

COASTLINE

The Newsletter of Suffolk Coastal District Council

Issue 41, Autumn 2009

Council looking at all options to balance budget

Suffolk Coastal is pressing ahead with its top to bottom review of its services and priorities as it seeks to bridge an estimated £1 million a year budget gap in the next three years.

Community leaders and residents are being asked for their views about what services are less important than they used to be and where further savings can be made.

“I warned in May that despite our excellent record of delivering savings, the financial climate facing councils meant that we need to make 20 per cent savings on our budget, equivalent to £3 million. Our efforts since then mean we are already one-third of the way to meeting that target but we want help to bridge the whole gap,” said Councillor Ray Herring, Leader of Suffolk Coastal.

“Since 2001 we have achieved over £8m of efficiencies, and we are spending £3.75m less than other similar councils, but that means that it is increasingly difficult to wring any further savings from our existing services.

“We want our residents and our town and parish councils to help us identify which services deserve to remain a top priority and which in these pressing financial times are less important,” added Cllr Herring.

For more information please turn to page 23.

Rates are online

Businesses can now receive their business rates bills electronically and manage their accounts online by visiting www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourbusiness/businessrates/online
For the latest business rates news call 01394 444456.

Loans to turn homes green

Any residents interested in buying renewable energy technology such as solar panels or heat pumps, or making other green improvements to their homes, can apply for interest-free loans of up to £4,000 from the Ipswich and Suffolk Credit Union (ISCU).

For more information call SEAL on 0800 0288 938, visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourhome/energy/seal or call ISCU on 01473 690690.

Give your views on where new housing should go

Residents are being given the chance to comment on the latest version of Suffolk Coastal's proposals on where new homes should be shared out between now and 2025.

“I would like to thank all those who have taken one of the many opportunities to help shape our Local Development Framework's (LDF) Core Strategy which will help meet the needs of our district's residents for homes, jobs, shops and leisure while safeguarding our communities and our valued environment,” said Councillor Andy Smith, Suffolk Coastal's Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning.

Following the public consultation earlier this year, and taking account of the changing economic circumstances, the updated Core Strategy proposed to the LDF Task Group and recommended by it to Cabinet involved a significant change in the distribution of housing, most notably in Felixstowe and Martlesham.

“The changes are significant enough that we want to give everyone the opportunity to understand and comment upon them. We have to plan carefully for the future, to ensure as much as possible that we maintain and enhance our excellent quality of life, while making it possible for our people to find the jobs and homes that are needed to stop our district stagnating.

“We believe that our latest proposals are the best way forward and I hope people will take this latest chance to give an informed opinion on them. The final decision, taking account of feedback from the new consultation, will then be taken later this year,” added Cllr Smith.

The number of new homes which the Government require us to provide for in the district by 2025 remains unchanged at 7,710. Outstanding planning permissions exist for 1,780 of those and another 1,850 will be within existing built-up areas, or areas already identified in the existing Local Plan. The remaining 4,080 will require new areas of land to be allocated.

It is proposed that 2,000 new homes be allocated for Martlesham, that homes in Felixstowe and the Trimleys will be in a variety of locations, and phased over 3 5-year periods, with the first restricted to previously developed land and, if necessary, one small-scale greenfield site, and up to 1,000 being in new areas later. This would mean an average of 160 homes in Martlesham and 350 homes across the rest of the district being built every year.

This latest consultation will run until Wednesday, November 18. Visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/planning/review/corestrategy for full details or visit the Council’s Melton Hill offices or local libraries.

Benefit from free advice

Residents can get expert free advice from Suffolk Coastal's Benefits team and other organisations at two special information sessions being held in October.

The sessions are being held at Kesgrave Community Centre on Tuesday, October 13, 10am to 3pm and Aldeburgh Fairfield Community Centre on Saturday, October 17, 10am to 3pm.

“As well as being able to meet people who handle the applications and ask their advice, it is also a great opportunity to meet people from other organisations who may be able to provide services for residents' family or friends,” said Councillor Chris Slemmings, Cabinet Member for Housing.

For more information about benefits, and to find out what you could be entitled to, call 01394 444838, visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourhome/benefits or contact the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Additional help for families

Families are being urged to apply for help with paying their rent or Council Tax as new rules could see another £700,000 of benefits coming to the district to 1,000 new or existing claimants.

From Monday, November 2, families receiving child benefit for one or more children will not have this included when working out their means-tested entitlement to Housing or Council Tax benefits.

Families already receiving Housing or Council Tax benefit will see their entitlement increase as it will now be measured without the child benefit.

For more information call the Benefits team on 01394 444838, or visit the online service at www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourhome/benefits or contact the Citizens Advice Bureau - Felixstowe and District 01394 275958, Leiston, Saxmundham and District 01728 832193 or Ipswich and District 01473 286548.

How many homes?

You have until November 24 to give your views on how many more homes are needed in the region in a major public consultation launched by the East of England Regional Assembly, the full details of which can be found at www.eera.gov.uk

Don't miss out

There are approximately 57,000 homes in Suffolk Coastal and about 10,000 are getting help to pay their Council Tax or rent. If you think you could be entitled to help, call our benefits team on 01394 444838.

