

December 2023 Draft SCC report.

As local Town and parish councils are considering their budgets for next year, SCC is predominantly dominated by current financial positions and how the Council can make provisions to make 'in year savings'. The County Council are currently projecting a £20-£30 million overspend due to rising costs associated and the increased demand for adult and youth social care. As an example, in extreme circumstances some children require constant care and supervision which can cost the Council £20,000 per week per child. The increase in inflation and cost of living means that Suffolk County Council are currently spending up to £100 million per year on care homes alone. This equates to £3 in every £4 spent by the Council is spend on social care at present. It's predicted that to meet the increase in yearly costs The Council would be required to increase Council Tax by 10-15% per year, however there is a capped rise on residents of Council Tax of 5% per year.

There will be some tough decisions to make, although positive for many the minimum wage rise will impact the budget and of course local businesses etc.

As per previous years, the council's budget setting process will consider the responses to the recent consultation, advice from council officers, elected members from political groups, businesses and partners in health and other public service organisations across Suffolk. Results of the consultation will be included in the report considered by the council when agreeing the budget in February 2024. Last year it gave us excellent insight into the public's priorities, and as I mentioned above, social care services for adults and children being high on that list. This aligned with the council's thinking, and we invested an additional £50m in these areas for this current year. The council's budget consultation helps to explain the council's finances, what it has been doing to save money, and how it can generate more money to spend on public services. The two main ways in which the council can increase the budget, are an increase in the money it receives from government, and/or through Council Tax. There were three key questions, the first one - which services people have recently used, the second asked for thoughts on seeking a greater contribution to Council Tax to help fund public services, and the third on which service area you would like to see more money spent. For years this administration has managed our finances well, and we have built up appropriate reserves to be able to see us through difficult times. We're facing those times now, but can only spend our reserves once, meaning our budget for next year will bring new challenges.

We continue to lobby government, to demonstrate the challenges we are facing, despite our success making savings each year. To hear from Suffolk residents about the services they use, and their thoughts on Council Tax for next year, is always very helpful as we plan ahead. Thank you to everyone that took part.

More detail at the end of this report.

**As you would** have heard, Interim figures show more than 200 properties in Suffolk were flooded by Storm Babet. The number of flooded premises, including businesses and homes, is expected to be higher as Suffolk councils and emergency planners work together to compile a full list. It is key that all residents who suffered flood damage report the incident.

We know that this financial support is urgently needed, and we will do everything in our power to get it out to home and business owners as soon as possible. The measures announced by government are: - Flooded households in affected areas can apply for up to £500 to give cash quickly to help with immediate costs. - Households and businesses significantly affected by recent flooding will be eligible for 100% council tax and business rates relief for at least three months. - Small-to-medium-sized businesses in affected areas will be eligible for up to £2,500 from the Business Recovery Grant to help them return quickly to business as usual. - Eligible flood-hit property owners

will be able to apply for up to £5,000 to help make their homes and businesses more resilient to future flooding via the Property Flood Resilience Repair Grant Scheme.

The support will be made available through a scheme known as the Flood Recovery Framework, which is used in exceptional circumstances to support councils and communities following severe flooding. The full details of the scheme are yet to be announced by the Government, including where residents can apply and who is eligible. SCC and others will share updates once received. To report a flood please visit [www.suffolk.gov.uk](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk) or alternatively, you can call the customer service number on 0345 606 6171. Once again I have spent time out and about looking at issues across my division since the arrival of Babet and again over this weekend as we had more rain. SCC as the lead flood risk authority is contacting all those who have registered on our website (or via the District Council) and will produce a Section 19 report as required. These reports are important to look at what happened in each location, as this varies across our part of Suffolk and then what a solution might look like.

**May I remind you to take part if not done so already,** Suffolk Residents continue to be invited to help shape the future of library services. A public consultation was launched encouraging Suffolk Residents to tell SCC what they want from their library services in the future. Just over 1700 people have responded so far.

