

COASTLINE

The Newsletter of Suffolk Coastal District Council

Issue 29, Autumn 2006

We're listening but we need your help

Suffolk Coastal wants to keep its Council Tax rise to below three per cent next year as proof that it listening to what local residents are saying, and now we want your help to achieve that aim.

Work is already underway on drawing up the Council's budget for 2007/08 and it has been revealed that there is a £850,000 gap between the current planned level of spending and the Council's expected income for the year.

“Once again we are facing a serious challenge to balance our budget for the coming year and I am asking the district for their help in identifying where services can be changed and improved, or where efficiencies can be made,” said Councillor Ray Herring, Leader of the Council.

“We have already shown that we're ready to listen by announcing that we aim to keep our Council Tax increase next year below three per cent, which is under the current inflation rate and therefore less than the expected rise in state pensions.

“This is not a one-off move, as we intend to keep to this rate of increase for the next three years. We have done this because we have heard and understood the pressures of our residents facing small rises in their pensions, or huge increases in their fuel costs. We are doing our bit but now we want their help with ideas on how to bridge the gap between our income and spending,” added Cllr Herring.

Suffolk Coastal's annual budget is nearly £14 million, and it has successfully achieved £6 million of efficiencies and additional income over the last five years. To find out more about the challenges facing the Council, and have your say on its service and spending choices, turn to page 7 –12, or visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

More homes get new improved recycling service

Another 5,000 homes across the district will this month (September) join up to Suffolk Coastal's even better recycling service as part of the Council's commitment to make it easier to get into the recycling habit. The first 5,000 joined in June and all those on the scheme now have two additional wheelie bins – one with a blue lid for recycling paper, foil, cans, cardboard and plastics, and one with a grey lid for domestic waste that cannot be recycled.

The recycling bins are emptied one week, and the domestic rubbish bin the other. Homes that have been given special blue-lidded bins can for the first time have cans, cardboard and plastics recycled from their own kerbside.

“This is a major investment by the Council at a time when our resources are very limited, which is why it will take us a further four years to offer this deluxe service to every home. I know there will be many out there wishing they were part of the first 10,000, but sadly they will have to wait their turn,” said Councillor Andrew Nunn, Cabinet Member for the environment, natural and built.

Full information on the new service was delivered to every home with the new twin bins but any of those residents who still need more helpful advice can call a special hotline on 01394 444050. Do not forget that ALL residents can now use their brown bins to recycle their food.

Get your vote

Don't miss out on your right to vote at next May's local elections. All homes in the district will have received an electoral review form that they should return urgently. The new electoral register is published on December 1. If there are no changes to be made to the current details then people can call the elections team on 01394 444329 or visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/elections

However, if the details have changed since last year, because someone has joined or left the register, a completed form must be posted to Suffolk Coastal.

Residents can pay their Council at the push of a button

People can now use their telephone or computer to pay their Council Tax, Business Rates, car park excess charge notices, housing benefit invoices, or other Council invoices.

“It is all remarkably simple to use and you do not even have to have internet access as we have introduced an automated telephone system which you only need a push button phone to operate. All that you need are your invoice or excess charge notice, and your debit or credit card – armed with those you can pay us any time any day,” said Councillor Robert Whiting, Cabinet Member for Fiscal and Democratic Services.

An automated telephone payment can be made by dialling 0845 880 1312 and calls are charged at local rates. The online payment service can be found on www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourcouncil/contactus/payments/ where there is also full information on all the other ways of making payments to the Council.

Any member of the public wanting more information about the new improved payment services can email epayments@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk or call 01394 444541 during office hours (Monday to Friday - 8.45am to 5.15pm).

Felixstowe woman saved from bags of woe

Thanks to the eagle-eyed qualities of the Council's refuse teams, one Felixstowe resident was successfully reunited in the summer with her handbag that contained all her life savings.

The 84 year old Felixstowe woman was in the middle of packing up to move home on the same day as her refuse was due to be collected and accidentally put her handbag out alongside her black sack.

“Thankfully, when one of our team, Noel Woodard, loaded the sacks into the back of our refuse freighter a set of keys fell out of the handbag which made him look more carefully and realise that something was not quite right,” said Councillor Andrew Nunn, Cabinet Member for the Environment, natural and built.

“The handbag was taken back to the Suffolk Coastal Services depot at Ufford, where one of the managers searched the bag properly, found some personal identification and was able to track down the owner. Steve Green, the SCS Waste Services Manager, then drove to Felixstowe to personally reunite the woman with her handbag,” added Cllr Nunn.

The woman has since written to both Steve Green and the team.

She wrote: “How can I thank you enough for returning the life savings of an old lady. The bag contained everything I own. Fortunately I hadn't even realised I had lost it.

Brown bin tips

Are you putting everything you could be in your brown bin? You can fill it ready for collection every fortnight all round the year with not just garden waste, but also all food wastes, cardboard, and shredded or dirty paper. Please remove any plastic tape from cardboard before tearing it up to fit in the brown bin. All the contents will then be composted to produce a soil improver for agriculture.

Let our TICs do the booking

Suffolk Coastal's three Tourist Information Centres (TICs) have extended their services to include booking accommodation and entry to some of Britain's major attractions and, for those who want to go further afield, they can now book airport parking including overnight stay if required and airport lounges. The TICs are also able to help with travel arrangements as they offer a National Express ticket booking service and at Woodbridge and Felixstowe people can buy rail tickets. The TICs open Monday to Sunday, 9am to 5.30pm. The Aldeburgh TIC is located in the High Street, Felixstowe's can be found on the seafront by the Town Hall, and Woodbridge is next to Woodbridge Station.

New report will help plan district's housing needs

A major document that will influence and inform decisions about the district's housing policies, including how many more homes are needed and what can be done to improve existing properties over the next five years, has been drawn up.

The Suffolk Coastal Local Housing Assessment is based on information gained from over 1,500 residents and from national and local sources by Opinion Research Services, and meets the Council's need to regularly produce a new survey of local housing needs.