Conservatives hold seat

Voters in Walberswick and Wenhaston in July elected to Suffolk Coastal the Conservative's Peter Austin, who beat his only opponent, the Green Party's John Barrett, by 153 votes.

Cllr Austin will serve until May 2011 when all the Council seats are due to be up for re-election. The Conservatives now hold 45 seats on the Council, with nine Liberal Democrat and one Labour.

Help plan future of Seafront Gardens project

Felixstowe is now one step closer to a £2 million grant for repairs and improvements to its historic Seafront Gardens, thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) awarding £152,300 to Suffolk Coastal to develop proposals for a multi-million pound restoration project.

“We are delighted that the HLF has recognised the enormous potential of the Felixstowe Seafront Gardens project by giving Suffolk Coastal the means to finalise its plans, along with the opportunity to bid for more funding,” said Councillor Mary Neale, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Countryside.

The renovation is one of the flagship projects of the Felixstowe and Trimleys Peninsula Futures regeneration programme, which has the backing of Suffolk Coastal, local businesses, community groups and the East of England Development Agency.

To have their say the public can visit www.greenstat.org.uk selecting East of England, then Suffolk and then Friends of Felixstowe Seafront Gardens to complete either or both of the two questionnaires.

One is about the parks and open space service in the district, highlighted in green, and the second is specifically about the Seafront Gardens, highlighted in yellow.

The closing date for responses is November 27 and printed versions are available from Felixstowe’s Town Hall, Tourist Information Centre, Leisure Centre and Library, or can be requested from Caroline Driver on 01394 444239 or carosyv@hotmail.com

Get on the electoral register

Nearly 60,000 forms have been sent out to homes across the district to help update the electoral register and Suffolk Coastal is urging all residents to either send them back or go online so they can vote in the next General Election.

The Council is responsible for keeping the electoral register up to date and accurate but obviously relies on the cooperation of residents to provide the right details to ensure that everyone who is eligible for a vote gets a vote.

Those aged 16 and 17 should also make sure their names are on the form ready for when they can legally vote. The electoral register is also one of the most important proofs of residence used by many organisations and companies, so it makes sense to ensure that all details are up to date.

If all the details on the registration form do not need changing, then visit www.registerbyinternet.com/suffolkcoastal or call 0800 197 7694 (24 hours – calls are free) and use the two-part security code which is on the form.

Anyone wanting to make changes to the current form, by adding or removing names, must return their form by post. The information provided will be used to publish the Register of Electors on December 1, 2009. The qualifying date is October 15, 2009.

Heart review findings criticised

July's announcement that the urgent review into heart attack services has recommended that emergency patients will be sent to three hospitals outside of the county was greeted with disappointment by Suffolk Coastal.

The review by Professor Roger Boyle, national director for heart disease and stroke, followed a storm of criticism about the plans by NHS Suffolk – Suffolk’s Primary Care Trust – to send patients for specialist treatment unavailable in this county to hospitals at Basildon, Norwich and Papworth.

“Prof Boyle has failed to meet all the serious concerns of our rural communities, and skirted around some difficult questions and issues. While I welcome the promise of giving clot-busting drugs to patients in our district, why is this only being trialled for a three-month period?” said Councillor Sherrie Green, Cabinet Member for Community Health.

“The changes are being introduced without the public having their say. The issue about how our communities can easily and safely access these top quality services will not disappear and I hope this trial period is not just an attempt to defuse the real anger at the original ill-thought out proposals,” added Cllr Green.

Cllr Green had hoped that Prof Boyle’s review would explain why Suffolk NHS did not seem to want to offer these specialist services for Suffolk’s 850,000 population when Norwich can offer it for the 500,000 living in central Norfolk.

“A logical solution would be to have a facility at Ipswich that could serve all of Suffolk and those in north Essex where even its residents are unhappy with having to travel to Basildon. We need to know why NHS Suffolk and now Prof Boyle do not appear to have ever considered this option,” added Cllr Green.

Home safety

The Fire & Rescue Service is offering free home fire safety checks which include a free smoke alarm being fitted. To find out more call 01473 260586, which is also the number to ring if you want your electric blanket checked.

Walk to be fit

Why not join one of Suffolk Coastal's health walks, which are free and especially good for those recovering from illness or want to be fitter.

Visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourfreetime/steppingout/ or call 01394 444501 for the latest programme.

More homes can recycle more

The next 5,000 homes in the district to get Suffolk Coastal's improved recycling service will be able to put cans, tins, foil, plastic containers and paper into their new blue-lidded wheelie bin. The homes in Wenhaston, Blythburgh, Walberswick, Thorington, Aldeburgh, Trimley St Mary, Trimley St Martin and Purdis Farm should all have had leaflets by now but a special helpline is also on offer on 01394 444050.

A warning sign

While crime fell last year in Suffolk Coastal and our district remains one of the country's safest, there is still more that people could do to prevent them being a victim of crime.

Nearly one in ten of all crimes in the district are related to theft from cars and vans. The statistics show that in areas like Nacton, Kesgrave and Woodbridge up to half of all vehicles were not locked, and a staggering 70 per cent of those parked on driveways, when items were stolen from them. Among the stolen valuables were sat navs, mobile phones, handbags, and power tools.

