



## March 2022

Welcome to my monthly newsletter

### Millions of pounds of investments approved for projects across East Suffolk

Investment worth over £339 million has been approved for projects across the district.

As part of our budget setting process, a programme of capital expenditure, including a General Fund Capital Programme and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme, has been agreed.

Within the programme, over £118m has been allocated for planning and coastal management projects over the next four years, with a further £36.86m for economic development and regeneration schemes.

Some of the major projects to receive investment within this period include:

- £96m for permanent flood defences to protect homes and businesses in Lowestoft
- £50m for the Felixstowe North Garden Neighbourhood Regeneration Project, including a total of £44m to provide a new leisure centre and associated infrastructure
- £14.2m for the enhancement of Southwold Harbour and Caravan Park (subject to external funding)
- £6.4m on creating start up units for local businesses in Lowestoft
- £5.75m for the development of the South Seafront area and Martello Café, in Felixstowe
- £3.3m for Thorpeness flood defences (subject to external funding)
- £0.69m for Thorpeness emergency flood defence works

Projects already allocated funding from this year's budget include the replacement of beach huts in Lowestoft (£1m), the purchase of land to extend cemetery provision across the district (£395,000) and the development of sports hubs in Felixstowe (£197,000).

### Levelling Up White Paper announcement

The first nine areas to be invited to agree new county deals have been announced as part of the Government's Levelling Up White Paper.

The areas invited to begin negotiations will be Cornwall, Derbyshire and Derby, Devon, Plymouth and Torbay, Durham, Hull and East Yorkshire, Leicestershire, Norfolk, Nottinghamshire and Nottingham, and Suffolk.

It is really pleasing that Suffolk is one of the nine areas to be chosen for a county deal. It offers significant possibilities in terms of addressing regional inequalities, maximising resources and ensuring greater accountability, here in Suffolk, for powers previously held in Westminster.

Naturally, we are committed to ensuring that any deal benefits East Suffolk and its residents, and we're now looking forward to further discussions with our partners and the Government to consider how a county deal can work for our communities. It's important that any deal contains a policy and funding mix which can make a real difference, and we eagerly await the full details of the White Paper. – I am pushing for unitary local government, having a district and county is very inefficient both on resources and policy development.

### **Closure of second homes tax loophole**

We welcomed the announcement that a loophole which allowed some second home owners to avoid paying either council tax or business rates is to be closed.

The announcement comes as a result of a two-year campaign following an article in The Times which exposed the loophole of second home owners being able to register for business rates, then claiming relief by stating that their properties were available for let for 140 days each year but without actually having to let them.

Under tough new measures, effective from April 2023, those second home owners will have to prove that their holiday lets are being rented out for a minimum of 70 days each year in order to access small business rates relief, where they meet the criteria.

Holiday let owners will have to provide evidence such as the website or brochure used to advertise the property, letting details and receipts.

Properties will also have to be available to be rented out for 140 days per year to qualify for the relief.

### **Youth Voice is back!**

A scheme dedicated to involving young people in local issues which affect them is back and we want as many youngsters as possible to get involved and help make a real difference.

Youth Voice was designed to make it easier than ever for young people to share their thoughts and to see how these opinions can help shape their communities.

A new website has been created with a simple form for young people to have their say and it will also be widely promoted in schools and via social media – including a dedicated Instagram account. This will be alongside Youth Voice 'collection boxes' which have previously been placed in a variety of locations and used successfully to develop new ideas.

Any information which is provided is then shared with organisations and key decision makers who can help address the issues raised and help make a real difference, such as local councillors, East Suffolk Community Partnerships, Suffolk Police and other key partners. Anyone aged between 11 and 24, can share their thoughts online quickly and easily by filling out a short form at [https://my.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/service/Youth\\_voice](https://my.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/service/Youth_voice)

Youth Voice is also on Instagram now so young people can see how their feedback is helping to make real changes in local communities by following 'eastsuffolkyouthvoice'.

The Communities Team is currently contacting sites, such as schools and youth clubs, which had 'Youth Voice collection boxes' installed prior to the pandemic to encourage them to reinstall these as the service relaunches.

### **Interactive tool allows public to monitor progress on delivering Local Plans**

An interactive online feature has been launched for the public to track progress on the implementation of the Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Local Plans. It includes a range of monitoring data covering housing, economy, retails, natural environments and many more topics and can be accessed at <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/dfbbb431cf6c44c88bc58975e59ce191>

### **East Suffolk Council distributes oak trees for 'Treebilee' celebrations**

Two hundred oak trees have been distributed to communities across East Suffolk to plant in commemoration of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee. The 'Treebilee' scheme was launched by HRH The Prince of Wales to encourage the planting of trees during a year of celebrations to mark The Queen's 70-year reign. And it was my idea to donate a tree to every parish council, as a way of marking the occasion while helping to tackle climate change and promoting environmentally sustainable communities. Once mature, an oak tree can host up to 5,000 different species of invertebrate, supporting a healthy food chain benefitting many birds and mammals. Trees also naturally absorb CO<sub>2</sub>, a key greenhouse gas, through the process of photosynthesis, helping to create a significant natural carbon sink. The 200 trees were pot grown at James Coles & Sons (Nurseries) Ltd and can be planted in the spring months, ready for the June celebrations of the Platinum Jubilee, and each comes with a commemorative plaque.

"This is a key initiative in contributing to building environmentally sustainable communities for this, and future generations.

"Trees are not only our tangible connection to our past, but a footprint into the future."

**James Mallinder**  
**Deben Ward**  
**Environment Portfolio holder**