

April

99% of pupils receive a preferred primary school place on National Offer Day

99.18% of children were offered a place on National Offer Day at one of their three preferred primary schools and 95.78% were offered a place at their first preference school.

Suffolk County Council received 7,056 applications from parents and carers indicating which primary school they would prefer their child to join in September 2023.

May 2023

Library services protected as Suffolk County Council approves additional funding

Suffolk County Council has underlined its commitment to library services in Suffolk, as it approved plans to increase its funding to Suffolk Libraries, to enable the service to continue operating at its current level, until the end of the contract in July 2024.

Suffolk Libraries currently receives £5.9m per year from Suffolk County Council, however the service is forecasting a deficit of £60k per month from April 2023. The service has cited increases in service costs, a reduction in income opportunities following the Coronavirus Pandemic and rising inflation, as causes of the deficit.

June

Suffolk Fire Service to bring control room back to the County

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has announced plans to create a new fire control centre here in Suffolk.

Since October 2011, Suffolk has shared a control room with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire and Rescue Service in Huntingdon. The joint project has worked

well, saving both fire services money and enabling greater cross-border resource sharing.

However, the company behind a project to deliver a new IT system, initiated in 2019, has run into technical and financial problems, causing a significant delay. This, in addition to advancements in technology, has led to the decision to bring fire control back into the county by the end of 2024.

July

Councils set out concerns as public consultation opens for Norwich to Tilbury proposals

National Grid has opened its consultation to anyone wishing to comment on its Norwich to Tilbury proposal, previously known as East Anglia Green. This is an eight-week non-statutory consultation period which closes on 21 August 2023.

The project will see a new 400kV electricity transmission line built between Norwich and Tilbury, running 111 miles. It will be made up mostly of overhead lines and pylons, along with some underground cables and a new substation.

The new consultation reveals the route for the pylons, passing through Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex. It shows the line will run underground through the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on the Essex-Suffolk border.

August

Council fears new energy proposals will harm Suffolk's coastline

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.

The Council will study the details of the new proposals, and will prepare its response to the National Grid's second public consultation, which opens on 8 September.

The non-statutory consultation on [National Grid Venture's LionLink project](#) will commence on the 8 September 2023, and will remain open until 3 November 2023.

September

Councils unite against National Grid pylon proposals

In a [joint letter to National Grid](#), the leaders of the three councils address the extensive impact on landscapes and local communities that the scheme would bring.

They also highlight that an offshore solution has not been sufficiently investigated, and the opportunities that this could bring to co-ordinate with other large-scale energy projects off the region's coast.

The Norwich to Tilbury project would see 114 miles of electricity pylons weave their way through the three counties. Only a small percentage of this cabling would go underground, an issue which the councils also raise, stating that more would be needed particularly in the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and near Diss and the Waveney Valley.

October

New highways services arrive in Suffolk as multi-million-pound partnership goes live

The new 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.

Milestone Infrastructure, part of M Group Services, was awarded Suffolk's new highways services contract back in February and since then has been working with Suffolk County Council to mobilise the new contract ahead of it commencing on 1 October.

November

Cabinet approved £10 million new funding to resurface residential roads

At Suffolk County Council's Cabinet meeting (7th November), Cabinet approved an extra £10 million to repair and resurface local roads in villages and residential areas across Suffolk.

The funding will nearly double Suffolk Highways' £11 million annual road maintenance budget but be targeted at smaller residential streets which are typically maintained less frequently than busier A and B roads.

December 2023

More public money for adult and children's care, but difficult decisions are needed to balance the books

In the next two years, Suffolk County Council needs to pump almost £74 million extra into protecting the county's most vulnerable residents.

- £74 million extra needed to protect the most vulnerable over two years
- £64.7 million savings to be made over two years
- Council set to reduce workforce, services and use savings

As part of financial plans to prioritise those in greatest need, an additional £42.7 million for children's services and £29.9 million for adult care are being proposed.

Along with local authorities up and down the country, the council has been hit hard by inflation and rising demand for services such as children's care, special educational needs and disabilities and home to school transport. It means having to make difficult decisions about the services it provides, including £64.7 million of savings in 2024/25 and 2025/26.

January

Council to propose new funding for arts & heritage in Suffolk

Suffolk County Council is today (26th January) announcing its intention to create a new funding pot open to all arts and heritage organisations in the county.

- Core funding for nine arts and heritage organisations still to cease after 2024/25
- New £500,000 funding pot proposed from 2025/26, open to all arts and heritage organisations in Suffolk
- Proposal to be tabled at Cabinet meeting on 30 January

Following this week's announcement from government that £600 million of further funding will be available to local councils, the council intends to propose a new £500,000 project fund to which all Suffolk's arts and heritage organisations can apply.

February 2024

Public consultation on Suffolk County Council's proposed devolution deal starts on 18th March

A 10-week public consultation on our proposed devolution deal with the Government will start on 18th March and run through until 26th May. The consultation will be in two main parts – an open survey, hosted by Suffolk County Council, that any residents can complete and a sample survey of 1000 Suffolk residents conducted independently by Ipsos Mori. The consultation will be available through our website www.suffolk.gov.uk/devolution and social media. There will also be media coverage highlighting the consultation.

March

Funding boost for new and existing bus services across Suffolk

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 council has been awarded £1.8 million per year for two years – a total of £3.6 million – from the Department for Transport's Bus Service Improvement Fund Phase 2 (BSIP 2, renamed from BSIP+) to deliver improvements to public transport in Suffolk.

April 2024

Over 400 Suffolk roads set for upgrade as largest ever surfacing project gets underway

Residents across Suffolk are set to benefit from 421 newly surfaced roads this year - almost doubling the number of roads completed last year, as Suffolk Highways' largest ever resurfacing programmes get underway.

With the start of the surface dressing programme beginning this week, 102 roads will be surface dressed, whilst a further 319 sites will benefit from a full machine resurfacing during the year.