The Council and the police have joined up to remind people to lock their cars and hide their valuables with special signs being put up this autumn in the Council's public car parks.

Top of the class

Students at Grundisburgh Primary School used their recycling knowledge and sporting excellence to win first prize at the countywide Schools Recycling Sports Day.

“Grundisburgh Primary School was the third school in as many years to win the Schools Recycling Sports Day on behalf of Suffolk Coastal, and I would like to congratulate the students and teachers on their outstanding achievement,” said Councillor Andrew Nunn, Cabinet Member for the Green Environment.

Suffolk Coastal is launching a special competition in October asking school children to draw posters about getting people to clear up their dog’s fouling, with a prize to the best design. For more information call the recycling team on 01394 444000.

LGR in court

The ongoing saga of the Local Government Review of Suffolk was due to return to the law courts in early October after a judge ruled that the current review was flawed.

Judge Foskett made his ruling in July after Suffolk Coastal complained with Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury about the way the review was carried out by the Boundary Committee for England (BCE).

The BCE has appealed against that decision and, if successful, it could mean the BCE will soon be submitting its final recommendations for the future shape of local councils in Suffolk to the Government. If the appeal is rejected, it could mean the end of the review or a large part of it being restarted. Please keep an eye on the local press for more details or visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourcouncil/future

Know your limits

Did you know that a large glass of wine has three units of alcohol in it? A survey showed that 77 per cent of people did not. Did you know that a glass of wine or a pint of beer has the same calories as a sausage roll?

Suffolk Coastal and the police have linked up to hold two special Know Your Limits events between 10am and 2pm at Felixstowe's Triangle on Tuesday, October 20, and in Saxmundham on Wednesday, October 21.

It will give you the chance to find out the facts about alcohol, the impact that it can have on all aspects of your life and the health risks of over-drinking.

Capital news for pensioners

Pensioners could be entitled to more benefits from November 2 because the Government has increased the capital limit by £4,000 for pension credit.

From November, all capital up to £10,000 will be disregarded when working out entitlement to Housing and Council Tax benefit, and even those with savings up to £16,000 could still be entitled to help.

For more information contact the Benefits team on 01394 444838 who can do home visits, visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourhome/benefits or an office of the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Alde and Ore urged to get involved

Local people and organisations are being encouraged to get involved in efforts to improve the future of communities living in or around the Alde and Ore estuary.

The Alde and Ore Futures community conference, with over 100 representatives of local organisations, community groups, businesses, Government agencies and councils, agreed that broad consultation was needed in order to properly address the many issues facing the area.

“To find out what matters most to people living and working in and around the estuary, the conference set up four groups, chaired by members of the local community, representing farmers and fishermen, community organisations, businesses and organisations concerned with the environment, access and recreation,” said Councillor Andy Smith, Cabinet Member for Coastal Protection.

“The groups will share their experiences, pinpoint the issues that are important to them, and come up with ideas that could help deal with the future challenges likely to affect those living in the Alde and Ore area,” added Cllr Smith.

The strategies adopted by the Alde and Ore Futures project will cover such diverse issues as increasing business opportunities, ensuring there are enough affordable homes and protecting rare wildlife habitats.

Anyone who lives or works in or around the Alde and Ore estuary who wants to join one of the four consultation groups, or to find out more about Alde and Ore Futures, can call 01394 444553, email bill.parker@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk or visit www.suffolkcoastfutures.org.uk

Help to prevent flooding

A special Flood Fair is being held at Hotel Elizabeth Orwell in Felixstowe on Thursday, October 22 from 1pm to offer advice on how to prevent some of the problems of flooding.

Organised by the Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit, in partnership with the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce and the Environment Agency, the event will identify known flood zones and explain that flooding is not just something that threatens those in coastal areas.

There is also a free morning session aimed at businesses who want to prepare their contingency plans and places can be booked by emailing lesley.pretlove@suffolk.gov.uk

Businesses can save by going greener

Local businesses can tap into free expert advice that could help them reduce their energy costs and be more environmentally friendly at the same time.

“Because of the importance this Council puts on tackling climate change we are using some unexpected Government grants to help give our district a full-time expert,” said Councillor Andrew Nunn, Cabinet Member for the Green Environment.

Businesses can arrange an assessment of their energy and resources usage and a calculation of their carbon footprint, and get a practical action plan to reduce carbon emissions, as well as cutting energy costs.

Anna Martin is working with funding from Suffolk Coastal, Groundwork East of England and the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Sustainable Development Fund.

Visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourbusiness/energyadvice/ or call 01394 444257 or email anna.martin@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk to book a visit.

Fram homes can be warm and green

Framlingham residents can apply for free energy efficiency goods under the pilot Greener Homes DIY Scheme which if successful could go districtwide.

“As long as they agree to install the materials themselves, the scheme can meet people’s green ambitions halfway by providing the energy-conserving materials free,” said Councillor Andrew Nunn, Cabinet Member for the Green Environment.

The grants – up to £350, up to £250 and up to £150 – are linked to income, the current energy efficiency of the home and the number of people living there and is funding insulation for lofts, hot water tanks and pipes, reflective radiator panels, and much more.