“This document provides a very useful picture of the challenges that this Council, our partners and our residents have to face in the next five years. These include finding another 2,355 homes or about 4.5 per cent more homes to meet anticipated extra demand, while one in ten of our existing households say that they are living in housing unsuitable for their current needs,” said Councillor Chris Slemmings, Cabinet Member for Housing.

Among the interesting facts and figures reported by ORS are:

- That from 1999-2006 the average property price in the district rose by 125 per cent, but that the district’s average property price had fallen by nearly six per cent compared to the rest of East Anglia;
- That from 1981-2004, the district’s population had grown by 21.9 per cent, three times more than the English average, and that a further rise of nearly 20 per cent is expected by 2028, bringing the district’s population up to 137,400;
- That the district has an above average proportion of elderly households and a below average proportion of young families compared to the English average;
- That about 31 per cent of the housing stock is officially nondecent, about the national average – over half of these because of a poor degree of either effective insulation or efficient heating.

“Reports like this are vital for future planning, which is one reason why Suffolk Coastal encourages our town and parish councils to draw up their own town and parish plans, with the assistance of Suffolk ACRE, to map out the needs for their areas,” added Cllr Slemmings. The full document can be seen on www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourhome/housing/strategies/

Do your job prospects need a Kickstart?

Kickstart is a ground-breaking initiative by Suffolk ACRE aimed at giving people in isolated rural areas the chance to

break the vicious cycle of 'no transport, no training, no job, no money, no transport'.

Kickstart's novel solution is to loan a moped for up to six months so that people aged 16-65 can get themselves to possible training or work opportunities. The scheme is on offer to residents in nearly two-thirds of our district.

Successful applicants get the loan of a moped, some training on how to use it safely, a brand new crash helmet, gloves, insurance, road tax, and MOT, all backed up with a maintenance and repair service. All you need is a full or provisional licence, and to be ready to pay for all fuel and £8 a week towards costs.

Interested applicants are required to complete an application form where they are asked to outline their situation, where they live, why they need transport, and what transport is available to them currently. You can find out more and get a form by calling 01473 242500, or email gordon.mellor@suffolkacre.org.uk or write to Kickstart Co-ordinator, Suffolk ACRE, Suffolk House, 2 Wharfedale Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 4JP.

Kickstart is funded by Defra's Rural and Social Communities Programme, the Learning and Skills Council, the European Social Fund, Connexions, and Coastal Skills.

Plug into solar power

After over 30 people were turned away from an evening about renewable energy in July, another chance to find out more is being held in October.

The Riverside Centre, Stratford St Andrew from 7 - 9pm is the place to be on Tuesday, October 24 for the Suffolk Coastal and the Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre Anglia (ESTACA) organised event.

It will focus on solar powered water heating, with information about grants, Council-supported heating schemes and self-build projects. To book a place call ESTACA on 0800 512 012, or register for a quote from SEAL, the Council-supported solar water heating scheme on 0800 0288 938.

Affordable homes are in the pipeline

New figures from the Suffolk Local Area Agreement team show a big rise in affordable houses being planned for local people across the county, with 1,073 new affordable homes planned in 2005/06, compared to an annual target of 455. There are now 4,019 affordable homes in the planning process in Suffolk.

Councillor Ray Herring, Leader of Suffolk Coastal District Council, and Chairman of the Accountable Bodies Group of the Local Area Agreement, said: "This is excellent news for Suffolk residents who are looking for suitable and affordable housing. The days of councils building homes for rent are long gone. However, we do still have a significant part to play in encouraging new homes in a way that meets both local needs and respects our environment."

Nearly a quarter of the planned homes, 986 in total, are intended to be shared-ownership, allowing local people to take a first step towards becoming a property owner with the support of a housing association. The rest would be for rent, allocated to those on local waiting lists.

What can we do about recycling plastics?

Over eight per cent of all the black sack refuse disposed of in our district is plastics, roughly 3,000 tonnes a year, and mostly food and drink packaging. These plastics are made from oil, and it would clearly make sense to cut down on the amount of plastics used and increase the amount recycled.

From September, 10,000 homes in the district can now have most of their plastics collected and recycled every fortnight but while we roll out this service gradually to every home in Suffolk Coastal what can else can you do?

The district's main recycling facilities for plastics (mainly for plastic bottles and other 'hard plastic' containers) are at the County Council's Household Waste Recycling Centres at Foxhall, Leiston, and Felixstowe. Plastic carrier bags can be recycled at these centres or some major supermarkets.

Most residents' plastics is packaging, with 60 percent being 'hard plastic' eg. drink and milk containers, yoghurt/margarine type containers. The remainder is plastic 'film' eg carrier and food bags, food wrapping for which there is little demand from recycling companies and which cannot be mixed with hard plastics.

Using either reuseable shopping bags or reusing plastic carrier bags can help, and shoppers can also make choices as to the type of containers they buy. But this is not always easy as some meats are sold in expanded polystyrene trays which is difficult to recycle, some in hard plastic trays which is easier to recycle. Some alternatives to plastic can be more difficult to recycle eg cardboard drinks containers which often have a plastic lining and plastic spout.

The Council looked at putting plastics banks at our network of neighbourhood sites but because plastics are very bulky but light, most sites would need either large containers or very frequent emptying to prevent the sites overflowing and becoming a problem. The cost of this is high and would not give Council Taxpayers value for money.

In order to make the plastics recycling service to Suffolk Coastal residents affordable we concentrate on hard plastics for which there is a demand from recycling companies.

Planting this autumn?

Suffolk Coastal has set aside £3,000 for this year's Parish Tree Scheme, its successful initiative which has helped parish councils and community groups plant thousands of trees and hedges.

If your town or parish group is interested then it is not too late to get a bid for funding under this year's scheme which is aimed at encouraging planting mainly on parish council owned land. However private land which contributes to the visual appearance of a parish is also eligible.

Contact Jo Payne on 01394 444553 or Peter Ross on 01394 444508 or email peter.ross@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk for details. If you are interested in organising larger scale tree or hedge schemes or other environmental improvements in your area then there are other possible funding sources. The Council-supported Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Sustainable Development Fund will support projects that contribute to environmental sustainability by helping biodiversity and/or sustaining distinctive landscapes and protecting natural resources. www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org.uk for more information or contact them on 01394 384948.