SCC's contract with Suffolk's Libraries Industrial and Provident Society (IPS) Limited, the independent charity that runs the library service, comes to an end on 31 May 2025, with a new contract set to begin in June 2025. The Council is therefore seeking views from the public about what is important to them, ahead of awarding the new contract.

To inform the consultation, the council has undertaken engagement with over 30 organisations including Suffolk's Libraries IPS Limited staff, key service users, schools and partner organisations. A key focus of the consultation is the council's Library outreach services, which include three mobile library vehicles, serving more than 500 stops across rural parts of the county each month, for the pickup and exchange of books. The mobile library vehicles are coming to the end of their life and the council therefore needs to consider the best way to continue to deliver these services to people in rural areas of the county going forward. Library Outreach services also include Pop-up Libraries and a home library service, run by local volunteers, for Suffolk residents that find it difficult to access a library building or mobile library.

The council is keen to hear from people who currently use library services and those who do not, to better understand the needs across the county. This feedback will help to inform the requirements for the future contract. The value of the new contract will be £6.8m per year, increased from the previous contract value of £5.9m. The increase considers increased service costs, management of the Library Outreach service, and to allow for innovation in future years. The term of the contract will be 6 years, with the option to extend for a further 6 years. Residents can have their say by visiting [www.suffolk.gov.uk/LibraryConsultation](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/LibraryConsultation) Those who cannot access the consultation online can request a printed copy or assistance with completing the survey by calling 0345 603 1842. Close 26<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

**Father Gritmas** - As the temperatures continue to fall, our highways teams are ready for whatever the weather throws their way. Where possible, as a reminder, I encourage residents to do their bit and support our teams by driving to the conditions and parking considerately, leaving enough room so that our vehicles can grit the road- if they can't fit, they can't grit.

Energy matters – an update has already been sent out. I will try and get these out as much as possible. As you are all aware the SL consultation closes very soon, 18<sup>th</sup> December.

**May I take this opportunity** to thank you all, once again for everything you do for the community and to wish you all a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.

Very best wishes,

T-J

Cllr T-J Haworth-Culf

Other news.

**Father Gritmas, Gritty Gritty Bang Bang and Spread Sheeran prepared for county's cold snap  
Winter has arrived, Suffolk Highways prepared its gritting fleet for action.**

With 39 gritting lorries, around 17,000 tonnes of salt and a winter team of over 80 people, our depots were/are ready to spread salt and treat over 2,000 miles of roads across the county.

Suffolk Highways carefully plans for the arrival of the colder weather, including training and hiring drivers, checking the routes and preparing the gritting lorries for action. The service is responsible for gritting 36 Priority 1 (P1) routes, which amounts to around 1,259 miles, including all A and B roads (except trunk roads), roads to fire stations, hospitals, main bus routes and rail stations.

They also have 34 Priority 2 (P2) routes, which amounts to around 843 miles of the network, this includes other bus routes, roads leading to rural villages and access to schools.

The P1 routes are completed when road surface temperatures are forecast to drop below 1°C and P2 routes are carried out when the forecast predicts there to be a longer period of cold weather.

But gritting the priority network isn't all that the teams do to prepare our county for wintry weather; Suffolk Highways has also refilled 2,100 grit bins across the county at registered locations, such as the bottom of hills, or on junctions of minor roads. Grit bins are owned by [parish and town councils](#) and to ensure that the contents of grit bins are used to make roads safer, our communities are encouraged to monitor how and where the grit is used and if more is required to report it via the reporting tool.

Suffolk Highways is encouraging residents to make sure their cars are winter ready and ensure they drive to the condition of the road, as a treated road may still have some ice forming particularly in areas where there is water runoff from adjacent land.

To find out where Father Gritmas, Gritty Gritty Bang Bang, Spread Sheeran and the rest of our fleet are gritting, you can follow our whereabouts on social media.

More information on gritting can be found, here: [Check which roads are gritted in Suffolk - Suffolk County Council](#), <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/highway-maintenance/check-which-roads-are-gritted> and details of which roads are gritted can be found on [one.network](#), by selecting the 3 lines on the search box, then data layers, driver information then winter gritting routes.