People living in Framlingham can contact SEAL on 0800 0288 938 for more information or an application form, which is also on www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourhome/energy/seal

2008/09 - a year of better services and even better value

Introduction by Leader and Chief Executive

Over the next nine pages we are giving you a short summary of Suffolk Coastal’s latest annual report in which we look back on how we performed in 2008/09, another year when we can justifiably claim to have succeeded in delivering better services and even better value.

To ensure that we were still meeting the needs of our communities, we reviewed our previous year’s priorities and decided that they were still the key ones facing this district, and they are listed below.

These are the seven issues on which we are concentrating the efforts of this Council, and those of our partners, and which were agreed after consulting the communities of this district.

This was a highly unusual year, as throughout it we had the unwanted distraction of reviewing the future of local government in Suffolk. It remains in our view, whatever its final conclusion, a badly timed diversion from our efforts to provide better, more efficient services, which as the country slumped into recession were more needed than ever.

To achieve this district's priorities, we almost inevitably have to work in partnership with others. Our most important partner is our residents - without them of course we would not be here, and without their support we cannot hope to deliver on the priorities they have helped identify. It is a source of great pride that when asked what they thought of this Council, our residents again ranked it as the best in Suffolk and among the best in the country.

To deliver the quality of life that our communities both expect and deserve we are continuing to work hard to ensure that our partners share and support our priorities - your priorities. Our goal is to encourage, and lead where appropriate, all the organisations whether they be public, private or voluntary that provide services or jobs in our district to work together to do things better, more efficiently and to deliver success on the key issues facing this district.

An indication of this Council's willingness to take radical steps to make our services more efficient and value for money was our decision to share our Chief Executive with Waveney, a move followed by a sharing of our head of planning services, and a widening of our existing audit partnership with Ipswich to now take in Waveney as well.

The next eight pages give a snapshot of our achievements and how, despite our financial and other pressures, we continue to provide the services and value our residents want. However, we must also look forward, which is why pages 23- 28 are particularly important as they focus on what services we should provide in the future, given the challenge of having to save £3 million in the next three years.

Our current priorities are:

- Increasing access to housing to meet local needs
- Improved waste management (greater recycling and reduced proportions of waste going to landfill)
- Coast and estuary management will enable key assets to be protected
- Strengthening the economy through facilitating key investments
- Feeling safe and being safe from crime
- Develop and promote Green policies and improved environmental management in the district
- Deliver well performing, efficient and accessible services to all

Achievements in 2008/09

- Despite continued underfunding from the Government and falling income, Suffolk Coastal kept its Council Tax increase to just eight pence a week on its average Band D bill, a rise of only 2.9 per cent.
- Suffolk Coastal's public perception of anti-social behaviour is among the lowest in the country and the annual crime rate per head of population (46.27) is our lowest for three years, and the lowest of the Suffolk Community Safety Partnerships.
- An innovative partnership project involving Suffolk Coastal's housing options team has been working in local schools to help prevent homelessness and give young people an accurate picture of what help is on offer.

- The latest report to show that Suffolk Coastal is outperforming most councils was from the independent Audit Commission which stated that residents are receiving good access to the Council's services and gave the Council a rating of good, two stars and promising prospects of improving.
- A special project team was set up by Suffolk Coastal to help co-ordinate the regeneration of the Felixstowe and Trimleys peninsula and attract the necessary multi-million pound investments.
- Local children used their artistic talents to bring colour to the underpass near the Police Headquarters in Martlesham, thanks to a graffiti art project supported by Suffolk Coastal, local schools, community groups and parish councils.
- The go-ahead was given to an ambitious £1.5 million investment package in the district that could attract a further £6 million of funding for local regeneration and business support projects using money that the Council gained from the Government because of the district's success in increasing the amount of money collected from business rates.
- A partnership of three district councils including Suffolk Coastal struck an important deal to help make collective savings of over £1 million on their insurance costs across the next five years.
- By the end of March 2009, 36,000 homes across the district had been linked up to Suffolk Coastal's improved recycling service with plans agreed that all homes would be served by March 2010.
- June saw the start of the preliminary work for the major expansion of the Port of Felixstowe which was recently given the formal planning go-ahead by Suffolk Coastal and which could create up to 1,500 new jobs in East Suffolk.
- Suffolk Coastal ran a series of low-cost Safer Food, Better Business (SFBB) workshops for food managers in the district who wanted further help on how to put improved systems in place in their workplace.