The Big Lottery Fund is ploughing £5 million of National Lottery money into the BBC-led Breathing Spaces project, with grants of between £300 and £10,000 for improving or creating a public space. That can be anything from a community forest, park, local nature reserve, or community garden but it must be open to the public. To find out more about Breathing Spaces go to www.biglotteryfund.org.uk or call 0845 367 0610.

Council renews commitment to partnership working

Suffolk Coastal has restated its willingness to work with town and parish councils who want to take a more active role in

running some of the services currently provided by the district council.

The Council Leader, Councillor Ray Herring, has stressed the need for all parties to take a realistic approach. “I am firmly of the view that, in principle, services that can be delivered by town and parish councils should be delivered by them. However, in reshaping services so that they are fit for the 21st century, we must also take care to ensure that there is no additional cost to our council taxpayers, or a drop in the high standard professional service they expect, as a result of any changes,” said Cllr Ray Herring.

The issue of who delivers what services is part of a developing and wider initiative which has seen discussions between the Leaders of Suffolk Coastal and Suffolk County Council with the aim of reducing duplication, improving accountability, and delivering greater efficiency.

“My talks with the County Council’s Leader, County Councillor Jeremy Pembroke, have so far been very constructive as he shares this Council’s enthusiasm to reduce the cost of services to our residents. I hope to be able to say much more about this during the autumn.

“For some services it may well be that it would not make sense on a cost or quality basis to break it up in the way that it is delivered, but that there could be a much greater role in the day-to-day management of it by interested town or parishes. This could allow them to tailor the work to reflect the needs of their communities, although they would also have to bear the impact of any additional costs,” added Cllr Herring.

Council's Deputy Leader speaks out on dredging fears

Suffolk Coastal has spoken out to try and put an end to unfounded claims that beach levels in Felixstowe have dropped as a result of dredging in either the shipping channels or off-shore.

Councillor Andy Smith, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Coast Protection, said: “I do understand people’s concern about beach levels and the consequent damage, and their fear that this may have to do with dredging. But none of the information I have, technical or historical, shows this to be true.”

There has been recent speculation in the resort that has wrongly linked the ongoing drop in beach levels, and the subsequent damage to the sea wall, to the dredging of materials for the coastal protection works at Southwold.

“There is absolutely no connection between these two events. Materials are being dredged nearly six miles off Felixstowe and then transported to Southwold for use in a similar way that we had planned to do this year as part of our coast defence works. However, this site is among those deliberately selected, and approved by Government for dredging, as being so far out to sea that it would have no impact on our beach levels.

“I want to put the record straight before this turns into another coastal myth like the one that the material dredged from the shipping channel comes from our beach. Again, the reality is entirely different, as analysis of this material has shown that it is virtually all silt and mud.

“The problem we face is that there is a natural see-sawing of sand and shingle between our beaches and a series of offshore underwater banks. Historically our groyne systems have been

completely successful in managing this process – except where they have deteriorated beyond a critical point. Because of the poor state of our certain of the groynes this see-saw is currently heavily balanced to the offshore banks,” added Cllr Smith.

All the available evidence shows that the majority of Felixstowe’s beach material is basically held within the bay between Cobbold’s Point and Landguard Point, plus a limited net drift North to South. A visual example of this it that after certain storms, according to wind direction, anyone closely inspecting the beach will see a ridge of shingle about 15-20 metres from the promenade running parallel to the shore, clearly formed by material dumped more or less directly onto the beach. At other times, particularly during periods of moderate South Westerly winds, shingle can be seen building against the groynes, for the most part to the south of each bay.

All the engineering studies of which the Council is aware, including the Southern North Sea Sediment Transport Study, and those commissioned by the Council and the Environment Agency locally, have all failed to identify any connection between dredging and beach conditions.

“There are no facts to back up the claims that seek to link dredging to the problems that Felixstowe’s beaches are suffering. These problems will be addressed when the Government finally agrees to fund our coast protection works. History shows that groynes are the solution and putting in place a new network of them should provide the answer,” added Cllr Smith.

Demolition plans set out for Herman de Stern

Suffolk Coastal has confirmed its intention to demolish the burntout Herman De Stern building on Felixstowe’s south sea front that has been a boarded up eyesore since an arson attack in September 2005.

Specialist contractors are being sought to carry out the inevitably painstaking task of taking down what remains of the building and safely removing the asbestos materials.

“I can reiterate that we want to press ahead with the demolition of the Herman De Stern as soon as possible. For legal reasons, this will not occur until after the South Area Development Control Sub- Committee has agreed to a minor change to the conditions it set last December on the exciting leisure park and housing redevelopment of the 17.5 acre site in which the building lies,” said Councillor Ray Herring, Suffolk Coastal’s Council Leader.

“This building is a health and safety risk, and a danger to the public, given the fact there is asbestos scattered about the debris as a result of the fire. We have had to fence off the site and restrict access to the building, and it has been a real problem for us as a potential magnet for vandals and unauthorised intruders.

“However, for legal reasons we have been unable to take the necessary demolition action to remove this dangerous eyesore that I am sure will be welcomed by virtually anyone who has visited the site over the last year,” added Cllr Herring.

As CoastLine went to press, an end to this saga appeared closer as a recommended tightening up of the conditions regarding the use of the shared profits from the sale of homes on the site should be discussed at the Sub-Committee meeting on September 14.

Disabled people can help make their Council even more accessible

As part of its commitment to ensuring that all its services are accessible to any resident, Suffolk Coastal is looking for help from disabled people.

Following new legislation, a disability equality scheme is now being drawn up by the Council that will form a central role in its Services For All policy. With this in mind, over the coming months the views of local people are being actively sought.

“We are now at the stage where we need local people with disabilities of any kind to have their say and this is their chance to shape our services in the future. I hope as many people as possible, either representing particular groups or as individuals, will come forward to help make this new scheme as effective and relevant to local needs as possible,” said Councillor Doreen Savage, Cabinet Member for Customers and Partners.

