

East Suffolk Council achievements and activities 2025-26

East Suffolk Council continues to high quality services to its residents and communities despite the ongoing financial challenges faced by local government. Working closely with our town and parish councils remains of paramount importance and we greatly value our relationship with Lowestoft Town Council. The following presents a summary of achievements and activities of note during the past 12 months in line with the Council's Strategic Plan, [Our Direction 2028](#).

We are currently awaiting a decision by the Government about the future structure of councils in Suffolk.

The councils submitted proposals towards the end of last year and we have been told to expect a decision at some point in March. At this point, we will be told whether a single unitary council for Suffolk will be created, or whether it will be three separate unitary authorities.

Each of the participating councils have made their case for why they would prefer one of the two options. However, whatever the result, our focus is now entirely on collaboration; working together, to deliver the new structure or structures, ensuring the best possible outcomes for our residents and communities.

This collaborative effort is already well underway with programme teams across the County, District and Borough Councils meeting virtually and in person to jointly consider and plan for the challenges and opportunities we face. One such meeting took place today and more will of course follow in the coming weeks and months. This is to ensure the smoothest possible transition, no matter what decision is made. Unitary councils are a positive development, bringing a range of different services together for the benefit of the people we serve.

We don't yet know when the Government will make its announcement, but experience from elsewhere in the country tells us we may not get a huge amount of notice.

The new Better Recycling waste collection service begins in Suffolk in June 2026.

Ahead of the launch, East Suffolk Council will supply all households in East Suffolk with an additional wheelie bin or other container to collect paper and card separately from plastics, metal, cartons (including Tetra Pak) and glass bottles or jars. Food waste collection caddies will also be provided. Your new recycling bin will have a green lid, and your food caddy will be light grey.

The additional bins and food collection caddies will be delivered by May, and every household will receive information leaflets in the post explaining the changes.

National targets require us to divert 60% of waste to recycling by 2030 and 65% by 2035. The current co-mingled method of collecting recycling in one bin means that a large amount of the paper and card we collect is contaminated by the other items. The 'twin stream' method, with an additional recycling bin, will transform the quality of materials for re-use, with huge environmental benefits.

The new service means that much less residual waste will need to be collected, allowing the council to adopt a three-weekly waste collection service without a reduction in the overall, combined capacity of household bins.

Suffolk has the potential to divert over 58% of waste from rubbish bins to other recycling and organic waste collections. On this basis, and to encourage improved recycling habits, a twin stream recycling plus food waste collection service, will greatly increase recycling rates and reduce the waste which is unnecessarily disposed of.

Three-weekly waste collections will also save an extra 6,500 tonnes of carbon emissions a year compared to two-weekly waste collections.

A new Public Space Protection Order which will help reduce current anti-social behaviours in Lowestoft has been formally approved.

At a meeting of East Suffolk Council's Cabinet on 3 February, it was agreed that an existing Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in place for the Harbour ward should be discharged and replaced with an updated order to better respond to current patterns of anti social behaviour in the town.

The new PSPO strengthens measures to tackle behaviours including the dangerous use of e scooters and e bikes, public urination, spitting, threatening conduct, and the wearing of masks or face coverings used to conceal identity while engaging in anti social behaviour. These concerns have been raised consistently by residents and Suffolk Police, who have reported individuals using face coverings to hide their identity while behaving aggressively or engaging in nuisance activities.

East Suffolk Council is delighted to confirm that work to deliver Lowestoft's Cultural Quarter is progressing once more with a strong project team and a known cultural operator appointed.

This landmark regeneration project will transform an underused area of the town centre into a vibrant destination for culture, creativity, and community life. With the architect, contractor, and cultural operator now secured, the scheme is firmly anchored by expertise and commitment to deliver lasting benefits for Lowestoft.

Following an open application process for an operator, ESC are pleased to have First Light Festival CIC on board to deliver high-quality artistic programming with a community focus,

based on providing regular activity and exciting themes of work around music, movement, words, science and the environment, creative health and wellbeing and education and skills.

Together, these elements will complement the town's existing cultural offer — including the Marina Theatre and Players Theatre by adding new opportunities and building on Lowestoft's reputation for creativity and community engagement.

East Suffolk Council is investing £1 million in car park infrastructure, including new contactless payment terminals, EV chargers, new cycle racks and signage, as well as introducing a suite of new parking tariffs in the district.

As part of an annual review of its fees and charges last year, the Council agreed to retain the 30 minutes free parking available in many council-owned car parks and to introduce several new tariffs to reduce congestion at peak times of the year.

To reflect the increased number of visitors coming to the district from further afield during the summer, new seasonal tariffs were also introduced in car parks in popular tourist destinations to ease the demand on busy car parks during the main tourism season. New tariffs have also been introduced to allow campervans and motorhomes, HGVs and coaches to park in designated car parks in the district, with limitations on the length of stay.

This was the first increase in parking charges since 2020. From 2025-26 the Council will commit to inflation-only increases.

East Suffolk Council is aiming to ensure that kittiwakes can continue to nest safely in Lowestoft, while helping businesses and building owners to deal with the challenges of nesting on buildings in a way that doesn't harm the birds.