- Butterflies were at the centre of celebrations to mark the successful efforts that have seen 10 hectares of countryside being officially designated as Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) by Natural England. The Sandlings and Mill Stream open spaces won the classification after a great deal of work by Suffolk Coastal's countryside and open spaces team, supported by Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council and the Greenway Project.
- The much-needed coastal defence works around East Lane, Bawdsey got underway thanks to the unique community partnership that helped raise the money by building homes on three nearby sites.
- Thanks to the Suffolk Coastal Local Strategic Partnership, local people were given free training on how to help others lead a greener lives.
- It is now even easier for people to apply for Council Tax or Housing benefit, thanks to Suffolk Coastal's online application service which is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year on www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourhome/benefits/online/claimonline/
- A series of exhibitions and information road shows were held to encourage as many people as possible to have their say and help shape Suffolk Coastal's first Local Development Framework that will shape the future of their district
- Five closed circuit television cameras were installed in Felixstowe thanks to a successful bid by the Suffolk Coastal Community Safety Partnership to the Home Office for £37,000 of funding. The scheme has also been backed by the local town council, the chamber of commerce and the county council.
- More than 30 hours of memories and long-forgotten facts from the local villagers from the communities of the Alde and Ore rivers were recorded as part of the Ebb and Flow project, a Heritage Lottery funded programme, organised by Suffolk Coastal and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Unit.
- Felixstowe was home again to a free one-day event promoting and celebrating alternative sports, beach activities and healthy living, with the Xtremefest held at Brackenbury Fort packed with activities and attractions for people of all ages.

- Residents of eight villages were asked by Suffolk Coastal's conservation team to help assess their local area to help conserve the unique features that give them special character.
- A new Customer Access Strategy, backed up with improved service standards, was agreed by Suffolk Coastal after it consulted with people who use its services.
- For some youngsters, the biggest mission of the summer holidays is to avoid being bored, but thanks to a link-up between Suffolk Coastal and Rock Barracks Army base some 50 local youngsters found the answer with Operation Camouflage with its variety of exciting and different activities and challenges as part of a team.
- Suffolk Coastal's Food and Safety team help over 150 people a year gain nationally recognised certificates, and with courses in food safety and health and safety running throughout the year, there is plenty of opportunity for people to boost their skills.
- Local skateboarders, BMXers and bladers jumped for joy after Woodbridge skatepark opened.
- People aged 60 and over could register to swim for free at three Suffolk Coastal pools with the launch of a government-backed scheme to promote fitness.
- Much-needed new play equipment was installed at Kemps Field in Aldeburgh after Suffolk Coastal agreed to back the project with £28,000 from its outdoor play space fund. Last year many different projects across the district were helped by the special fund.
- New play and open space facilities are available to residents of Purdis Farm thanks to Persimmon Homes and Suffolk Coastal offering diverting fun with play equipment, an aerial runway, a basketball goal, and a kickabout area. The most was made out of the play area's natural surroundings with a flower meadow, and a peaceful informal area.
- The Soundwaves Ultimate Bands Contest offered bands and solo artists in the Suffolk Coastal district the chance to compete, battle-of-the-bands style, for the opportunity to work with top industry professionals, record demo CDs, and perform live on stage.

- An independent inspector reported that Suffolk Coastal's workforce is dedicated to delivering success as the Council was awarded Investor in People (IIP) status for the fourth time.
- Some of the district's licensed premises should be safer places thanks to a training course organised by Suffolk Coastal, which showed how to identify and prevent violence and aggression.
- Two of the first six projects in Suffolk to gain funding from the Government's Play Builder scheme are in Suffolk Coastal, with Felixstowe Skatepark and Otley Community Council play space both receiving £50,000.
- An informal free car park at the Felixstowe South Seafront project site opened for visitors and residents.
- A guide funded by the Suffolk Coastal Local Strategic Partnership offered help to those wanting to run or set up a voluntary or community group.
- To help mark the countdown to the London 2012 Olympic Games, the London Olympics Flag was hoisted and a fun doubles tennis tournament held in August at Felixstowe Lawn Tennis Club, one of the district's training facilities that are set to be used by overseas competitors.
- Suffolk Coastal has helped with two housing associations to create new housing developments in Orford and Kesgrave, making these areas more accessible to those on low incomes and people with disabilities and enabling them to remain part of the community.
- In the first 6 months of 2008-09, 42 affordable homes were completed, with 588 in the pipeline. This is in line with our annual target of 90 units, though the impact of the credit crunch may slow progress. In 2007-08 58 were completed, up from 52 in 2006-07.
- The Helping Hand agency set up by Suffolk Coastal's housing team for elderly or disabled people helped 62 major adaptation and renovation projects with a combined cost of £413,820 to be completed, £243,000 of which was secured through Government grant funding. It also carried out 291 jobs through their small repairs service.

- A two-page guide to surviving the credit crunch, packed with helpful contact details, was included inside Coastline, and is on www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/helpingyou/creditcrunch
- The Regional Minister for the East of England, Barbara Follett MP, saw first-hand the £10 million coastal defence improvement works at South Felixstowe and met with councillors to hear their urgent concerns about proposed Environment Agency policies towards river estuaries.
- Customers have a new and easy way to say what they think about the services Suffolk Coastal provides thanks to the GovMetric system which allow people calling the Council or using its Melton Hill offices or website to make an instant comment about the service they have just received.
- The police were given the additional powers to control anti-social drinking in parts of Wickham Market, Saxmundham and Kelsale cum Carlton after the Council gave its go-ahead to new designation orders.
- Plans to demolish Trimley St Mary railway station hit the buffers after Suffolk Coastal asked the Government to consider making the disused railway station a listed building, and served a building preservation order.
- To help shoppers visiting Woodbridge an extra 200 parking spaces were made available free on Saturdays at the Council's Melton Hill offices.
- Volunteers helped plant over 4,000 hedges and trees as part of the Parish Tree Scheme, launched by Suffolk Coastal in 1976 to encourage the planting of native trees and hedges to enhance the local landscape.
- The latest annual assessment by the independent Audit Commission rated Suffolk Coastal as one of only 12 councils to score top marks for its financial standing.
- The Suffolk Coastal-backed Go With The Flow mobile youth centre began touring rural communities offering a place to relax, socialise and pick up new skills.
- For the first time ever, over a three month period last spring, just over half of all the district's domestic waste was recycled or composted.