The scheme will explain the Council’s aims to make sure that it is taking all reasonable steps to prevent or put right any perceived disadvantage that a person with a disability might encounter when using one of its services.

One of the latest improvements to Suffolk Coastal's website www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk is a ReadSpeaker System that offers a spoken version of the actual wording on the page, and a text-only version of the site. CoastLine is available in a tape or CD version thanks to the efforts of Wickford and District Talking Newspaper for the Blind.

Help us plan our budget to deliver your services

Help us plan our budget to deliver your services.

On February 22, 2007 Suffolk Coastal’s district councillors will be meeting to agree how much money to spend on local services in 2007/08 and what Council Tax level to charge residents across the district. But looking at one year at a time isn’t good enough. The Government has started to realise this too and it will be announcing the financial support for councils for the following three years 2008/09 through to 2010/11.

We already have a strong indication of Government support for the coming year and once again the financial picture facing the Council is tight, with its fixed costs rising thanks to factors outside of its control, an increasing demand for its services, and a Government grant level that we strongly believe does not take full account of local needs.

We want your help to draw up the details of next year's budget and help us with our medium term focus – over the next few pages we will give you information on:

- where your Council Tax goes;
- our efficiency initiatives to help your taxes go further;
- the tough challenges we face;
- what we see as our priorities over the medium term based on the feedback we've already had and;
- and how you can play your part in drawing up a budget for your district in 2007/2008 to help solve our immediate problems as we see them.

We will be listening and we have already listened – we want to keep our Council Tax rise to below three per cent next year or just under £4 a year on a Band D house. You have told us how hard you are finding it to balance your household budgets because of spiralling fuel and energy costs, low pay or state pension rises, and general price increases.

We too are facing similar cash problems – and we know that by keeping our Council Tax rise to below three per cent we are facing a gap of £850,000 between the income we currently expect to get next year, and the cost of all the services we currently provide.

You can help us fill that gap – are there services that we need to provide differently or more efficiently? Are there services you think we don't need to do anymore? Are there services that we should be charging more for, or that we should start charging for?

Our budget timetable

The Council's overview and scrutiny committees are carrying out a thorough review of Suffolk Coastal's budget and will pass their thoughts and recommendations to Suffolk Coastal's Cabinet.

All employees are being asked for their views on how services can be made more efficient, how we can improve the way we work to become more efficient, and where additional income can be brought in or service improvements can be made.

All residents are being asked for their views and ideas through CoastLine and our website.

Three consultation meetings are being held – one with members of the local business community, and two with representatives of the community including town and parish councils – to get their opinions.

The winter edition of CoastLine will be distributed from November 27 with news of the latest proposals.

The draft budget will be presented by Cabinet to other councillors for their views during December and January.

Full Council will vote on the budget and set the Council Tax on February 22.

Where do we get our money from?

Each year, the Council sets its budget requirement– the amount it needs to fund its services. The Council Tax equals less than half of that budget requirement – the pie chart shows graphically where that money comes from.

We can control the amount of Council Tax we raise, but the Government has made it clear that any council that sets a Council Tax increase of five per cent or more will be capped by Parliament. This would mean that the Government would set a new lower tax level for the Council and a new set of bills would have to be sent out.

We do not have any control on the level of business rates in our district – this bill is set by the Government and normally rises each year in line with inflation. We collect all the business rates in this district and send it to the Government who then share out the national pot of business rates and other monies back to every council in the country.

We have no control over the amount of Government grant we get – we have argued strongly that this district does not get a fair share of the money paid out nationally to councils. We believe there has been an unfair shift of resources away from rural areas like ours towards councils in urban areas and cities. We also receive the lowest amount of Government grant per Band D property of any of district or borough councils in Suffolk – see the chart below.

The Council's budget requirement is after grants and other income we receive from charging for some of our services.

What do we see as our priorities?

Our financial goal is to manage our resources better, and by working effectively with our partners, so we can deliver our priorities

We have six key medium term issues • tackling anti-social behaviour;

- 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 that would enable key assets to be retained;
- strengthening the economy through facilitating key investments; and
- a robust and efficient local planning system.

But in trying to deliver these we are conscious of the need to become ever more efficient to deliver services and to take notice of climate change and green issues generally.

We are working to set a balanced budget, with three key points:

- have a Council Tax level that is acceptable to residents and the Government as necessary, acceptable and affordable and able to deliver our policies and objectives;
- redirecting resources to support our priorities; and
- maintaining sufficient reserves and balances

To help give us the stability that we need to help us achieve our goals and priorities over the next three years the Council has agreed that

- Our budget will be balanced and reflect our objectives, priorities and commitments
- We will reduce our dependency on the use of reserves/balances
- We will identify annual efficiency savings, including the use of partnering opportunities within and across county borders
- We will review the way services are delivered and by whom (eg ourselves, parishes, or other partners)
- Increase fees and charges on a market forces basis, with regard to our policies and objectives – at least inflation rate increases each year.
- Keep balances at around the recommended level of 5 per cent of gross expenditure to help us meet any emergencies (coastal protection is a recent example)
- Set a necessary, affordable and acceptable level of Council Tax
- We will maximise our capital receipts and grants to support capital investment
- Use grants, capital receipts and earmarked reserves to support capital investment, only borrowing if we have to

- Capital expenditure will be prioritised in accordance with our objectives

Council income

Formula grant – while next year will be the second of the Government's two-year settlement, we can also expect news of what the subsequent planned three year settlement will be, and should expect it to be ungenerous!

Fees and charges – Review the scope for changes in line with our policies and objectives – there should be at least a minimum in line with inflation increase.

Council Tax – forecast should take into account anticipated household growth, political acceptance and the Government's capping criteria.

Forecast budget gap 2007-2010 before action

The difference between the target budget needed to achieve our council tax rise of just under 3% and our forecast of total spending. This gap forecast at £850,000 for next year will need to be met by a combination of new efficiencies, savings and income. This gap is equivalent to over 5 per cent of our expenditure.

