



January 2023

Welcome to my monthly newsletter

Kate Blakemore appointed to new Strategic Director role



I am delighted to confirm the appointment of Kate Blakemore as the Council's new Strategic Director.

Kate has been in an equivalent role at Great Yarmouth Borough Council for more than five years.

Her appointment follows a thorough recruitment process and will make an outstanding addition to the Strategic Management Team.

A recent LGA Peer Review indicated that we were making tremendous progress as an authority but lacked sufficient capacity and resilience at a senior level. We are very pleased to have addressed one of the key recommendations by bringing in someone with a track record of success, delivering genuine outcomes for local people.

£2.75m funding agreed for levelling up in East Suffolk

Following a submission to the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund, East Suffolk Council has been allocated £2.75m, which will be used to support high streets, local businesses, workforce and community skills development, as well as support for those struggling with the cost of living.

In April 2022, the Government launched the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to support its Levelling Up agenda. The primary goal of the UKSPF is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK, focusing on communities and place, supporting local business, people and skills.



East Suffolk Council has been allocated £2.75m to invest across two-and-a-half years (2022/23-2024/25) in initiatives that will address inequality and contribute to levelling up.

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

Final approval for this element of funding is expected in the new year, following submission of an investment plan addendum, with funded programmes to commence in April 2023.

Although one should ask the question how much cutting of funding has taken place over the last 5/10 years so is this even new funding ?

The Council's 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 in Suffolk. These include a three-year programme offering grants to improve high streets and town centres across the district, a business support programme providing free advice and a small grants scheme to support business growth, a local economy and community skills programme, and voluntary skills provision supporting vulnerable young people to transition into education, employment and training.

All programmes are expected to be completed by 31 March 2025.

East Suffolk Awards 2023 to celebrate community success stories

Nominations for the East Suffolk Awards 2023 are now open.

Last staged before the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2019, the awards celebrate the best in local businesses, people and community groups.

Run by East Suffolk Council, the awards recognise contributions, celebrate successes, and give people the 'round of applause' they deserve for improving local lives.





Winners will be announced at an event at Snape Maltings on 28 February 2023.

This year sees our biggest ever range of awards, with a 'Community Next Big Idea' category winner receiving a grant to turn their dream scheme into a reality.

The other categories are...

- Team of the Year Award sponsored by Everyone Active
- Health and Wellbeing Award sponsored by Active Suffolk
- New Business of the Year Award sponsored by Spider Recruitment
- Business Growth Award sponsored by ABP Associated British Ports
- Great Idea Award sponsored by Cory Brothers Ltd
- Green Impact Award
- Encouraging Tourism Award
- Apprentice of the Year Award sponsored by EDF Energy
- High Street of the Year sponsored by East Suffolk Means Business
- Community champion of the year (individual) sponsored by Places Leisure
- Community of the year sponsored by East Suffolk Community Partnerships

Find out more by visiting the [awards website](#).

Network of Warm Rooms launched to support residents

A network of War Rooms has opened across East Suffolk to provide a safe and welcoming space for anyone struggling with heating costs during the colder winter months .

The network of 30 Warm Rooms has been part-funded by the Government (through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund), with more than £70,000 set aside from East Suffolk Council's wider Ease the Squeeze programme of advice and support around the rising cost of living.

A number of additional rooms are also being funded from Community Partnership budgets, with grants provided to cover heating, lighting and basic refreshments for a minimum of three warm rooms in each CP area.

Several venues are planning free, independently funded activities, ranging from books and games to film showings, allowing people to not only stay warm but also connect with others in the community, reducing isolation and loneliness.

Help and advice will be available on subjects such as reducing energy costs and managing finances, while East Suffolk Council will also be working with the Rural Coffee Caravan to identify and support Warm Spaces in more rural communities.

Cycling and Walking Strategy will ensure access to quality infrastructure



A new planning document has been officially adopted to enhance the district's cycling and walking network.

After gaining Cabinet approval in October, and following the prescribed 'call-in' period, the new East Suffolk Council Cycling and Walking Strategy will now be implemented to ensure that communities have access to high quality infrastructure across the district.

The strategy sets out to create safe, coherent, direct, comfortable and attractive cycling, walking and wheeling environments that lead to improvements in health and wellbeing, facilitate greater social interaction and play, encourage more environmentally sustainable lifestyles, reduce road congestion and support economic growth.

In order to create these environments, the strategy identifies cycling and walking infrastructure recommendations across East Suffolk, including in the Broads Authority Area.

Two rounds of consultation informed preparation of the strategy. An initial consultation in October/December 2020 was followed by public consultation on the draft strategy between November 2021 and January 2022.

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And finally I wish you all a very happy new year

The battle against inactivity over environmental issues is now more urgent than ever before . Not only in influencing the lack of action by other authorities but in new and better legislation through parliament - we need strong serious focus with a vision to how we protect and champion our biodiversity . The time is now and I continue to push the agenda at every opportunity .

James Mallinder
Deben Ward
Environment Portfolio holder