Also, from stopping the spread of winter illnesses, to heating your home for less, residents can find advice at [www.suffolk.gov.uk/wintermatters](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/wintermatters) to help you and your loved ones look after your money, health, wellbeing and safety during the colder months. Information will be regularly shared on the council's social media channels throughout winter, follow Suffolk County Council on Facebook or @SuffolkCC on X, using the hashtag #WinterMatters.

### **Suffolk County Council Adult Services Rated Good by Care Watchdog**



Suffolk County Council has had quite a bit of good news recently when it comes to Adult Social Care, we had a great result at the Social Worker of the Year Awards, with wins in several categories. We also celebrated the 2nd birthday of Cassius, the council's digital care provider which is helping people stay independent for longer in their own homes using the latest care technology. Most recently, however, the Care Quality Commission has rated the quality of Adult Care Services provided by Suffolk County Council as Good - a huge achievement for Suffolk and something we are all rightly proud of.

Earlier this year the Care Quality Commission, the government watchdog that monitors and oversees the quality of adult social care services, announced that it was looking for local authorities to volunteer to be part of the initial pilot inspections to test its brand-new local authority inspection process. This represented quite a bit of risk for any local authority volunteering, as it meant they would be inviting the CQC to lay bare publicly any issues it found with how adult care services are being provided. It would also involve a huge amount of work on already busy officers and teams; however, our fantastic leadership team were totally supportive, because in Suffolk we have a well-established culture of learning and constant improvement, and we accepted that these inspections will help support better quality services for people across the country, so it was right that Suffolk put itself forward to be a test subject in this pilot assessment.

There is a huge amount to do when you are being assessed by CQC, to begin with teams across Adult Social Care began to create our self-assessment document which would be based on the themes laid out by CQC in their inspection framework. These themes included how well we work with people, how we ensure a safe social care system, the quality of what we do and the effectiveness of our leadership. Alongside our self-assessment we ended up providing over 325 individual pieces of evidence to the CQC. On top of that, SCC then arranged 40 interviews for 164 staff, partners, and people with lived experience of Adult Social Care to meet with CQC and discuss themes in more detail, a huge undertaking!

In the summary of their report CQC said; "Overall feedback from people was positive in relation to the approach of front-line staff, and the care and support provided. Staff focused on providing the best care and support for people.

Staff were overwhelmingly positive about working for the local authority including the leadership and culture. Support with staff well-being, learning and development, and career progression was good

There are areas where more work is needed of course, CQC said we were good - not perfect. The good news is that we have already begun working on those areas, like the care assessment process, where we want to make that process quicker, make it more intuitive from the outset and better

capture the ideas and views of individuals from the moment they begin the process of assessing care needs. We are also looking at new strategies including around an All-Age Autism Strategy, and we are continuing to develop upon our All-Age Carers Strategy that we launched last year.

The best thing about a good rating is that it should give us all confidence that we have the right people and right priorities to make necessary improvements so we can provide an even better quality of care in the future. It also provides clear proof that the County Council is delivering on its aims to put people's health and wellbeing as one of its key priorities.

### **Suffolk pledges to Change The Story this White Ribbon Day**

**Organisations across Suffolk have pledged their support for this year's White Ribbon Campaign, which aims to #ChangeTheStory to end violence against women and girls.**

Representatives from Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Constabulary, Suffolk's Community Safety Partnership, Suffolk Libraries and specialist support organisations, gathered at Suffolk County Council's headquarters, Endeavour House, to sign the White Ribbon Pledge.

White Ribbon is the UK's leading charity engaging men and boys to end violence against women and girls. The annual White Ribbon campaign strives to change long-established attitudes, behaviours and systems around masculinity that perpetuate gender inequality and men's violence against women. This year, individuals and organisations were encouraged to make consistent choices and actions so that we #ChangeTheStory for women and girls to live their lives free from the fear of violence.

