



## Leader's monthly bulletin – January 2023

Welcome to the January edition of my monthly bulletin – and the first of 2023 – aimed at keeping Councillors up to date on the main news stories from East Suffolk and, where possible, giving you a heads up on emerging issues.

I would like to wish everyone a very happy new year. Despite obvious challenges, I am proud of what the Council has been able to achieve over the last 12 months, and I look forward to what more can be accomplished in the year to come.

Regards,  
Steve

**Steve Gallant**  
**Leader of East Suffolk Council**

### Approval granted for £2.75m from Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund

East Suffolk Council has been allocated £2.75m from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to invest across two and a half years in initiatives that will address inequality and contribute to levelling up.

The funding will be used to support high streets, local businesses, workforce and community skills development, as well as supporting those struggling with the cost of living crisis.

In April 2022, the Government launched the UKSPF to support its Levelling Up agenda by building 'pride in place' and increasing life chances across the UK, focusing on communities, and supporting local business, people and skills.

The East Suffolk Investment Plan contains a number of key programmes, based on new and existing schemes, to be delivered either locally or collaboratively with other local authorities. More details can be found [here](#).

Additionally, the Council has been allocated £1.129m under the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), part of the UKSPF, which aims to support small business and community infrastructure in rural areas.

### World Championship off-road cycling event returns to Trinity Park



An action-packed championship cycling event returned to East Suffolk in December.

More than 600 riders, representing 20 different nations, descended on Trinity Park for the UCI Masters Cyclo-Cross World Championships, racing along a purpose-built circuit featuring obstacles, bends, muddy slopes and bridges.



Supported by East Suffolk Council and staged at the same venue for the first time last year, the event sees riders aged 35 or over, who no longer compete in an Elite Professional Team, pitted against each other across five age groups containing many former pros, Olympians, national champions and some of the best Cyclo-Cross age category riders the world has to offer, including European Champion (50-54), Cordula Neudörffer (pictured).

The weekend of competition also featured open races for riders of all ages, as well as a Special Olympics Cyclo-Cross event.

Schools in the Ipswich and South Suffolk School Games partnership also came together for a morning of cycling activity organised in partnership between Active Suffolk, British Cycling, East Suffolk Council and Elmy Cycles, and involving the Suffolk RoadSafe partnership, Suffolk Constabulary, schools outreach organisation Kinetic Science, art organisation Rock Paper Scissors, British Cycling and Loose Cannon's Conditioning.

### Digital Springboard launched to provide digital boost for businesses



A new online service has been introduced to provide a digital boost for businesses in East Suffolk.

Launched on behalf of East Suffolk Council by not-for-profit company MENTA, the Digital Springboard offers access to support, resources, workshops and grants for businesses hoping to create or improve online presence.

The project is the latest component of a wider Digital Towns programme already being rolled out across East Suffolk with the installation of free-to use public Wi-Fi linked to footfall counter technology and accompanying analytics.



The ambitious programme has been funded by the New Anglia LEP's Innovative Projects Fund, the Getting Building Fund, and East Suffolk Council internal funding, and aims to strengthen the local economy and improve connectivity within the district's market towns.

Alongside masterclasses on various digital themes, the launch of a 'Digital MOT' profiling tool will provide analysis and insights for businesses on their current digital capabilities, while businesses that progress through the programme will also be able to apply for a small Digital Grant to support their business growth journey.

The Digital Springboard website is a simple, quick, and fun way to access the full programme including free resources, one-to-one support and events, to help people grow their digital skills and business reach. The Digital Springboard can be found by following [this link](#).

### **Suffolk councils' successful bid for housing fund pot**

Suffolk's local authorities are delighted to have been awarded funding by the Local Government Association to commission a vital, county-wide housing strategy review.

The £20,000 pot will kickstart a programme which aims to increase the number of genuinely affordable properties available to meet those in housing need.

The Housing Advisers Programme grant is designed to support councils seeking to innovate and will fund the provision of bespoke expert support to councils.