- The Council joined with other partners to hold special Suffolk Skillz events for local school children at Adastral Park aimed at highlighting the career opportunities on offer.
- Big changes were made to the way that people on the housing waiting lists get their new home with a new system being brought in that will give more control and choice across six other council areas.
- Felixstowe's South Beach won the prestigious Blue Flag for the ninth consecutive year because of its water quality and resort management.
- Plans were drawn up for a scheme to provide coastal defence for Central Felixstowe after the public were given their say on the best options.
- Over 2,700 residents, encouraged by the annual Spring Clean and by the 'don't be a tosser' campaign running on BBC Radio Suffolk, registered litter-picking activities with the Council – up from 1,900 last year.
- Businesses in the district attended a Greenprint Forum, where speakers from BT, the Port of Felixstowe and CRed Suffolk shared their experiences of tackling environmental issues in the workplace.
- A Suffolk Coastal project to restore and improve Felixstowe's historic seafront gardens applied for a grant from Parks for People, run by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Help us to review our services and priorities

As explained on the front page of Coastline, Suffolk Coastal is aiming to find £3 million worth of savings between 2010-13 and is reviewing all its services and how important they are.

As well as seeking the views of its residents, the Council has also asked the views of town and parish councils, community organisations and local businesses.

On page 26-28 you will find a list of all the Council's services that are used directly by the public, and afterwards you will be asked about which five you think are the most important and which five are the least important.

“Our survey of the public will focus solely on the services that they use, as they are in the best position as our customers to identify what changes can be made, and how they can be made more efficient. However, I can assure everyone that all our ‘back-office’ services will also be firmly put under the microscope,” said Councillor Ray Herring, Leader of the Council.

To bridge the budget gap, the Council is looking at which of its services can be provided more efficiently in partnership with other councils or organisations, as well as which services can be reduced or even discontinued.

“We are also investigating whether we can increase the use of new technology to help us deliver our services cheaper and better, and we will also review both our charges and our own buildings and offices.

“The whole organisational structure of this Council could be revised, and we will need to see what if any of our services or assets our local town and parish councils or our community and voluntary groups may be willing to take on.

“We have a proud track record of introducing innovative changes at this Council and of delivering more efficient and better services, and we will not shirk from making more radical changes if we need to. Our goal over the coming weeks and months is to identify the way forward for this Council and we are ready to work with our community to provide the value for money services our residents want and deserve,” added Cllr Herring.

What do you think are our most important services?

On pages 26-28 we list all of our services used by the public and we would like you to tell us on page 14 which you think are the most important and also which are the least important.

When we asked your councillors they thought were the most important public services they said planning, coast and estuary management, waste and recycling, and environmental protection, while among those ranked lowest were cemeteries, the dog warden service, pest control, theatre management, and abandoned vehicles.

Do you agree with their ranking of our services? From your experiences and needs, which services could be reduced or which are really important? How can our services be improved and made more efficient?

Please use the form on page 29 to make your comments and help us make the changes that are needed to make our services more efficient and more in line with the needs of all our community.

As well as reviewing its services, the Council has also been looking at whether to change its priorities. On page 28, is a revised version of the Balanced Scorecard, which sets out the Council’s main priorities.

Among the proposed changes from the current priorities would be commitments to supporting economic development and recovery with a focus on key sectors, the achievement of a balanced supply of appropriate housing to meet identified needs, and continued emphasis on preventing people becoming homeless.

If you have any views on our draft list of priorities, please write them when you return your completed survey on page 29.

Some facts about our budget

- Suffolk Coastal's current income from Council Tax paid by local residents is £7.142 million. It also receives £8.1 million of Government grant.
- Suffolk Coastal has achieved budget savings of over £8m since 2001.
- Suffolk Coastal has kept its Council Tax increases to below five per cent every year since 2001 - indeed, this year its Council Tax rose by only eight pence a week for a Band D house.
- Suffolk Coastal receives the lowest grant per household from the Government of any council in Suffolk – we get £165 per Band D home this year, while in comparison Ipswich gets £290 and Forest Heath £333.
- The economic downturn has hit the Council's income with far fewer planning applications and land searches being made, while services such as housing benefits are far busier.
- In recent years, Suffolk Coastal has engaged in a number of innovative partnerships, including the establishment of Suffolk Coastal Services Ltd and Suffolk Coastal Leisure Community Association Ltd, as well as closer working with other local councils, which has seen it share its Chief Executive and Head of Planning with Waveney District Council.