Key assumptions used in the forecast

- 2.5% pay increases
- 2% inflation - Government's target
- Planned reduction in reserves resulting in lower income from investments
- Future capital investment to be paid for by borrowing
- 2% increase in Government grant
- 1% increase in tax income from property growth
- 3% maximum tax increase

Our budget - how we get there

In arriving at our budget we take into account

- Our base budget
- Our medium term priorities
- Plus emerging Government issues such as climate change, green issues and efficiency agendas
- Changes in our statutory responsibilities
- Demographic changes
- Consultation outcomes
- Fiscal matters like price inflation, our reserves and balances, capital borrowing, and ongoing commitments some of which have previously been grant aided

Next year's changes

So far we know about the following spending pressures

- £780,000 pay and other price increases (energy, fuel etc.)
- £85,000 less housing benefit administration grant from Government
- £154,000 for service improvements and other changes
- £110,000 for scheduled equipment and vehicle replacement
- £250,000 from expanding our waste recycling service

These are balanced in part by

- £130,000 to be saved from a review of property maintenance
- £150,000 the additional effect in this year of previous service reviews
- £63,000 from new houses within the district
- £186,000 from a tax increase of just under 3%

Next year's budget gap

Taking all of this into account we are now faced with a £850,000 budget gap.

Here are our ideas for closing the gap

- Additional income from fees and charges, including identifying new opportunities
- Business process reviews to help all services become more efficient and effective
- More partnerships - where these are of benefit to all
- Effective procurement – eg we have contracts for IT, insurance and banking up for renewal in next three years
- Your ideas - by having your say as to the changes that may need to be made either to the services themselves or the levels of service we provide.

This year's savings and improvements

Given 10,000 homes in the district an even better recycling service which we will roll out to every home over the next four years so that everyone can recycle cardboard, plastics, foil and cans from their own doorstep

- All residents can now put all food waste and shredded paper into our brown recycling bins to help reduce the amounts of waste going to landfill.
- Following on from the success of our audit partnership we have again linked up with Ipswich Borough Council so that our building control services now have one manager in control of both, with shared expertise so that an improved and more cost effective service can be offered
- Reduced the cost of our service to officially homeless local people with less time spent by families in bed and breakfast hotels
- Used computers and other new technology to further improve access and extend our services, for example you can now pay your tax and other bills either by phone or online. Go online to

access an increasing range of service including making planning applications and viewing your Council Tax bill

Built on recent improvements in dealing with planning applications which sees us consistently beating Government performance targets whilst still protecting the natural and built environment

- Strengthened the Council's commitment to protect, improve and make sustainable use of our environment by setting up a "green issues" think tank to generate ideas and take them forward
- Kept our staff sickness rates at among the lowest in the country and thereby increasing the resources available to help deliver services
- Working with three local housing associations attracted £3.5m of national funding to help build 86 new affordable homes
- Used some of our reserves to carry out vital emergency repairs to parts of the sea wall at Felixstowe while we await Government funding to help protect the resort for the long term
- Actively manage our asset holding - selling surplus land and property assets to help fund services and formed a partnership with Norfolk Property Services to manage and market our remaining assets in a more business like manner
- Helping to reduce crime and the fear of crime by extending public drinking ban in parts of Felixstowe and issuing ASBOs across the district
- Demonstrated our commitment to efficiency by achieving in one year the Government's target efficiency figure for two years

- Helping strengthen a diverse economy by playing vital roles to support the Port of Felixstowe expansion, the Haven Gateway partnership, the Suffolk Innovation Park at Martlesham and the development of University Campus Suffolk

And finally we are proud that since 2001 we have delivered over £6 million of efficiencies, savings and additional income, while investing over £2 million in improved services. We also kept our Council Tax rises below the national average and in single figures for each of the last 10 years, despite Government and other factors forcing up our costs by roughly £6 million.

Government called on to address rural needs with better grants

A study has highlighted the fact that the Government is giving less grants to rural councils even though it costs them more to provide basic services.

SPARSE, the coalition of more than 60 of England's most rural local councils serving more than 5.5 million people, is now pressing the Government to change the way it funds local government to take account of the extra cost of providing services in rural areas and also the needs of countryside communities.

“This is an important study that backs up what this Council has been arguing for the last few years – that we are getting an increasingly unfair deal from the Government in the way it distributes its grants to local councils,” said Councillor Ray Herring, Leader of Suffolk Coastal which is a member of the SPARSE group.

“The balance has been tilted unfairly towards urban councils who are getting far more of the central government pot of cash which is there to help fund local services.

“Our residents pay into this pot through their income taxes and other direct and indirect taxes but their councils, both us and Suffolk County Council, are not getting a fair share compared to urban areas who are getting far more from the Government to help pay for their services and keep their Council Tax down. I strongly support calls to make the grants fairer to take more account of rural needs and the inevitable dearer costs of serving such a geographically spread out area,” added Cllr Herring.

Suffolk Coastal covers an area of 320 square miles, about half the size of London, but with a population of around 115,000 people spread over 100 different towns and parishes.

The study by local government finance expert Rita Hale showed that because of rural factors such as scattered and isolated villages, hamlets and houses, it was inevitably more expensive for councils like Suffolk Coastal to provide services. Despite this, countryside councils get less government grants than their urban counterparts.

According to the Chairman of SPARSE, Councillor Steven Pugsley, Leader of West Somerset District Council, “It is time for ministers to recognise the extra cost of providing services in rural areas by announcing plans to reform the grant system.”

Although the Government introduced a new way of distributing grants to councils this year, SPARSE it has not made any major changes to the treatment of population sparsity which most affects rural councils.

What do we spend your money on?