Suffolk's successful bid was led by East Suffolk Council, which will work with Suffolk County Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Babergh District Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and West Suffolk Council – identifying opportunities to bridge the gap between supply and demand.

Working together as the Suffolk Housing Board, the councils have identified 900 properties available for rent, 5,000 properties marketed for sale, 1,000 long term empty homes and 6,000 second homes. And yet, despite this, there are currently a significant number of households living in unsatisfactory, unsuitable accommodation, experiencing, or at risk of homelessness.

The Suffolk Housing Board has agreed to establish a project which will agree proposals that remove barriers to accommodating people, as well as gaps in policies where accommodation solutions could be encouraged. The councils will use this opportunity to join up their approaches, exploring ideas such as resource pooling, funding empty home renovations, early engagement, legal advice and community engagement.



## Free augmented reality walking trail app launched during Christmas holidays



A new augmented reality app was launched in the lead up to Christmas, offering a free activity for children and their families to enjoy in Lowestoft and Felixstowe.

Launched by East Suffolk Council in partnership with AR Trails, and free to download on Apple and Android devices, the ESCape Trails app challenges users to solve clues, collect characters and earn badges as they go.

The inaugural trails move through East Suffolk Free Wi-Fi zones in Lowestoft and Felixstowe, so participants need not use their own data to take part. The Lowestoft Christmas Adventure (2.4 miles) and the Felixstowe Christmas Adventure (two miles) were lined with virtual presents for youngsters to find, collect and interact with along the way.

East Suffolk Council has also worked with Go Jauntly to develop outdoor adventures across all 12 of the district's principal towns and villages as part of the Digital Towns programme, which has seen the installation of free public Wi-Fi, digital footfall counters and town marketing platforms, alongside business support, in nine East Suffolk towns to date, including Felixstowe, Lowestoft, Southwold and Woodbridge.

## More time for public to have say on masterplan for Leiston town centre

Consultation on a masterplan and supporting framework for the centre of Leiston has been extended in response to the encouraging level of feedback so far received.

The Leiston Town Centre Masterplan Framework Document had been due for publication at the end of December 2022. However, due to the volume of feedback received to date, a further public consultation period will be launched in January to allow as many people as possible to contribute.

The design team, having worked closely alongside East Suffolk Council's Economic Regeneration team, wants to ensure that there is sufficient time for ongoing consultation work and consideration of draft proposals.

The updated timeframe for delivery of the project will include further public online consultation to consider the draft masterplan and supporting framework, starting in early January, with publication of the final Masterplan Framework Document set for the end of March.

The development of the work is being led by East Suffolk Council, working in partnership with Leiston Town Council, Leiston Community Land Trust, Leiston Together and Suffolk County Council.

The masterplan and supporting framework will include improvements to public spaces and better connectivity between key locations, as well as enhanced cycling and walking routes, while also being used to identify redevelopment opportunities over the next 10 to 15 years and to help attract investment.

LDA Design, commissioned by East Suffolk Council to deliver the masterplan, brings extensive knowledge and experience to the project, and recently completed a Traffic Management Strategy for Leiston, which will also inform the work.

### **New and improved beach access ramp unveiled at Felixstowe seafront**



Local residents and visitors to Felixstowe can enjoy improved access to the seafront following completion of a new ramp.

Work began in autumn to install a replacement ramp at the South Seafront, linking the pavement along Sea Road and Orford Road to the beachfront, over the sea defence wall.

Located within Flood Zone 2, to the northern extent of Martello Park, the ramp will also provide a safe escape route in the event of the sea wall gates being closed in bad weather.

Wider by about one-and-a-half metres and longer by about five-and-a-half metres, the ramp also features the addition of steps from the beach on the southern elevation and a landing area within the mid-section along the Martello Park side, as well as slip resistant material and railings.

Designed by Framlingham based architect, Hollins, the main structure was built off-site in Great Blakenham by Elliston Steady & Hawes (Building) Ltd, before installation began on-site in September – overseen by local authority commercial partner, East Suffolk Norse.