Services we provide for the public

(with their 2009/10 budget)

* Abandoned vehicles - removal of abandoned cars identified around the district £118,500

Affordable decent housing - encouraging more affordable housing to be built and helping improve the quality of existing homes £539,900

Car parks - helping to protect town centre vitality by providing off-road parking. £784,700 (net income)

Cemeteries - includes the management of four cemeteries and a grave-digging and funeral service £129,800

Coast and estuary management - helping maintain the district's extensive coastline and protecting our communities and the environment £281,100

Communications - informing residents via Coastline, media relations and the website £63,400

* Community safety - includes tackling anti-social behaviour and working with the police to prevent crime £150,600

* Concessionary travel - includes the new free national bus pass for elderly and disabled people £775,600

* Council Tax & business rates - collection of Council Tax and business rates £881,100

Countryside management & Rights of Way - includes the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB, Greenways Countryside Project, managing green spaces and helping regulate tree and landscape protection, public footpaths and bridleways £366,600

Economic development and regeneration - offering support and helpful advice to new and existing businesses, and helping those areas of the district needing new investment. £311,100

* Electoral registration and administration of elections - ensuring that people can vote at local and national elections £155,500

* Emergency planning - responding to civil emergencies and ensuring business continuity £62,200

* Environmental protection - includes dealing with noise, air pollution complaints, private water supplies and animal welfare £518,100

* Food and safety - includes food hygiene and health and safety inspections and investigating complaints £388,400

Grants - to assist voluntary and community organisations across the district £306,200

Green issues - to help local communities and businesses reduce their carbon emissions and help tackle climate change £32,000

Health improvement -encouraging local people to make changes to their lifestyles that will make them fitter and healthier. £24,000

* Homelessness - offering support and advice to help prevent people becoming homeless £485,200

* Housing and Council Tax Benefits including Fraud

Investigation - ensuring that those who need it get the benefits they are entitled to £661,700

Leisure facilities and sport development - promotion of sport, physical activity and active recreation both through formal and informal sporting opportunities including four leisure centres across the district £1,338,100

* Licensing – includes taxis/private hire cars, pubs and clubs £84,000

Parks and play areas - managing and maintaining parks and play areas £705,900

Pest control and dog warden service - helping control the nuisance of pests and dealing with stray or dangerous dogs and enforcement activities £189,900

* Planning and building control - includes dealing with all planning applications for developments, ensuring that standards of design and safety are met, setting planning policy for the future and providing land searches £1,554,700

Public conveniences - management of over 30 blocks of toilets across the district £437,700

Theatre management - the Council's Spa Pavilion at Felixstowe £312,500

Tourism - managing our four tourist information centres and initiatives to encourage tourists to visit our district, including beach huts and resort activities £367,000

* Waste and recycling management including street cleaning & litter clearance – includes the refuse and recycling collection service and promotion of waste minimisation and reuse, as well as providing and emptying litter bins and dog waste bins
£3,644,900

* indicates services provided by or for the Council that are all or partly ‘statutory’ – which means that Parliament insists that Council must provide these services.

Working with our community

Develop a safe and healthy community with access to leisure opportunities

- Support the development of opportunities to engage in leisure and cultural activities
- Work with the Police and other partners to reduce anti-social behaviour, the fear of crime, and to maintain the low crime rate.
- Continue to provide a healthy and safe environment for the community.

Protect and enhance the environment

- Protect and enhance both the natural and the built environment and maintain quality of life.
- Work with local communities to ensure our services enhance their local environment.
- Ensure the principles of sustainability are promoted widely and guide Suffolk Coastal in its decision making.

Support our economy

- Support economic development and recovery with a focus on key sectors.
- Lead and support regeneration initiatives.

Meet housing needs

- Achieve a balanced supply of appropriate housing to meet identified needs.
- Continued emphasis on the prevention of homelessness.

Community-wide issues

- Young people
- Older people
- Equality and diversity
- Access to services
- Green issues

This is Suffolk Coastal's draft revised Balanced Scorecard which sets out the main priorities of the Council. Do you think these are the right priorities for this Council?

Help us plan our budget

In this edition of Coastline, we have outlined the issues facing the Council in balancing its budget for the coming years.

We would like to hear your views on the issues we have raised, or indeed any others that you want to bring up about our services and how they are paid for.

On pages 26-28 you will have seen a list of the services offered by the Council. You or your family may use some or most of these services to a greater or lesser extent. Based on your experiences of using our services and your needs, which of our services are most important to you.

Please list your top five.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

- 4.
- 5.

On the other side of the coin can you also suggest up to five services that you think you have the least need for or that you think no longer need to be provided in the way we do now.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

We would also like to have your views on:

- Where / how we could become even more efficient and improve?

- Where should we be looking to further reduce our spending?

- Any services we should charge for or charge more for?

Please use this form and enclose any additional comments on an attached sheet of paper and return it to RLYA –BTTE– CKTE, Coastline, Suffolk Coastal District Council, Melton Hill, Woodbridge, IP12 1AU. Freepost - no stamp required.

This survey is also available online – visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourcouncil/haveyoursay
If you would prefer to fill in this form over the phone, please call the communications team on 01394 444361.

