable construction topics include energy efficiency, renewable energy, water management and conservation, construction methods, and use of materials.

New community play area is officially open

A new play area in Grundisburgh, created by the local community, has been officially opened.

Supported in part by community fundraising, historic Section 106 contributions and funding from the Kesgrave, Martlesham and villages Community Partnership, the creation of the new Grundisburgh Community Play Park has been a community effort, with involvement from across the village, including the Grundisburgh Playing Field Committee and the local Horticultural Society who helped with planting. Funding was also provided by East Suffolk ward councillors, Cllrs Colin Hedgley and Tony Fryatt through their Enabling Communities Budgets.

Surveys and consultations

We have run a number of consultations and we want to encourage participation as feedback from people in East Suffolk is invaluable and helps us ensure we're making the right decisions for our communities.

Firework displays on council-owned land

As part of a review into firework displays on council-owned land, we have launched an 8-week consultation to better understand how residents feel about them and whether the rules need to be reconsidered. The consultation closes on Friday 20 May:

Road Safety Forum.

The two meetings of the Forum have been held this year - 17 January and 9 May. We have tried to involve all Parishes to ensure that we have a consistent set of policies across the whole of our area. Many very useful proposals have been put forward

Supplementary Planning Document.

The Planning Policy and Delivery Team, alongside Development Management, have prepared a new Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to provide further guidance on the application of two policies in the Local Plans. The review covers:-

SCLP5.4 (Housing in Clusters in the Countryside) and
WLP8.7 (Small Scale Residential Development in the Countryside.)

These have been the cause of several disagreements since the changes were introduced and this is an opportunity to make the changes we need.

East Suffolk Council budget approved

The Council's budget for the 2022/23 financial year has been approved, and as part of our commitment to improve the lives and outcomes of local people, finance has been approved for a range of different areas, including £3.35m for economic development and regeneration, £2.46m supporting and enabling communities and £2.39m for our housing services.

The budget also includes a further £428,000 to support our green agenda, as part of our pledge to be carbon neutral by 2030.

Local Validation List.

The Local Planning Authority is currently undertaking a review of its Local Validation List, which currently comprises guidance the factors to consider when assessing a planning application.

The content and requirements of any revised / new Local Validation List will need to be in accordance with Town and Planning Act 1990 and the relevant Regulations. It will also seek to reflect local policy requirements. It cannot and will not remove any existing national legislative requirements relating to the plans and documents required to validate an application but will add additional local requirements where those matters/documents are reasonably required to enable the Local Planning Authority to understand the proposals and assess their potential impacts, which in turn will enable the determination of the application.

There will also be an aim to revise and potentially restructure the document to make it easier to understand which documents are required when submitting applications.

This initial consultation period expired on 13 March 2022. However, a further consultation will take place later in the year, during which you will be invited for comments on the revised draft document.

East Suffolk Council distributes oak trees for 'Treebilee' celebrations

Two hundred oak trees have been distributed to communities across East Suffolk to plant in commemoration of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee. The 'Treebilee' scheme was launched by HRH The Prince of Wales to encourage the planting of trees during a year of celebrations to mark The Queen's 70-year reign.

As part of its involvement in the project, officially known as the Queen's Green Canopy, East Suffolk Council purchased 200 English oak trees which have been donated to every town and parish council in the district – as a way of marking the occasion while helping to tackle climate change and promoting environmentally sustainable communities.

Environmental Activities.

East Suffolk have been very active to plan what we could be doing for the drive to zero carbon emissions particularly during the COP26 activities.

The four headline actions are as follows :

Lead by example

We have pledged to become a carbon neutral council by 2030, which means we will look for environmental benefit in everything we do – this includes radical changes to our vehicle fleets and mileage usage, council buildings and new build housing stock to ensure they contribute to our carbon neutral aims. We will work with communities to establish opportunities for biodiversity and will promote digital solutions to minimise our carbon footprint.

Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling

We will minimise waste generated throughout the district, encourage the reuse of materials and increase our recycling rates.

Renewable energy

We will explore new ways of encouraging and investing in the use of renewable energy, both in terms of our own consumption as a council and the ways we can offer support to our residents and businesses as part of addressing climate change.

Protection, education and influence

We will use our influence at all levels, our regulatory functions and appropriate enforcement to protect our natural environment including our

outstanding coastline. This includes working through our community and business partnerships to achieve environmental gain and establishing a network of environmental champions throughout the district.

Surveys and consultations

- **East Suffolk survey**

People who live and work in East Suffolk were asked to take part in a short survey to help us shape East Suffolk. After such a difficult period, we would like to know what they think, what matters most to them and where we should be spending our money. The survey closed on 29 November:

- **The Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document**

Consultation on draft document which will provide guidance on the implementation of our affordable housing planning policies.

The Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document

Consultation on draft document which will provide guidance on our planning policies on sustainable construction, including guidance on a range of topics relating to the construction of environmentally sustainable buildings

The draft East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy

Consultation on draft document which provides a district-wide shortlist of cycling and walking infrastructure opportunities has been completed. The strategy aims to encourage greater use of sustainable forms of transport, reduce contributions to climate change, support the growth of the tourism industry, and to improve the health and wellbeing of residents by ensuring more trips to work, school, leisure, day-to-day errands, or public transport hubs, such as train stations or park and ride sites, are accessible by bike or on foot. Once adopted, this strategy will replace the Waveney Cycle Strategy (2016) and will cover the whole of the district.

East Suffolk Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule.

The Planning Policy Team have issued the following statement:

The council have prepared a single East Suffolk CIL Charging Schedule (to replace the two separate CIL Charging Schedules in places for the former Suffolk Coastal and former Waveney areas). As part of the process an East Suffolk CIL Instalments Policy has been prepared, which allows the payment of CIL in instalments (as with the CIL Charging Schedules, there are currently two separate Instalment Policies, one for the former Waveney area, and one for the former Suffolk Coastal area).

Tony Fryatt, Ward Councillor
10 May 2022