

## EAST SUFFOLK COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr Stephen Burroughes – SEPTEMBER 2022



- **HELPING EAST SUFFOLK EASE THE SQUEEZE ON COST OF LIVING**

As the UK continues to face a cost-of-living crisis, households are seeing huge increases in their outgoings. As we head into the colder months, East Suffolk Council has a responsibility to help residents find the support they need. That is why we have launched Ease the Squeeze – a comprehensive scheme which helps connect those needing help to those helping. We are working closely with key partners on a number of local schemes, while also directing people to other available support and services.

All the information, including practical support, funding and advice, has been gathered on our website, at [www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/squeeze](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/squeeze). This page is continuously being updated as more schemes, services and support becomes available, so please share this with others.

We will also be running a social media campaign to raise awareness of the website.

- **£24.9MILLION REGENERATION PROGRAMME GIVEN FINAL GO-AHEAD FOR LOWESTOFT**

A £24.9m programme to transform Lowestoft has received final Government approval, enabling work to progress on five major regeneration projects.

In 2019, Lowestoft was one of 100 towns invited by the Department for Levelling Up to develop a bid for up to £25m of the £3.6bn Towns Fund.

The Lowestoft Town Investment Plan, developed alongside the Lowestoft Place Board, setting out the ambitions, opportunities and challenges of the next 10 years, was submitted to the Government in 2020 as the basis of a £24.9m application, focusing on five projects:

The Station Quarter: Full restoration of the former Post Office and front of Lowestoft railway station building.

The Cultural Quarter: Improvements to the Marina Theatre, redevelopment of the East Suffolk Council's current Customer Services Centre to provide a new cultural facility, and redevelopment of the former Battery Green multi-storey car park to provide a new leisure offer.

The Historic Quarter: Redevelopment and refurbishment of the Town Hall, along with enhancing the historic 'Scores'.

The Seafront Vision: Redevelopment of Royal Plain, including the Royal Plain fountains, Royal Green and associated public realm to complement the recently refurbished East Point Pavilion.

The Port Gateway project: Supporting development of the Lowestoft Eastern Energy Facility (LEEF) to secure Lowestoft's future as an Operations and Maintenance hub for the offshore renewables sector.

Full funding was provisionally secured in March 2021 before detailed businesses cases were submitted for each of the five projects in March 2022.

Businesses and visitors will be able to view proposed designs and learn more about each project in the coming months, with all five projects having now received final approval and due for completion by March 2026.

- **FREE WI-FI PROGRAMME EXPANDS TO ANOTHER TWO EAST SUFFOLK TOWNS**

Free-to-use public Wi-Fi has now been launched in Southwold and Woodbridge following recent launches in Felixstowe and Lowestoft and as part of a range of exciting digital projects.

To support local towns and businesses, East Suffolk Council is delivering a range of digital projects which aim to strengthen the local economy and improve connectivity within the district's market towns.

One of these projects is the East Suffolk Digital Towns programme, which will digitally transform market towns through the installation of free public Wi-Fi, digital footfall counters and town marketing platforms alongside a business support programme. It was initially piloted in Framlingham in 2019.

Supported by funding from the Getting Building Fund and New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership's Innovative Projects fund, this new technology will be combined with bespoke business support, helping local businesses and the towns in which they are based, to grow.

New technology will enable the Council to understand the number of visitors to the towns, the busiest periods, the average time people spend in the town centre and much more. This will enable the council's Economic Development team to provide tailored support for local businesses and provide data-based evidence to support other ongoing projects.

We are also working in partnership with an interactive walking app provider, Go Jauntly, to develop outdoor adventures across all of East Suffolk's principal 12 towns and villages.

Following these latest launches, East Suffolk Free Wi-Fi is provisionally scheduled to be available in Beccles, Bungay, Halesworth, Aldeburgh, Leiston and Saxmundham by October.

- **HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION OWNER FINED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL BREACHES**

A business owner has been ordered to pay £5,160 in fines and court costs for failing to properly dispose of rubbish at premises near Halesworth. Richard Boddy admitted two counts of failing to comply with requirements imposed under section 47 of the Environmental Protection Act, between 7 June and 28 September 2021. The holiday accommodation owner failed to provide suitably sized bins for the waste produced at Holly Tree Farm Barns, in Cratfield, allowing rubbish to collect around the bin compound.

Mr Boddy was issued a section 47 notice by East Suffolk Council in October 2020 following a number of complaints concerning overflowing bins and excessive waste – in some cases attracting wild animals – at the Cratfield holiday let site. The notice directed that all waste products be placed in receptacles of a suitable size and type; that no waste be left on the ground around the bin compound or on the public highway, and that a trade contract for regular removal of waste be arranged.

However, during subsequent site visits, conducted in June and July 2021, a waste management officer discovered loose litter and black refuse bags full of rubbish on the ground around overflowing bins.

- **APPOINTMENT AIMS TO FURTHER EMBED GOOD DESIGN INTO FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

A new role has been created within the Planning team to ensure high-quality design is at the forefront of new developments in East Suffolk. East Suffolk Council is believed to be one of the first local authorities in the country to appoint a Design Champion. Urban designer and landscape architect, Chris King is experienced at promoting design quality in place-making.

The Design Champion role heads up the newly created Specialist Services team, which comprises highly skilled landscape, heritage, design, and ecology experts.

The creation of the Design Champion role also aligns closely with the national planning agenda, with recent and anticipated future changes to national planning policy placing an increased emphasis on achieving high quality design in new development.

- **COMMUNITY CELEBRATES OPENING OF REDESIGNED AND MODERNISED PLAY AREA**

An updated and improved play area has reopened to the local community that helped shape its new design. Among many new features, the play area in Purdis Farm now includes seating and sculpture based on clay models handcrafted by local youngsters.

Funded through East Suffolk Council's Outdoor Playing Space Fund, the redevelopment of the Murrills Park play area has been a community effort from as early as its inception.

In the summer of 2020, East Suffolk Council consulted residents of Purdis Farm for their views on how to spend available funds for 'sports and active play' from the Outdoor Playing Space Fund for Parishes. The responses helped to create a tender – awarded to successful bidder, Groundwork East, ahead of a series of community events earlier this year to give residents an opportunity to see the new designs and offer feedback.

Youngsters cast clay models which provided inspiration for the hare and bunny seating and the moon-gazing hare sculpture that now serve as way markers around the park – indicating an existing walking route and information boards about the area.

The park also now boasts a new accessible roundabout, part funded by county councillor Patti Mulcahy, along with a new circular group swing, a wobble sheep, and five new pieces of outdoor gym equipment.

### **Cllr Stephen Burroughes**

Member for the Kelsale & Yoxford Ward

Cabinet Member for Customer Services, ICT & Commercial Partnerships

Twitter @CllrStephenB