White Ribbon Day which began on the 25<sup>th</sup> November runs for 16 days of action to help end domestic abuse and to highlight support available for women and girls, both nationally and locally.

Our thanks to Suffolk Libraries who also support the White Ribbon campaign. Set up through Suffolk County Council's Domestic Abuse Champions Network - which now consists of more than 1300 Domestic Abuse Champions - all Suffolk Libraries continue to offer 'Safe Spaces' for victim-survivors of domestic abuse.

Safe Spaces provide an accessible safe and discrete environment where anyone, whether they are experiencing domestic abuse themselves, or if they're worried about someone else, can speak to someone in the library in confidence and be referred to the organisations who can support them. A visit to the library may offer someone the chance to get away from their abuser and so provides an ideal opportunity to speak to someone in confidence.

Visit <https://uksaysnomore.org/safespaces/> to find other safe spaces in Suffolk.

Anyone who is worried that they, or someone they know, may be a victim of domestic abuse can call the Suffolk Domestic Abuse Helpline free of charge 24 hours a day on 0800 977 5690. Perpetrators can contact the Respect Phoneline on 0808 802 4040 for confidential advice on how to stop hurting the one they love.

### **The Way to Go team at Suffolk County Council are celebrating the first anniversary of their social prescribing active travel pilot running in Ipswich and Lowestoft.**

Suffolk County Council were awarded £1.495 million in November 2022 from Active Travel England (the executive agency sponsored by the Department for Transport) to run the three-year pilot. Since

September, 48 low-intensity walking and cycling group sessions have taken place in various locations. Many more cycling and walking group sessions will be offered over the coming months as the pilot increases its capacity, including an 8-week cycling for health course and bike maintenance courses. Social prescribing, sometimes known as community referral, is a way of connecting people to local activities, groups and services which will benefit their health and wellbeing. Health professionals (such as GPs and practice nurses) can refer people to a link worker who will work with the individual to access local sources of support. Residents can also self-refer. One of the main aims of social prescribing is to support people to take greater control of their own health, improving both their physical and mental health. More information on the and please see <https://thewaytogosuffolk.org.uk/social-prescribing/> or telephone The Way To Go Suffolk helpline on 01473 260060.

**Almost £1 million extra committed to investigating significant flooding following Babet**  
**Suffolk County Council has committed almost £1 million of funds to bring in additional flood investigation specialists as the response to Storm Babet continues.**

(Published: 22 Nov 2023) Since the storm, and much more rainfall since, targeted recovery work has been carried out across the county to ensure damaged highway infrastructure is repaired, those whose properties were flooded get help and that investigations can start which will identify how to reduce flood risk.

Identifying ownership and conversations with landowners does take time, but please do help by letting me know of any other areas not already identified. More details on the website.

**1,400-year-old temple discovered at Suffolk royal settlement**

**A rare, possible pre-Christian temple from the time of the East Anglian Kings, has been found at Rendlesham, near Sutton Hoo in Suffolk.**



Rendlesham Revealed: showing the archaeological remains including the probable temple or cult house (left hand side) and boundary ditch. The discovery was made this summer by Suffolk County Council's Rendlesham Revealed community archaeology project, which is funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, made possible by National Lottery players.

Last year the project uncovered the remains of a large timber Royal Hall, confirming the location as a royal settlement of the East Anglian Kings. This year's excavations also uncovered evidence of fine metalworking associated with royal occupation, including a mould used for casting decorative horse harness similar to that known from the nearby princely burial ground at Sutton Hoo.

The full story is available on the website but To find out more about the Rendlesham Revealed project visit: [heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/rendlesham](https://heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/rendlesham)

### **Extra £108 million for Suffolk's roads welcomed**

Road repairs in Suffolk look set to receive a £108 million boost over the next 10 years.

(Published: 17 Nov 2023) Suffolk County Council 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.

**Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for Ipswich, operational highways and flooding, said:** "The news is extremely welcome and will certainly help us to make Suffolk's Road better for everyone. We still need to understand the detail in full. But so far, what we know is very positive and will make a significant difference to our road network.