How to contact your council

Suffolk Coastal District Council

Melton Hill, Woodbridge IP12 1AU

www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

Fax: 01394 385100

Minicom: 01394 444211

Email: scdc@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

Emergencies outside office hours: 07771 816535

Planning Advice 01394 444403 or 01394 444423

Council Tax 01394 444855

Housing Benefits 01394 444838

Port Health 01394 614933

General Enquiries 01394 383789

Office Hours

Monday to Thursday 8.45am - 5.15pm

Friday 8.45am - 4.45pm

Refuse and Recycling 01394 444000

Also call this number for street cleansing, car parks, pest control, public toilets, abandoned cars, ground maintenance, coast protection - all provided by Suffolk Coastal Services Ltd.

Leisure Centres (managed by DC Leisure)

Felixstowe 01394 670411

Brackenbury 01394 270278

Leiston 01728 830364

Deben Pool 01394 384763

Tourist Information Centres

Aldeburgh 01728 453637

Felixstowe 01394 276770

Woodbridge 01394 382240

How to contact your Suffolk Coastal councillor

Aldeburgh - Marianne Fellowes 01728 454696

marianne.fellowes@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

Aldeburgh - Roger Warren 01728 454029

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Woodbridge Riverside - Geoff Holdcroft 01394 610548
geoff.holdcroft@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

Woodbridge Seckford - Clifford Cocker 01394 385895
clifford.cocker@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk
Yoxford - Barry Slater 01728 648559
barry.slater@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

What's on in Suffolk Coastal

October 23 to November 1 is the 7th Saxmundham Arts Festival with a wide range of events for the whole family. Among the highlights are a literary lunch with Edna O'Brien and Jon Canter on Friday, October 23, the Hobbies Fair in the Market Hall on Sunday, October 25, and an antiques and collectors fair on Saturday, October 31.

Saturday October 31, Halloween 'frite night' at Landguard Fort, Felixstowe

Friday 6 November to Sunday November 8 - The 21st Aldeburgh Poetry Festival with over 40 different events. Among the highlights are on Friday from 6pm – 7pm in Aldeburgh's Jubilee Hall, the winners of the Suffolk Young Poets competition will read their poems followed by John Hegley. On Saturday 5.45pm – 6.30pm in the Jubilee Hall, Peter Blegvad of seminal '70s bands Slapp Happy and Henry Cow will be performing solo and acoustic.

Visit one of our tourist information centres for our monthly what's on guide or visit
www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourfreetime/calendar/whatson/

Suffolk Coastal has definitely got sporting talent

The cream of the district's sporting community was honoured in September at the Suffolk Coastal Sports Awards 2009, with eight prizes being handed out on the night.

“The old cliché about sport is that it is the taking part that matters, rather than who wins or loses, and I think that is also true about these awards which are not just about the headline-grabbing achievers but just as much about our up and coming young talents and those who are helping people take part,” said Councillor Mary Neale, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Countryside.

The winners were -

Volunteer of the Year – Sarah Vick, The Saxons running club

Sports School of the Year – Leiston High School

Coach of the Year – Mavis Thompson, Thorpeness Badminton Club

Club of the Year – Leiston Football Club

Disability Sports Personality of the Year – Oliver Minns, athletics

Lifetime Achievement Award – John Bennett, Woodbridge Town Football Club volunteer

Young Sports Personality of the Year – Heidi Beck, golf

Sports Personality of the Year – John Rednall, bowls

Soundwaves!

The best of local young musical talent are taking to the stage in this year’s Soundwaves Ultimate Bands Contest 2009/10. Heats are at Felixstowe’s Spa Pavilion on Friday, October 30, Saturday, November 14 and Saturday, November 28, and will be headlined by The Kabeedies, Ed Sheeran and The Loyal Few, respectively.

To enter, bands need to fill in an application form, which is available from

www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourfreetime/arts/youthmusic

The best 10 bands will appear on CD next year.

Skatepark officially opens

Young people showcased their skateboarding and BMXing talents at the official opening of long-awaited skatepark at Orwell Green in Felixstowe in September.

“The skatepark has been a long time coming for young people in Felixstowe and we are thrilled that there is now a place for budding skateboarders and BMXers to practice and develop their sport,” said Councillor Doreen Savage, Cabinet Member for Young People.

It has been supported by Suffolk Coastal, Felixstowe Town Council, Felixstowe Skatepark Association, the Outdoor Playspace Fund, County’s Playbuilder Grant, the Youth Opportunity and Capital Fund, the L.D Rope Trust, Level 2, the Skatespace group and last year’s Mayor of Felixstowe, Joan Sennington.

Big Draw sets its sights on Sizewell

This year’s Big Draw focuses on individual buildings to encourage people to get drawing, and the Suffolk Coastal Arts Team has picked the landscape of Sizewell to be our district’s image.

They are looking to create a work of art based on 70 different A2 sized pieces of artwork, each representing a small part of the Sizewell landscape. Anyone taking part can use paint, charcoal, pen, pencil, collage, screen print, embroidery or whatever medium they want to create their specific part of the overall image.

All the pieces of this four metres wide jigsaw will then be put together at Leiston Sports Centre on Saturday, October 24. To take part, contact the arts team by emailing arts@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk or call 07747 756705.