In this section we explain what some of the services are that we offer and their annual cost. Some of these are statutory services, those that Parliament insists that we provide, while some are discretionary ones that the Council has chosen to offer. Space is limited so we cannot go in to too much detail but the council’s

budget book can be viewed online where there over 100 pages of far more detailed financial information about all the services that we provide. The services we provide include the following:

* Food safety, health and safety – includes food hygiene and health and safety inspections £371,500

* Port health – checking food imports at the Port of Felixstowe £256,300

* Development control - includes dealing with planning applications £740,400

* Building control – ensuring that standards of design and safety are met across the district £112,300

Leisure development – includes promoting sport and providing activities for local young people £149,000

Tourism promotion – encouraging tourists to visit our district and add to the

estimated worth of £37 million that tourism brings to Suffolk Coastal £397,100

Economic development – offering support and helpful advice to new and existing businesses in our district £436,400

* Crime and disorder reduction – including tackling anti-social behaviour £74,500

* Countryside management - includes the coast and heaths £262,700

* Homelessness and advice - helping people avoid becoming homeless £463,500

* Benefits - ensuring those in need get support with their rents and Council Tax £698,400

Communications - includes CoastLine, media relations and the website £74,100

* Land charges - providing searches for home buyers -£188,000

* # Back-office services such as human resources, legal services, print room, customer services, computer staff, finance that support service delivery. £2,453,600

* #Waste management - refuse collection and recycling, pest control, dog bins,

cesspool emptying, litter bins, street cleansing, abandoned vehicles £2,434,900

Car parks - helping town centre traffic management by providing off road parking -£389,800

* Pollution control – includes dealing with noise and air pollution £802,100

Coast protection - helping maintain the district’s extensive coastline £521,100

Public conveniences £466,800

Leisure centres - helping promote a healthy community £1,455,900

Arts/Spa Pavilion - includes helping and supporting local arts groups £440,900

* # Outdoor leisure - cemeteries, parks, gardens, play areas, playing field £870,300

Beach huts and chalets -£136,300

Resort activities - management of the beaches and promenade £221,600

Grants to Citizens Advice Bureaux - so they can provide helpful advice to local residents £135,500

* Planning development and policy - setting the planning framework for the district £503,900

* Rights of Way - helping regulate public footpaths and bridleways £29,100

#Highway services - maintaining the district’s highway verges and trees £130,100

* Tax collection - collection of Council Tax and Business Rates £1,004,500

* Emergency planning - ensuring business continuity and responding to civil emergencies £59,500

* Licensing - includes taxis/private hire cars, pubs and clubs £10,400

Concessionary travel - includes the new free bus pass for elderly and disabled people £652,900

Grants to local groups - to assist voluntary organisations across the district £156,900

Street furniture £134,600

* Housing renovation grants - to help local people stay in their own homes £511,400

* Private sector housing - includes encouraging home energy efficiency £218,000

Housing enabling - encouraging more affordable housing £62,500

Electoral registration - ensuring people can vote at national and local elections £105,100

= Services provided for the Council by partner organisations but there is still scope to do things differently, more efficiently or effectively.

* = Services that are all or partly statutory – that Parliament insists the Council must provide these services.

However there is still scope to do things differently, more efficiently or effectively.

- = Where services generate more income than expenditure these are indicated with a minus sign in front of the cash figure.

Policing your neighbourhood

To help provide an even better service to people, the local policing map of Suffolk is being re-drawn with sectors and beats being replaced with districts and neighbourhoods as part of the Government's Neighbourhood Policing initiative.

The aim is to get service providers, agencies and local organisations to work even more closely on keeping communities safe while improving quality of life for local people.

Safer Neighbourhood Teams will be created across the county which will see police officers, Community Support Officers and Specials working alongside staff from other organisations including district and borough councils. Each team will have a

remit to solve problems identified by local people – which could range from crime and antisocial behaviour to noise and litter.

The work is headed up by Superintendent Chris Mayhew. “These neighbourhoods will be the foundations of policing in Suffolk,” said Supt Mayhew. “There is no standard size; in urban areas, they may consist of a relatively small area. However, in rural areas, they may cover a number of parishes. What will be standard, though, is each team’s ability to make a real difference at a local level.”

The teams will be running by June 2007, with five pilot teams already in action, including one in Kesgrave featured in the last CoastLine.

“From the policing point of view, Safer Neighbourhood teams will give officers the opportunity to concentrate their efforts on protecting smaller, more localised areas than they do at the moment,” said Supt Mayhew.

“They will be supported by more CSOs, specials and, of course staff from other agencies so together they will be able to provide a far more visible service to local people. And they will still have the back-up of existing specialist units.”

Magazine spreads the safe message

Suffolk Police together with their Nightsafe partners this summer launched an innovative magazine packed with safety advice and guidance for young women based on the three main messages of Nightsafe - don’t overdo it, friends stick together, and get home safe.

Safe! encourages women to think about and plan their night out, be aware of the amount of alcohol they consume; understand more about the effects of alcohol (and their potential vulnerability whilst under its influence); encourages friends to

stick together and look out for one another; and importantly plan how they are going to get home safely at the end of the evening.

Suffolk Police has an early intervention – zero tolerance approach to alcohol related offences which has proved very successful with most areas of the county seeing a decrease in incidents of disorder and violent crime.

Chief Superintendent David McDonnell, Head of Operations for Suffolk Police said: “We are conscious that alcohol can play a part in people’s social lives, including young women. We need to raise their awareness of potential problems and of the fact that they become more vulnerable while under the influence of alcohol.”

Views welcome on Council's proposed gambling policy

Residents and businesses now have the chance to give their views on proposed principles that are set to be used by Suffolk Coastal next year when it takes on new duties to control gambling in the district.

The Gambling Act 2005 replaces most of the existing law about gambling in Britain except the National Lottery and spread betting. In particular, it brings Internet gambling into regulation and transfers some licensing responsibilities from the magistrates court to district and borough councils.

“I am sure we all welcome the main aims of the new Act - to keep gambling crime free, make sure that gambling is fair and open, and protect children and vulnerable adults from being harmed or exploited by gambling. From January next year, this Council will be given updated, new and hopefully stronger powers to license and control gambling in our district, and we are seeking the views of our residents and businesses on how we

intend to use those powers,” said Councillor Norman Bugg, Chairman of the Licensing and Health Committee.

The Act will come into force on September 1 next year, following a transition period starting on January 1, 2007. By that time local authorities must have a statement of principles that they will apply when dealing with their duties under the Act.