Other projects in the East of England set to benefit from the Network North money includes the transformation of the Ely Junction to give an extra six freight trains per day access to the Port of Felixstowe and [upgrades to key roundabouts on the A12, from Seven Hills to Woods Lane](#). A new dual carriageway section will be built to replace the existing single carriageway bottleneck at Seckford Hall between the B1438 and B1079.

### **Budget details**

School transport - 39% of the overspend, with £8.3m of this being travel costs for children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND). This is largely due to more children with SEND needs, transport operators being in limited supply, and rising costs from those operators who are also feeling the impacts of inflation, especially fuel costs.

Children in care - 28% of the overspend. The council has a responsibility to provide care for children and young people under the age of 18. Some of these have incredibly complex needs requiring 24-hour care from multiple carers. There is currently an unexpectedly higher number of children requiring this support, with this costing an average of £22,700 per week, per child.

Adult care services - 12% of the overspend for purchasing care, due to increases in demand, and staffing costs in the sector. The fees paid for residential and nursing placements remain high with 64% of new residential and nursing packages being above the published rate of £806 per week, with some specialist packages being over £1,500 per week.

Inflation - inflation and interest rates have been higher than experienced in a generation, with the legacy of COVID-19 continuing to have a significant impact on various services. As an example, there is an estimated £3.0m (10% of the overspend) pressure as pay settlements continue to be above historical norms as inflation has remained stubbornly high during 2023 so far. High interest rates mean it has been more costly than anticipated to borrow money, which the council does to help fund big projects, such as upgrading highways, maintaining schools or developing household recycling centres.



## **National Grid could cause unnecessary disruption to Suffolk communities**

Suffolk County Council remains concerned at the lack of coordination between huge energy projects which would affect coastal communities in Suffolk.

In particular, the council believes National Grid should be taking more collective responsibility of its projects, such as with the Sea Link and LionLink schemes. If left unchallenged, these projects could have a significant impact on Suffolk communities.

Sea Link is a proposal for a development of a new 2 gigawatt electricity connection, approximately 140km in length and predominately offshore.

LionLink aims to connect multiple offshore wind farms in the North Sea, instead of individual wind farms connecting one-by-one to the shore.

**Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's deputy leader and cabinet member for finance and environment, said:**

"The east coast of Suffolk is seeing a continual stream of proposed energy projects. It's therefore essential that where they proceed, they are coordinated, and our communities are treated fairly.

"For example, the Sea Link and LionLink projects both propose to connect to the same converter station site near Saxmundham. Yet they do not currently share a proposed landing point or cable route to the converter station site. So as it stands, we would see two lots of disruption for essentially the same goal.

"While the Sea Link team has worked hard to enable their scheme to coordinate with other projects, their colleagues working on the Lion Link proposals have utterly failed. If these projects are to go ahead - and we do have wider concerns - then it's essential they share a landing point and cable corridor to minimise their impacts."

These are points which will be presented at the council's Cabinet meeting on 12 December, as it looks to formalise its response to the current Sea Link consultation, which closes on 18 December.

The council's response will explain that the two projects must share the landing point and cable route, and that National Grid Group must coordinate the projects of its subsidiaries, so that the projects can be consented at the same time and be fully coordinated.

Also, if agreed at the Cabinet meeting, Cllr Rout will write to both the National Grid Group and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, asking them to align both the Sea Link and LionLink projects. It will be requested that should the projects apply for Development Consent Orders, that the Planning Inspectorate considers both projects simultaneously, using a single panel of examiners, so there is co-ordination.

**Cllr Rout continues:**

"The council has long been calling for an offshore approach to manage as much of the energy transmission as possible. It's important to note that one of the key alternatives to the Sealink project, would mean more pylons across Suffolk - something which we utterly oppose.

"I can't see how National Grid can be a genuine leader in delivering Net Zero infrastructure unless it improves harmonisation across its projects. It would be wholly unacceptable for the technicalities of different branches of National Grid, or for the regulator Ofgem, to stand in the way of effective coordination."

