

Revenue

It is probably best to think about Suffolk County Council (SCC) in terms of its income - the money coming in and then look at some elements of expenditure.

Council tax will be increasing by 3% this year as a result of the Council deciding to implement the 3% National Adult Social Care Levy. This extra funding means that spending on Adult community services will cope with the continuing financial pressures caused by the rise in the national living wage and the Council will increase the rates paid for places in care homes in Suffolk and thereby strengthen the care sector.

The base Council tax has remained frozen for the seventh year in a row. To achieve this the Council has made savings in excess of £200 million since the government's deficit reduction programme began back in 2011. The number of council staff (excluding schools) has reduced from 7427 to 5549. Making these reductions and efficiency savings has been a real challenge

Roads

We managed to allocate an additional £10 million of investment from our reserves into 2016's programme of road surface dressing during the spring and summer months. This preventative maintenance work helped reduce the number of potholes this winter and will do the same in future years on the roads that are treated. The focus has been on rural roads across the county.

This intensive programme of work equates to delivering **three times** the usual amount of new surface dressing based on the Council's recently adopted asset management approach to highway infrastructure.

We implemented an online reporting system for the public and parishes to report potholes and other defects in the highways. This can be found on the highways section of the SCC website and the Stowmarket call centre will still be available for telephone enquiries, this has speeded up the reporting and repair process

Education attainment in Suffolk

In previous years reports Education has always been a critical area where we really need to do better.

Much more remains to be done but at last things are moving in the right direction. Figures published on the Department for Education's website confirm that Suffolk's GCSE progress has for the first time risen above the national average. Suffolk is now ranked in the top half of all authorities for progress at GCSE level, at **55th out of 151**. This is a real improvement since 2014 when Suffolk was ranked 119th for English progress and 108th for maths.

Across Suffolk, 60.1% of students achieved the national measure of attaining a grade C or above in English and maths. This is **3% higher than last year** and marks a **6% increase since 2014**.

We are now into the fifth year of the Raising the Bar programme which aims to improve levels of educational attainment and ensure that every child in Suffolk is able to achieve their full potential. Since the programme began in 2012, there has been a more than 20% rise in Suffolk Schools being judged 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. This rate is currently improving more than twice as fast as those across the country. We will not become complacent and will continue to build on the momentum of the positive results we have seen since the programme started and will continue to ensure that every child and young person in Suffolk reaches their full potential.

Sizewell.

If the twin reactor project was to go ahead at Sizewell it would be one of the largest civil/nuclear engineering project to be undertaken in the UK.

The stage 2 consultation closed on 3 February and dominated the political agenda of the previous three months. The Council's response to the consultation was something we just had to get right. The County Council has hardened and changed its position radically in the last six months. EDF have been left in very little doubt that while we still support nuclear power in principle we are not prepared to be fobbed off with a second rate proposal. In particular we are very conscious that our unique environment needs the highest level of protection and the interests

of local residents should be protected especially in the area of positioning workers accommodation and providing the transport infrastructure that is necessary.

The influential SAGE monitor reports that the two councils- SCDC and SCC are 'not satisfied' with the proposals. They report that the 'usually supportive East Anglian newspaper picked up one councillors comment that Suffolk should now get on a war footing, another councillor representing an area on the north side of the project development area proposed a tough 12 point programme to EDF on a take it or leave it basis.

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The Future

I will be standing down in May after 4 years as your County Councillor.. It has been a great privilege to represent Westleton and to attend your parish council meetings.

My successor will be determined by you when you record your votes at the ballot box on 4 May. My successor as the Conservative candidate will be Richard Smith who many of you will know as the current county councillor for Leiston and Aldeburgh. He is extremely experienced, and currently the cabinet member for Resources/ Finance, and thankfully is an expert on all matters relating to Sizewell.

Thank you and good luck in the future. If there are any questions I will try and answer them.