

East Suffolk Council, Annual Report 2021/22

East Suffolk Council is emerging from the impacts of the Covid 19 pandemic with a clear determination to ensure that its communities, residents, businesses and other stakeholders receive the services they want and need.

Central to this has been the delivery of clear outcomes based around the key priorities established in our Strategic Plan. There are five – Economy, Communities, Financial Sustainability, Digital and the Environment – each of which detail the areas which we believe matter most to us and to council tax-payers.

Economy Theme

A key element of our economic approach is creating greater certainty for investors in East Suffolk and there are few better examples than the construction of tidal flood walls in Lowestoft as part of a scheme to protect 1500 homes and 825 businesses (pictured below).



The town's East Point Pavilion is also being repurposed into an exciting community and events space and 72 contemporary beach huts are also under construction.

Meanwhile, further down the coast – and as part of ongoing investment in Felixstowe's South Seafront - a new iconic café has now been delivered and the new beach village is set to be built. We hosted last stage of 2021 Woman's Tour too, showcasing Felixstowe to international audiences and supported the three-day 'Felixfest' festival.

In 2021/22, we secured funding to support economic growth which includes £24.9m for Lowestoft from the Towns Fund programme and £8.3m to help deliver Freeport East. We were also responsible for distributing over £135 million in Covid-related Business Grants across the last two years to support local businesses which have been impacted by the pandemic. Meanwhile, our East Suffolk Towns initiative is boosting local economies – including a digital towns project to install free public WiFi in East Suffolk town centres and seafronts.

In a further boost to local areas, we collected £6.2m from developers as Community Infrastructure Levy payments and, as part of the funding that has been distributed, a new community centre for Framlingham has received £700,000. We also dealt with 5443 planning applications in 2021/22 ensuring the best possible built environment.

Communities Theme

Our East Suffolk Community Partnerships are delivering funding for schemes that local people want and need, including tackling social isolation and loneliness, employment projects, an ambassador programme in schools and a successful self-neglect and hoarding project led by Access Community Trust.

Meanwhile, all 55 East Suffolk Councillors have utilised an annual Enabling Communities budget of £7,500 and more than 130 projects have been funded in East Suffolk.



Housing delivery is a crucial element of our wider responsibilities and we completed 223 affordable homes this year. We have also supported 331 disabled facilities grants, achieved 164 homelessness preventions and housed 607 applicants from the housing register.

We are also helping people make safe and healthy decisions by inspecting food premises and 98% are now rated 3-5 in the district. In addition, we are also increasing participation in leisure activities, with 787,617 taking place this year.

Financial Sustainability

Managing our finances is critically important and in difficult times we delivered a balanced budget - an overall spend of £129 million committed to delivering essential services across 57 different service areas.



We are also taking a dynamic and business-like approach to our operational services and we're creating a brand-new trading company called East Suffolk Services – a commitment to seek the best possible value for money for residents, businesses and all local stakeholders.

Digital Theme

Digital Transformation helps us deliver services in different ways while also reducing unnecessary contact and protecting resources. This year, 81.6% of all one-off payment were made to us digitally. We are pleased with how well we support people online and our average customer rating is 4.3 (out of 5) stars. Over 90,000 e-forms were submitted and there were over 2.5 million website visitors.

Our GIS public mapping project is live, providing greater access to information about the area and we've designed and delivered a new website for Lowestoft Beach Hut Hire. Additionally we've delivered a range of digital solutions, including a full rollout of MS Teams, Telephone enhancements and hybrid broadcast of council meetings.

Environment Theme

The environment is critically important, and we are working to achieve our Net Zero Carbon targets by 2030. Our carbon footprint of activities is down 18.9% and Solar PV systems across council assets have generated renewable energy avoiding approximately 38 tonnes of Co2 emissions.

We've also created 100 eco areas promoting biodiversity and supporting wildlife and 40.37% of waste goes to recycling, reuse and composting with the rest sent to energy plants. We are also delivering the Deben Fields scheme - 61 new properties, 42 of them affordable, using green technology to achieve 'Passivhaus' certification.

Meanwhile nine electric fleet vehicles are helping us avoid a further 10 tonnes of Co2 and we've reduced pesticide spraying by 145 pesticide spraying.



We're working closely with coastal communities to enable a climate resilient coast and (finally!) we also dealt with 883 noise complaints to help our residents enjoy our beautiful district in peace.

Cllr Steve Gallant
Leader East Suffolk Council