



Library services protected as Suffolk County Council approves additional funding

Suffolk County Council in May underlined its commitment to library services in Suffolk.

Suffolk County Council has underlined its commitment to library services in Suffolk, as it approved plans to increase its funding to Suffolk Libraries, to enable the service to continue operating at its current level, until the end of the contract in July 2024.

Suffolk Libraries currently receives £5.9m per year from Suffolk County Council, however the service is forecasting a deficit of £60k per month from April 2023. The service has cited increases in service costs, a reduction in income opportunities following the Coronavirus Pandemic and rising inflation, as causes of the deficit.

This means it is no longer possible for the service to continue operating at its current level of service, within its current contract value.

At Suffolk County Council's Cabinet meeting, the council has approved plans to absorb this cost pressure, funding Suffolk Libraries an additional £720k per year, through to the end of the current contract in July 2024. This additional funding will support Suffolk Libraries to continue delivering its highly valued services to Suffolk Residents.

Suffolk residents urged to #ShakeltOut when recycling

A new campaign by Suffolk Waste Partnership is encouraging people to empty plastic bags and not throw them in recycling.

The #ShakeltOut campaign has been launched by the Suffolk Waste Partnership to encourage households in Suffolk to help improve recycling rates across the county by making sure black bin bags and other plastic sacks are not thrown in with recyclable materials.

#ShakeltOut is encouraging people to shake out plastic bags and keep recycling clean, dry, and loose.

The Partnership, which comprises Babergh District Council, East Suffolk Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Mid Suffolk District Council, Suffolk County Council, and West Suffolk Council, says more than a quarter (26%) of the materials in Suffolk's recycling bins in 2022/23 were not able to be processed as they were spoiled.

Items that contributed to spoiled recycling collections included:

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- Materials that were not clean and dry, or contained food and drink residue
- Rubbish sacks or plastic bags containing recycling
- Non-recyclable items, such as nappies and food waste

Plastic bags and rubbish sacks are a particular problem – recycling handlers can't see what's inside them and they are often full of rubbish or other non-recyclable items.

This means bags are removed during the sorting process to avoid spoiling other good recycling. Any removed bags are then sent for disposal.

£10 million new funding to fix residential roads

Local road surfaces in villages and residential areas in Suffolk should be blitzed as part of a new £10 million programme, Suffolk County Council has announced today (25th May).

The extra funding will nearly double Suffolk Highways' £11 million annual roads maintenance budget, but be targeted at smaller residential streets which are typically maintained less frequently than busier A and B roads.

The announcement was made by Suffolk County Council's leader, Cllr Matthew Hicks, at the authority's annual general meeting.

The funding is subject to a formal Cabinet decision which will follow later this year.

Commitment to Improving Key Services

Cllr Hicks reiterated the council's commitment to improving services for children with special educational needs and disabilities, including £55 million to create 1,275 new SEND school places by 2025.

Highways and SEND will be areas of particular focus for Suffolk County Council over the next two years. There was also reaffirmed commitments to deliver:

- The Gull Wing bridge in Lowestoft
- New homes on SCC land
- Further help for Ukrainian refugees
- A new highways contract with Milestone Group
- Hundreds more EV charging points
- A £20 million flood prevention and footpath improvement programme.



To coincide with the annual general meeting, Suffolk County Council has published a list of its top 50 achievements since 2021, including:

- Our Cassius Digital Care work and innovation is going from strength to strength
- An extra £2.5m for mental health services
- 300 miles of road now designated as quiet lanes
- New household waste sites in Ipswich and Haverhill
- £13 million in funding secured for active travel
- 3,000 environmentally friendly homes being delivered on SCC land
- 250,000 trees planted
- Over 100 new EV charging points
- A new Highways Contract with Milestone starting in October
- 43,400 streetlights converted to LED.