From around March to September each year, black-legged kittiwakes return home from their journey to the Arctic to nest on Lowestoft's buildings. They can be distinguished from herring gulls by their diet and nesting habits, feeding on invertebrates and small fish.

The Lowestoft Kittiwake Partnership includes East Suffolk Council, Lowestoft Town Council, the RSPB, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, the Marina Theatre, Lowestoft Vision and Lowestoft South Pier Ltd. The partnership is here to support both kittiwakes and the people of Lowestoft, carrying out conservation work, community engagement, street cleansing, and advocacy for local businesses, alongside a range of other support.

An innovative new commercial development opened its doors in the heart of Lowestoft's PowerPark energy hub. Delivered by East Suffolk Council, The Nexus is home to 16 modern business units for office and light industrial uses – positioned at the forefront of the region's renewable energy sector.

Work began on redeveloping the Newcombe Road industrial site in November 2023 – following two years of design and planning work to create an ideal base for start-ups and

more established businesses, with a particular focus on clean energy enterprise.

Developments such as The Nexus will support high skilled job creation whilst creating a sustainable future for the town and the wider area. The clean energy sector has the potential to create hundreds of jobs in Lowestoft, from engineering and technical roles to supply chain and administrative positions.”

East Suffolk Council has this year approved a record £8.5 million spending on 27 infrastructure projects thanks to the ‘Community Infrastructure Levy’ (CIL). This ranges from a £4.2 million Medical Centre expansion in Beccles to £6,000 for a sensory garden in Rushmere St Andrew.

CIL is a developer contribution which we collect from housing developments to fund infrastructure in East Suffolk. When we receive that we split it three ways. We keep 5% to allow us to administer the service, fully funding our Infrastructure team. Between 15% and 25% goes to the local Town or Parish Council, and since 2013 we have distributed £8.6 million to our Town and Parish Councils to spend on their local infrastructure and facilities. The rest is then spent anywhere in the district.

A lot of this spending is informed by the infrastructure identified in our Local Plans. We also need to assess whether what we are spending our CIL on will bring benefits which mitigate the effects of development and that it is well related to communities where development is happening. Following scrutiny and recommendations from our CIL Spending Working Group our Cabinet approves that spending for the year each autumn.

As part of the suite of East Suffolk Council projects supporting residents this winter, the Warm Welcomes project returned for its fourth year. This project provides funding for community venues to offer heated spaces with free refreshments for residents to go to.

Last year, 22 Warm Welcomes were funded across the district, providing thousands of people a warm welcome in temperature and in spirit. We look forward to over 20 Warm Welcomes running from the first week of November 2025 to the last week of March 2026 offering refreshments, a heated space, and access to services and information in the community.

Alongside this support is the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme. This Department of Education funded project provides holiday activities and meals for families in receipt of benefit-related free school meals.

A new law called Awaab’s Law has been introduced, giving give social housing tenants greater protection from damp and mould. The law is named after Awaab Ishak, a two-year-old who sadly died in 2020 after prolonged exposure to mould in his home.

It ensures that landlords take urgent and effective action to fix damp and mould problems within strict timeframes. At East Suffolk Council, we already take a proactive approach to damp and mould repairs and welcome this new national standard to ensure every home is safe, warm and healthy. By working together with residents, landlords and support partners we can make sure that every home in East Suffolk is safe, warm and free from damp and mould. If you spot a problem early, report it. If you need help heating your home, reach out.

East Suffolk Council successfully secured a £2.8million grant from the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and, with an additional £2m investment of its own, will now move forward with ambitious plans to upgrade and decarbonise three of the district's leisure centres – Leiston, Waterlane, and Deben.

The funding will help the Council take a major step towards its goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2030. Leisure centres currently represent the single largest contributor to the Council's greenhouse gas emissions – now accounting for around 42% of the total. Tackling emissions from these buildings is crucial to reaching overall carbon reduction targets.

The planned upgrades will focus on replacing outdated gas boilers with cutting-edge Air Source Heat Pump systems for heating, and CO2 heat pumps for hot water in some locations. These cleaner, highly efficient systems will significantly cut energy use and emissions at all three sites.

East Suffolk Council has signed an agreement with the Deben Climate Centre (DCC) to roll out an ambitious community action project with a focus on four rivers across the district.

The '4 Rivers Recovery Programme' will focus on each of our major rivers - The Waveney, Blyth, Alde & Ore and the Deben and community workshops will produce recommendations and work packages designed to help restore the more obviously degraded sections of the river catchments. Citizen Science groups will be supported and grown to more extensively monitor the state of our rivers.

Through the participatory decision-making process a number of small-scale nature-based measures will be implemented to help reduce levels of flooding and to contribute towards nature recovery.

East Suffolk Council has partnered with environmental charity Groundwork East to launch 'Nature at Work' – a campaign responding to the climate and nature emergency by helping nature to thrive at hundreds of community sites across East Suffolk.