The development forms part of wider ongoing investment in the South Seafront area, where the Martello Park has already delivered new homes, a play area and new car parking facilities, while East Suffolk Council has also invested in the development of a contemporary café, the refurbishment of two public shelters, and the long-term maintenance of an historic Martello Tower.

Meanwhile, work continues on a new Seashore Village and activity park further north along Sea Road.



Further along the East Suffolk coast, at Lowestoft's South Beach, a new boardwalk was completed earlier this year to provide year-round access for people with disabilities, particularly wheelchair users, as well as people with pushchairs.

## Surveys and consultations

As always, we want to encourage participation in surveys and consultations, as feedback from people in East Suffolk is invaluable and helps us ensure we're making the right decisions for our communities.

- **Extended consultation on Leiston Town Centre Masterplan Framework Document**  
Further consultation period, to be launched in January, on a masterplan and supporting framework for the centre of Leiston.  
[Leiston Town Centre Masterplan](#)
- **Renewal of Public Space Protection Orders**  
Public consultation on the proposed renewal of 13 Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) due to expire next year. Consultation closes at 5pm on 8 January 2023.  
[Public Space Protection Order consultation](#)
- **Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Tidal Barrier**  
A public consultation will run to Thursday 12 January 2023. Information includes how construction is being planned, the impact on navigation and environmental studies.  
[Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Tidal Barrier Engagement](#)

## Staying up to date on the latest East Suffolk news

The Communications Team shares all media coverage on SharePoint, so you can easily stay up to date on all media stories relevant to East Suffolk Council, whether on local, regional or national news outlets, tv, radio, print or online.

Access these at any time at

<https://eastsuffolk.gov.uk.sharepoint.com/sites/Communications/Lists/Media%20coverage/AllItems.aspx>

If you have any questions or need any help with this service, you can email the team on [communications@eastsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:communications@eastsuffolk.gov.uk)

**Don't forget to share your own news!**



We do a lot of great work in East Suffolk and we want everyone to know! I would therefore like to encourage all Councillors to share their own good news stories with the Communications Team so they can help showcase some of this work, whether this is from projects funded through your Enabling Communities Budget or supporting an initiative which will benefit our local communities.

You can email the team on [communications@eastsoffolk.gov.uk](mailto:communications@eastsoffolk.gov.uk)

## Social media

We keep our communities up to date in a variety of ways and social media has an important role to play. Please follow us and share our posts with your audiences!

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/eastsuffolkcouncil](http://www.facebook.com/eastsuffolkcouncil)

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/EastSuffolk>

## Diary dates

- 9<sup>th</sup> January at 10.30am – Licensing Sub-Committee (Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House)
- 9<sup>th</sup> January at 2pm – Kesgrave, Rushmere St Andrew, Martlesham, Carlford and Fynn Valley Community Partnership (Tower Hall, Rushmere St Andrew)
- 10<sup>th</sup> January at 2pm – Planning Committee North (Conference Room, Riverside)
- 12<sup>th</sup> January at 4pm – Southwold Harbour Management Committee (Stella Peskett Millenium Hall)
- 12<sup>th</sup> January at 6pm – Framlingham, Wickham Market and villages Community Partnership (Remote meeting via Zoom)
- 16<sup>th</sup> January at 6.30pm – Licensing Committee (Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House)
- 17<sup>th</sup> January at 2pm – Licensing Sub-Committee (Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House)
- 19<sup>th</sup> January at 6.30pm – Scrutiny Committee (Conference Room, Riverside)
- 23<sup>rd</sup> January at 6.30pm – Audit and Governance Committee (Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House)
- 24<sup>th</sup> January at 2pm – Planning Committee South (Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House)
- 25<sup>th</sup> January at 6.30pm – Full Council (Conference Room, Riverside)
- 26<sup>th</sup> January at 6.30pm – Scrutiny Committee (Conference Room, Riverside)
- 30<sup>th</sup> January at 10.30am – Felixstowe Peninsula Community Partnership (The Hadwen Room, Felixstowe Library)
- 30<sup>th</sup> January at 2.30pm – Licensing Sub-Committee (Conference Room, Riverside)