Suffolk Coastal is now asking for responses by November 1, 2006 to its draft statement of principles that can be seen, together with a downloadable response form, on www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourbusiness/licensing/gambling/

Councillors' allowances 2005/06

Every year, the Council publishes the details of allowances paid to its councillors during the previous financial year. The amount is largely based on recommendations made in 2002 by an Independent Panel. However, councillors agreed to a set of increases that were below the recommended level because of the ongoing financial problems facing the Council.

For example, the Basic Allowance paid to every councillor was set at £2,750, rather than the recommended £3,000. Since then, the allowances have risen every year in line with the percentage increase agreed nationally for Council employees' salaries.

The allowances take account of the responsibilities of each councillor, with each one responsible for representing their electorate. Additional allowances are paid to those who have additional responsibilities such as being a member of the Cabinet, or Chairman or Vice-Chairman of one of the Council's committees.

For further information contact the Council's Head of Customer Services on 01394 444367, or write to Melton Hill, Woodbridge IP12 1AU.

Marian Andrews	Saxmundham	2,832.00	471.00	3,303.00
Diana Ball	Woodbridge Farlingaye	2,965.06	-	2,965.06 Includes part re March 05
Nigel Barrett	Woodbridge Seckford	2,832.00	1,725.37	4,557.37 Includes SRA arrears re 04/05 (£857.50)
Sir Peter Batho	Saxmundham	2,832.00	2,334.36	5,166.36 Includes SRA arrears re 04/05 (£714.71)
Peter Bellfield	Otley	2,832.00	-	2,832.00
David Bentinck	Felixstowe South	2,832.00	-	2,832.00
James Bidwell	Trimleys with Kirton	2,832.00	-	2,832.00
Edward Binns	Woodbridge Kyson	2,832.00	1,416.00	4,248.00
Christine Block	Sutton	2,832.00	2,832.00	5,664.00
Norman Bugg	Kesgrave East	2,832.00	2,832.00	5,664.00
Stephen Burroughes	Peasenhall	2,832.00	2,398.06	5,230.06
Paul Callaghan	Melton & Ufford	2,832.00	-	2,832.00
Clifford Cocker	Woodbridge Riverside	2,832.00	471.00	3,303.00
Harry Dangerfield	Felixstowe West	2,832.00	-	2,832.00
Mike Deacon	Felixstowe North	2,832.00	1,218.56	4,050.56 Includes SRA arrears re 04/05 (£857.50)
Mary Dixon	Trimleys with Kirton	2,832.00	471.00	3,303.00
Philip Dunnett	Rendlesham	2,832.00	1,513.06	4,345.06
Veronica Falconer	Nacton	2,832.00	-	2,832.00
Cyril Fidler	Snape	2,832.00	2,838.71	5,670.71
Rebecca Foster	Martlesham	2,832.00	-	2,832.00
John Geater	Leiston	2,832.00	-	2,832.00
Dennis Gooch	Rushmere St Andrew	2,832.00	471.00	3,303.00
Sherrie Green	Trimleys with Kirton	2,832.00	3,581.00	6,413.01 Includes SRA arrears re 04/05 (£857.50)
Robert Grimwood	Kesgrave West	2,832.00	471.00	3,303.00
Bryan Hall	Wickham Market	2,832.00	1,062.00	3,894.00
John Hammond	Kesgrave East	2,832.00	1,716.90	4,548.90
Colin Hart	Hacheston	2,832.00	433.94	3,265.94
Trevor Hawkins	Leiston	2,832.00	2,695.63	5,527.63
Ray Herring	Orford & Tunstall	2,832.00	8,496.00	11,328.00
Neil Jackson	Earl Soham	2,832.00	-	2,832.00

Ivan Jowers	Grundisburgh	2,832.00	2,832.00	5,664.00	
John Kelso	Martlesham	2,832.00	-	2,832.00	
John Klaschka	Kesgrave East	2,832.00	-	2,832.00	
Gordon Laing	Rushmere St Andrew	2,832.00	1,062.00	3,894.00	
John Leggett	Witnesham	2,832.00	471.00	3,303.00	
Rae Leighton	Walberswick/Wenhaston	2,832.00	2,537.00	5,369.00	
Malcolm Minns	Felixstowe South East	2,832.00	3,814.07	6,646.07	
Kenneth Musgrave	Framlingham	2,832.00	-	2,832.00	
Michael Nimney	Felixstowe West	2,832.00	-	2,832.00	
Andrew Nunn	Leiston	2,832.00	2,832.00	5,664.00	
Patricia O'Brien	Nacton	2,832.00	433.94	3,265.94	
John Perry	Melton & Ufford	2,832.00	2,832.00	5,664.00	
Veronica Read	Kesgrave West	2,832.00	471.00	3,303.00	
Ann Rodwell	Felixstowe North	2,832.00	471.00	3,303.00	
Winter Rose	Framlingham	2,832.00	471.00	3,303.00	
Doreen Savage	Felixstowe East	2,832.00	2,832.00	5,664.00	
Joan Sennington	Felixstowe South	2,832.00	-	2,832.00	
Barry Slater	Yoxford	2,832.00	1,062.00	3,894.00	
Chris Slemmings	Felixstowe East	2,832.00	4,877.05	7,709.05	Includes SRA arrears re 04/05 (£393.05)
Andy Smith	Felixstowe South East	2,832.00	2,360.00	5,192.00	
Rhona Sturrock	Hollesley with Eyke	2,832.00	682.52	3,514.52	
Roger Warren	Aldeburgh	2,832.00	108.59	2,940.59	
Robert Whiting	Rushmere St Andrew	2,832.00	2,832.00	5,664.00	
Maggy Wilson	Aldeburgh	2,832.00	2,124.00	4,956.00	

Council meetings diary

October

3rd, 7pm	Cabinet
11th, 9am	Area Development Control Sub-Committee - North
12th, 9am	Area Development Control Sub-Committee - South
12th, 7pm	Environment & Housing Committee
19th, 7pm	Economy & Service Partnerships Committee (O&S)
26th, 7.30pm	Council November
2nd, 7pm	Standards Committee
7th, 7pm	Cabinet
8th, 9am	Area Development Control Sub-Committee - North
9th, 9am	Area Development Control Sub-Committee - South -
9th, 7pm	Community Well-Being & Rural Issues committee (O&S)
16th, 7pm	Corporate Management Committee (O&S)
23rd, 7.30pm	Council

Make tracks to the Long Shop Museum

A rather special 100th birthday will be celebrated on Sunday, October 22 when the Long Shop Museum in Leiston will be marking the centenary of Sirapite, the works shunting locomotive.

