

BAWDSEY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT 2023-2024

Over the last 3 years since 2021, the county council's priorities have been to:

- promote and support the health and wellbeing of all people in Suffolk
- strengthen the local economy
- protect and enhance the environment
- provide value for money for the Suffolk taxpayer.

Below are just some of the initiatives taken by SCC in the last year. More details may be found on the county council's website www.suffolk.gov.uk.

April 2023	99% of pupils received a preferred primary school place in September on National Offer Day and just under 96% were offered a place at their first choice school.
May 2023	Suffolk County Council has underlined its commitment to library services in Suffolk, as it approved plans to increase its funding to Suffolk Libraries by £720k per year, to enable the service to continue operating at its current level, until the end of the contract in July 2024. Suffolk County Council has set out its plan for improving air quality in Suffolk following results from a recent air quality survey, as its county-wide Air Quality Strategy is published.
June 2023	Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) has announced plans to create a new fire control centre here in Suffolk. Currently SFRS shares its control room with Cambridge and Peterborough, but a new IT control system has run into difficulties making a tried and tested system focussed on Suffolk a better alternative. More than 400 years of historical documents held at Suffolk Archives are to be digitised and made available online, thanks to an agreement between Suffolk County Council and Ancestry.
July 2023	National Grid has opened its consultation to anyone wishing to comment on its Norwich to Tilbury pylon proposal. Suffolk County Council is being consulted on the proposals as statutory consultee and have already raised concerns about the initial consultation undertaken last year. Suffolk County Council has received more than £1.4m million from the government to fund participation in a national pilot scheme to promote cycling and walking as part of a more active lifestyle.
August 2023	SFRS Training Centre at Wattisham Flying Station near Stowmarket has recently undergone a £1.3 million upgrade. The Training Centre is a state-of the art facility used by other Fire Services when not in Suffolk's use. Suffolk County Council is disappointed to learn that the LionLink interconnector project from National Grid Ventures has identified an alternative landfall at Walberswick, with cable routing making its way to the north of Southwold.
September 2023	Inflation, school transport for children with SEND, and looking after children in care are the main factors for SCC forecasting to spend £22.3m over its £688.1m budget for this year. Demand increases have also been experienced in Adult Care. In a joint letter to National Grid, the leaders of Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk county councils address the extensive impact on landscapes and local communities that the National Grid Pylon scheme would bring.

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October 2023	The new Highways contract, which is worth in the region of £800 million - £1 billion, will deliver highway projects and improvements across Suffolk for up to 20 years, including maintaining roads, pavements and rights of way, improving drainage, hedge trimming, construction of new road schemes, snow-clearing and gritting and much more. The Government has announced funding for upgrades to Ely and Haughley rail junctions. This will increase freight movements to and from Felixstowe by rail and ease congestion on our roads. Suffolk County Council is preparing its response to proposals for a significant off-shore electricity connection which could affect Saxmundham and Aldeburgh. It is encouraging local residents and businesses to do the same. Sea Link is a proposal for a new 2 gigawatt subsea high voltage direct current electricity connection developed by National Grid Electricity Transmission. It is approximately 140km in length and predominately offshore.
November 2023	At Suffolk County Council's Cabinet meeting in November, Cabinet approved an extra £10 million to repair and resurface local roads in villages and residential areas across Suffolk. The government has (on 31st October) confirmed funding for a transformative package of improvements as part of Suffolk County Council's A12 Major Road Network scheme. The improvements will be between 7 Hills roundabout and Melton roundabout. Suffolk County Council has welcomed the Government announcement - which is part of a Department for Transport plan to pump £609 million into highway maintenance in the East of England. £107,590,000 has been ringfenced for Suffolk over the next decade, including £3.4 million in this financial year. Suffolk County Council has been awarded an indicative overall rating of "Good" for the quality of its Adult Social Care services. Suffolk County Council has committed almost £1 million of funds to bring in additional flood investigation specialists following the response to Storm Babet in October.
January 2024	Sizewell C triggered its Development Consent Order, meaning that work can begin to build the new 3.2GW nuclear power station on the Suffolk coast. Suffolk County Council is announced its intention to create a new funding pot open to all arts and heritage organisations in the county.
February 2024	A 10-week public consultation on Suffolk County Council's proposed devolution deal with the Government will start on 18th March and run through until 26th May. A new Cabinet structure will strengthen SEND reform following a highly critical report from Ofsted/CQC. Suffolk Highways has welcomed the new pothole-repairing machine to help fix the growing number of potholes experienced nationally during the winter season, with a trial set to initially target defects in rural Suffolk. Suffolk County Council has confirmed its £750m financial budget for 2024-25 with a focus on protecting the vulnerable. 77p in each £1 raised goes to Adult Care and Children and Young People

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	Regular weed treatment on SCC's highway network will continue using a variety of methods, with plans for glyphosate being considered when appropriate – the ambition still remains to reduce the use of glyphosate as far as possible. Suffolk County Council's Cabinet confirmed that 60 new members of staff will be recruited to drive forward important reform to the way special educational needs and disability (SEND) services are delivered in Suffolk.
March 2024	A new campaign urging Suffolk's drivers to switch off their engines when parked has launched (1 March 2024). The campaign against Idling particularly focuses on turning off engines outside schools to protect children's growing lungs from unnecessary pollution. The final section of the Gull Wing Bridge in Lowestoft has arrived bringing the completion of this significant infrastructure project one step closer. The bridge is due to be opened later this year. Suffolk County Council is to spend £3.6 million of Government funding over the next two years on strengthening and expanding Suffolk's bus network. The County Council has secured £7.3 million of funding to help develop electric vehicle (EV) charging across the county.

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