Residents and businesses still have the opportunity to have their say on the [Sea Link proposals](#), the non-statutory consultation closes on 18 December.

Sea Link information on National Grid website:

<https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/infrastructure-projects/sealink>

Suffolk County Council's responses to Sea Link:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/major-infrastructure-projects/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-nsips/national-grid-electricity-generation-sea>



Please also be aware that a letter has gone out to some town and parish councils regarding:  
DISCHARGE OF REQUIREMENT 3 (PROJECT WIDE: ARCHAEOLOGY AND PEAT) IN RESPECT OF SZC Co.  
SIZEWELL C NUCLEAR POWER STATION

The majority of these works are indicated to take place in Yoxford, Middleton and Theberton.

Para 1.2.2 of the submitted WSI states:

*The site starts at the A12 south of Yoxford, moving in an easterly direction over open, gently undulating fields intersecting with the East Suffolk line, Littlemoor Road, Fordley Road and Hawthorn Road, south of the village of Middleton. The site intersects a narrow linear section of woodland 750m west of Theberton, before skirting through fields to the south of the village of Theberton and re-joining the B1122 to the south-east of the village.*

Please ensure that the parish councils are aware that any comments they may wish to make, must be received by **2 January 2024**.

Yoxford Parish Council  
Middleton Parish Council  
Leiston Town Council  
Kelsale cum Carlton Parish Council  
Saxmundham Town Council

Cc: Councillors Richard Rout, Richard Smith, T J Haworth-Culf

**FOR INFORMATION: DISCHARGE OF REQUIREMENT 3 (PROJECT WIDE: ARCHAEOLOGY AND PEAT) IN RESPECT OF SZC Co. SIZEWELL C NUCLEAR POWER STATION**

Dear Sir/Madam,

For information, Suffolk County Council, as the Discharging Authority, has received the above application to Discharge this Requirement(s).

This project has been granted consent by the Secretary of State of the department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), following the recommendations from the Examining Authority. Suffolk County Council has the responsibility to assess the information provided in order to discharge the Requirements set out in the Development Consent Order (DCO). This will involve liaising with various experts within the County Council to determine whether the information provided by the applicant is satisfactory, and that the Requirement can be discharged. The County Council will not Discharge the Requirement until there is sufficient evidence and detail provided.

Although the proposed developments have been approved by the SoS, further detailed information is required to enable construction to be undertaken and the responsibility for the approval of the detailed information for certain matters rests with Suffolk County Council (SCC).

I am therefore writing to you to inform you that SZC. Co have submitted information under Requirement 3 for the approval of SCC. Requirements 3 states the following:

**3 Project wide: Archaeology and Peat**

*(1) No part of any terrestrial works, may be carried out until a site-specific written scheme of investigation for each phase of archaeological investigation relating to that part has, following consultation with Historic England, been submitted to and approved by Suffolk County Council. Site-specific written schemes of investigation must be in accordance with the Overarching Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation.*

The submitted information can be found by following the links below to the SCC planning website.

<http://suffolk.planning-register.co.uk/Planning/Display?applicationNumber=SCC%2F0115%2F23%2FDOR>

If any parish councils or members of the public choose to provide comment, they are welcome to do so, but there is no expectation for parish councils to submit comments.

Any comments submitted should be in relation to the submitted document only, and not raise concerns or issues outside of the scope of the submitted document.

There is also no formal duty on the part of the discharging authority to have regard to comments from any person or organisation which is not a named consultee, though it may at its discretion.

It is not mandatory for any public comments to be received in order for the Planning Officer to Discharge the Requirement document that has been submitted to them.

**If you wish to make any comments to SCC upon the submitted information, please do so to the following email address, no later than Tuesday 2 January 2024.**

[planning@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:planning@suffolk.gov.uk)

Yours faithfully,

*Georgia Teague*

**Georgia Teague**  
Planning Officer  
Growth, Highways & Infrastructure