The Final Fling Steam Day will give visitors the chance to see steam engines in action, as well as a display of the restoration work that has been undertaken on Sirapite so far.

This Museum is set in some of the original buildings of the Richard Garrett Engineering Works, and covers 200 years of local, social and industrial history. From the first production line to the first woman doctor this is a Museum for all ages with lots to look at and do and is well worth a visit if you haven't already discovered this important part of Suffolk's amazing heritage.

Although the Sirapite engine is currently on display in a dismantled state the aim is to restore it to full steaming capacity and there will be lots of opportunities over the next two years to see the work involved in restoring an engine and learn more about the care and maintenance and even driving skills of a working steam engine.

There are also opportunities to help in the shop or the galleries if you like working with people or behind the scenes if you like working with paper and archives.

For more details of how you could get involved contact the Museum Manager on 01728 832189 or pop into the museum. The museum, which is supported by Suffolk Coastal, is open to the public every day until the end of October and the Friends Lecture Supper about Suffolk Punch Horses is on Saturday October 29.

Dancing breaks out in Felixstowe

A new wave of dancing will be breaking on Felixstowe this autumn with the launch of a new DanceEast Company FXYouth Dance Company.

They are looking for boys and girls aged 11-15 who love music and dance. No experience is necessary - just energy, enthusiasm and commitment.

Kelly Ludgrove, Company Leader, recently held break dancing taster sessions at Deben and Orwell High Schools and says Felixstowe has a good break dancing scene. This dance company will give young people the chance to work together and develop their talent.

Anyone interested can contact Claire Bourgein of DanceEast on 01473 295234

Oysterband unveil district's new pearl

An exciting new venture involving Suffolk Coastal, Easton Farm Park and Suffolk's Peppery Productions is to be launched this winter with Oysterband, the legendary folk roots performers.

'Peppery at the Shed' will offer an eclectic programme of music at Easton Farm Park's former turkey shed which has been transformed into a 300 capacity auditorium, with cabaret-style tables and plenty of room for dancing plus a licensed bar with locally sourced food and drink.

"This pearl of a venue has great potential and will be fully equipped to present the finest musicians in a unique, informal and beautiful setting. This is an exciting project which will give local people the chance to experience music of national and international importance," said Councillor Rae Leighton, Cabinet Member for Community Well-being.

Oysterband will launch 'Peppery at the Shed' on Friday, November 24. Last year they celebrated 25 years in the business and have built a massive following based on their inspirational

live performances, often at major festivals around the world including Glastonbury.

Tickets are £12 and available from The New Wolsey Theatre box office on 01473 295900 - for more information visit peppery.co.uk

Get on the record with Soundwaves

Soundwaves, an exciting new music project, is offering the district's young musicians, producers and DJs the chance to record or submit a track for a compilation album.

Created using entirely local resources, each contributor will be able to work closely with the Soundwaves team and learn how to publicise the release and their involvement in it. They will also be given guidance in how to make the most of having such a useful promotional tool at their disposal.

"As well as workshops to help existing bands and musicians in Suffolk Coastal, there will also regular after-school sessions for beginners, to be held in various schools and youth clubs in Felixstowe, Framlingham, Leiston, Saxmundham and Woodbridge," said Councillor Rae Leighton, Cabinet Member for Community Well-being.

"Those taking part will get a valuable introduction to the skills needed in rock music, DJing, music technology, songwriting and more. The sessions will be led by local musicians and specialists wherever possible, while young local musicians, technicians and DJ's will be working as 'shadow tutors' throughout the whole programme, aiming to eventually realise their full potential of becoming professional musicians and tutors themselves.

"To help put our local talent in the spotlight, there will also be six live events in the district between November 2006 and

October 2007, two of which will feature nationally touring artists, one rock and one urban, which the local acts involved in Soundwaves will be able to support," added Cllr Leighton. Soundwaves kicks off in October and will run for a year. It is managed by a group consisting of youth workers, music teachers, musicians, extended school officers, the Suffolk Coastal Arts Officer and the Amplifier Project Officer. The first live event is due to take place on Wednesday November 26 at Woodbridge Football Club. With bands and DJs already lining up for the night, doors will open at 7.30pm and admission will be £3.00.

For more information please call 01473 435762 or visit <http://bsoundwaves.runboard.com>

Shouts of 'more' greet Oliver

The fourth annual Summer Youth Project hosted by the Spa Pavilion proved a big hit with critics and audiences alike with its production of Oliver.

Supported by Felixstowe Town Council and Suffolk Coastal, it was a chance for young people aged between nine and 25 to stage and perform a full-scale musical under expert professional supervision.

With only a one-week intensive rehearsal schedule, the 100-strong group learnt all stage techniques including performance, lighting, sound and music and then performed it on stage in full costume, with stage lighting and sound.

The lead role of Oliver was taken by 10 year old Jordan Lewis but everyone was really a star, with the show directed by Steve Wooldridge earning a massive thumbs-up from the East Anglian Daily Times.

Trying to give young people a voice

The call has gone out to young people to get involved in a new youth forum that aims to give them a voice on the issues that concern them, as well as involving them in the district's democratic processes. Keri Mohan (pictured left) is the district's first young people's officer and has been getting in touch with local teenagers and the organisations that work with them.

"Keri's initial work has confirmed what we already suspected - that young people do want more of a say in their local community but feel they either are not being listened to or there is not a way to be heard," said Councillor Doreen Savage, member of the Suffolk Coastal Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and Suffolk Coastal's Cabinet Member for Young People.

"The LSP agreed to fund Keri's new part-time post because it recognises the importance of getting young people involved in the way services are provided now and in the future.