The campaign will develop and promote the biodiversity of 116 existing council owned spaces, including improved and interactive signage. There is also a renewed focus to support schools, parish councils and community groups on the wider benefits nature-rich spaces can

bring to local ecosystems.

Ten schools throughout East Suffolk are being supported by Groundwork to create native wildflower meadows and habitats for wildlife on their school grounds. These spaces can then be used for learning activities, encouraging future generations to be conscious of and inspired by the natural world.

East Suffolk Council has secured a provisional allocation of £5.9million to help improve the energy performance of social housing as part of the Government's Warm Homes Plan.

Funding will contribute to a total £12m programme to allow the installation of energy efficiency upgrades and low-carbon heating measures in social homes across East Suffolk – supporting climate goals and helping to protect tenants from risk of fuel poverty.

East Suffolk Council has been offered a provisional allocation of £5,905,116 as one of 127 'Challenge Fund' projects announced in the third wave of the programme, administered by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, and formerly known as the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

The programme aims to raise the energy performance of England's 1.2m social homes currently below EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) band C. This funding will allow the Council to upgrade a significant amount of social housing stock to be more energy-efficient – helping to drive down emissions and bills, supporting lower income families, and improving the health and wellbeing of tenants. An important step towards addressing fuel poverty and achieving net zero ambitions.

Following the great success of the 2022-25 East Suffolk UK Shared Prosperity Fund programme - a government funding scheme aimed at kickstarting the local economy - East Suffolk Council was awarded a further circa £901,000 for 2025/26 that will support local businesses, people, and communities.

This is in addition to the £334,000 awarded to East Suffolk Council for the Rural England Prosperity Fund.

During 2022-25, East Suffolk Council supported over 750 businesses to start, grow and sustain through advice, guidance, and grants, supported over 470 economically inactive people to train in life and work ready skills, 269 people to gain a qualification and invested almost £400k in high street and town centre projects which included small high street improvements, facilitating events, and providing funding to improve shop fronts.

East Suffolk Council's Strategic Planning Committee voted to approve planning permission which will transform the former Jeld Wen factory site in Lowestoft, delivering up to 500 homes and more than 16,000 sqm of employment development.

This is a major step forward for the town, meeting one of the Council's Local Plan priorities for brownfield land regeneration in the Kirkley Waterfront area of the town. While a planning policy for the site has been in place since 2009, redevelopment plans have not been forthcoming due to various challenging conditions on the site.

However, in recent years its potential has been aided by the delivery of the Gullwing bridge, improving its prominences and connectivity in the town, plus new road connections into the site. In July 2025, East Suffolk Council published a revised Kirkley Waterfront Planning Position Statement to reflect the new circumstances of this site and others adjacent. This has greatly improved the opportunities for the site, which has also seen considerable engagement with the local community as part of consideration for its future.

A new collaborative approach to tackling health inequalities affecting East Suffolk residents has been launched, with partners working together to improve people's access to health services, education, employment and housing.

The East Suffolk Marmot Place was officially launched in November and was attended by representatives from the main partner organisations; East Suffolk Council, Suffolk County Council and both the NHS Norfolk and Waveney ICB and NHS Suffolk and North East Essex ICBs which cover East Suffolk.

Health inequalities are unfair and avoidable differences in people's health, including how long people are likely to live, the health conditions they experience and the care available to them. A Marmot Place recognises that health inequalities are shaped by people's living, learning and working conditions, sometimes known as the 'social determinants of health' and include people's access to services, education, employment and housing.

At the launch of the East Suffolk Marmot Place, Sir Michael Marmot delivered a presentation on health inequalities in the district, delegates took part in a workshop looking at the key data around those inequalities and then heard from a range of experts working first hand to tackle them. The event closed with a talk from Alicia Phillips from the Institute of Health Equity about the Coventry Marmot Place and what becoming a Marmot Place means in practice.

Marmot Places were developed after an independent report by Professor Sir Michael Marmot in 2010, commissioned by the then government, identified the most effective ways to reduce health inequalities in England.

During a ministerial visit to the district, East Suffolk Council urged the Government to improve coordination and strategic oversight of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs).

On Thursday 18 December, Lord Vallance, Minister for Nuclear at the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, visited Sizewell C. The Council's Deputy Leader Cllr Paul Ashton and cabinet member for Energy and Climate Change Cllr Tom Daly met with the Minister, alongside the MP for Suffolk Coastal Jenny Riddell-Carpenter. During discussions, the Council pressed its concerns about the lack of coordination across multiple NSIPs affecting East Suffolk and emphasised the importance of maintaining momentum on the social and environmental mitigations secured as part of the Sizewell C project.

East Suffolk continues to play a significant role in the nation's progress towards Net Zero, with several NSIPs already planned or under construction across the district and heritage coast. These include the Sizewell C new nuclear project, alongside other large-scale energy and infrastructure schemes, including the Sea Link grid reinforcement project currently in examination with the Planning Inspectorate.

However, the concentration of these projects, many with overlapping construction periods in the same geographical areas, poses the risk of substantial cumulative impacts on local communities, the environment, the district's tourism economy, and essential services.