

Parish Report – OCT 2023

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Suffolk County Council Overspend

At Cabinet on 12 September my group raised concerns about the overspend predicted for the financial year 2023-24. The council is forecasting a net overspend of £22.3m, which is 3.2% of the overall budget for the year and will cut into the council's financial reserves with a reduction of £56.9m of the council's 'savings'. Finance officers at the council had suggested a high council tax rise during the budget process to try and lessen the pressures on the council caused by rising inflation, energy costs and increased demands on council services such as placements for children in care, adult care and school transport for children and young people with special educational needs. The Cabinet agreed that senior leaders at the council would look at how money could be saved in each directorate to protect council reserves and prevent cuts to services wherever

New Suffolk Fire and Rescue Control Centre

Officers from Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) joined Cabinet on 12 September to explain their recommendation that the council leave the current control centre partnership with Peterborough and Cambridgeshire and open a new control centre in the county by the end of 2024. This would create significant extra cost, but it was agreed that it was necessary for the safety of Suffolk residents. A vote was held and the recommendations were approved. My group were keen to ensure that no fire stations would close and there would be no cuts to jobs or changes to work terms and conditions, but no assurances were given.

£100k Fund for Net Zero Business Solutions

Suffolk's Public Sector Leaders group have announced a £100k fund to spark net zero innovation across the county. The 'Net Zero Innovation Fund' will provide grants to businesses for innovative solutions that drive the county towards its net zero target. The fund is being coordinated by the Carbon Charter, Suffolk's hub for sustainable business, and is part of a package of work to deliver the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan, which sets out the shared ambition of a net zero county by 2030.

To find out more information and to apply, businesses should visit

<https://carboncharter.org/nzifs/>

SMEs (small to medium enterprises) looking for general help to decarbonise their operations can also access grants to support this as well as free business consultancy delivered by our partners Groundwork East: [Carbon Charter | Net Zero Business Advisor Service](#)

NETWORK RAIL'THURSTON CROSSING I have also emailed Jo Churchill MP Richard Smith SCC cabinet member for transport and the leader of the council asking them to join us in a letter to department of transport demanding money for making the crossing safe.

NEW RURAL BUS PROJECTS; I've emailed the details to the clerk.

SUPPORT FOR CARE LEAVERS. A Suffolk County Council programme which supports care leavers when they reach the age of 18 has proved so successful, it is now being rolled out across the country by the government.

Staying Close, which was launched by Suffolk County Council in 2017, provides a package of support and guidance to young people leaving care. This includes ensuring they have accommodation, resources, and practical and emotional help to help them thrive as independent adults. This support is provided by a staff member who already works with them, so they have a consistent and stable relationship as they move into adulthood. The Staying Close programme in Suffolk is currently providing approximately 150 young people with help and support.

A14' the change over to the west bound contra-flow is expected later this month. there is a fund for "social benefit! Which could be of interest.

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<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/family.page?familychannel=6>

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