

Good evening.

TJ sends her apologies as she is double booked. She would like to thank all those that attended the ESP forum on Friday at Trinity Park which was once again a great success. Thank you to Jane for speaking with Richard Best re the Common work we have been discussing.

Can we take this opportunity to remind you about our Exemplar Fund that we run at SCDC: Enabling Communities Exemplar Programme is looking to assist community initiatives with grant funding to deliver new 'flagship' projects, which will have a positive impact across our communities at a ward, multiple wards and/or district level that need more funding than is available through the Enabling Communities Budgets.

The Exemplar Programme is a rolling programme, with no set application deadlines and you should receive a decision within 8 weeks of us receiving your complete application. Groups can apply between £1,000 and £10,000 to help fund a specific project or activity.

To be eligible for funding, the project must be supported by your local Ward Councillor or the relevant Cabinet Lead Member(s), for theme based projects covering a wider geographical area. A Letter of Support must be submitted from the relevant Councillor with your application relating specifically to the proposed project.

For more information:

<http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/community/community-grants-and-funding/enabling-communities-exemplar-programme/>

At Suffolk Coastal Cabinet on 7 November, in the Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House we looked at:

Felixstowe Forward: One of this month's key decisions poses the extension of the place-based initiative, Felixstowe Forward.

Felixstowe Forward has now been established in Felixstowe since April 2015 and this report showcases the success of the initiative so far and it's plans for the next three years.

As you are aware a similar Board has been created for Leiston; **Leiston Together**.

Dog Control - Public Space Protection Orders: Although a non-key decision, this month's paper on dog controls in the district considered the outcomes from the pre-consultation exercise and the public consultation on the introduction on the draft Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) which outline dog controls in the district. Town and Parish Councils and the public have now been consulted on the seven proposed PSPOs which replace the existing by-laws, enactments and a local "order" in the Suffolk Coastal District which impose requirements on dog owners. As well as updating controls, PSPOs also provide a more effective and efficient way of dealing with these types of offence through the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice. The benefit of this approach is that controls, such as the prohibition of dogs on certain beaches

during the summer months, can be more effectively enforced through the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices rather than by way of prosecution. This isn't about banning dogs everywhere. It's about replacing the existing laws to protect specific places where problems have been raised, with a more effective way of ensuring people control nuisance dogs. For instance; · Keeping dogs on leads at Landguard Point nature reserve – subject to time of year · Banning dogs from gated and fenced children's play areas · Excluding dogs on Aldeburgh and Felixstowe beach – at certain specified times It was recommended that Cabinet do not adopt the proposal PSPO covering dogs on leads (general provisions) following feedback from the consultation

Woods Lane – Closures: A drop-in session was held at East Suffolk House by Bloor Homes and their contractors to give people the opportunity to find out more about the Longwood Fields development in Melton and the associated road closure of Woods Lane.

Councillors and staff from Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Coastal joined the event which gave the public information about the closure and diversion routes, along with the extra efforts being made by the developer while Woods Lane is closed, which include additional 'businesses open as usual' signage, speed monitors and how updates on progress will be communicated to those interested.

Bloor Homes is the developer and Palmer Fencing Ltd is responsible for the traffic management on the closure and diversion. Their telephone number is 01473 834 960, if you received any questions or comments about the closures.

The diversion route can be seen on www.roadworks.org by changing the dates viewable and ensuring Road Works and Road Closures and Diversions layers are visible. For help using www.roadworks.org please see here: <https://www.elgin.org.uk/support>

Bloor Homes has therefore applied for the road closure in two parts:

- Phase 1: 6 Nov – 30 Nov – This first closure will be to construct new footpaths, bus stops and prepare for the more substantial works after Christmas.
- Phase 2: 8 Jan – 13 April 2018 - The second closure will be to install 500 metres of sewer pipes and connections, running beneath the middle of Woods Lane, at a depth of two metres. They will also be giving utility companies the opportunity to make their own connections.

Issues with the works should be directed to Bloor Homes on woodslanehighwayworks@bloorhomes.com Issues with access or egress or closure/diversion signs should be directed to Palmer Traffic Management Ltd. 01473 834960 or info@thepalmergroup.co.uk

East Suffolk Report 2016-2017: The 2016-17 East Suffolk Report which takes a snapshot of activities and outcomes in the last financial year, has now been published.

The report reflects our achievements against key projects and ambitions contained within the East Suffolk Business Plan. To read the report in full, visit: www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/features/east-suffolk-report-2016-2017

Spedeworth fined for Health and Safety failings: Spedeworth International was fined for a number of Health and Safety charges for failures which put visitors at risk at Foxhall Stadium.

The company that promotes stock car racing at the stadium were ordered to pay fines and costs totalling £118,000 at Ipswich Magistrates Court on Thursday 19 October.

In April 2016 a member of the public contacted the Council to say they had attended an event and the emergency exits had all been locked. When Environmental Health Officer visited Foxhall Stadium on 30th April 2016, the eight emergency exits were found to be locked whilst racing was taking place.

At a hearing on 25 July 2017, in a prosecution brought by Suffolk Coastal District Council, the company pleaded guilty to four charges under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 in relation to:

- Emergency exits;
- Structural stability and maintenance of the grandstands;
- Failure to comply with an improvement notice requiring safety improvements to the grandstands; and
- Having eight emergency exits locked at a stock car race meeting.

When sentencing Spedeworth International (East Anglia) Ltd on 19 October 2017 for the four charges, District Judge Celia Dawson referred to Sentencing Council Definitive Guideline for

Health and Safety Offences and considered the degree of culpability to be high in all four charges before assessing the likely harm arising from the company's failings.

The breakdown of the fine included £20,000 for the lack of maintenance resulting in the stands being found in an unsafe condition, £27,000 for failing to comply with the Improvement Notice that required additional work to ensure the stands were safe, £20,000 for not having an adequate evacuation plan in place in October 2015 and £33,000 for holding a race meeting in April 2016 whilst eight emergency exits were locked.

The Council was awarded £18,000 in costs.

Canvassers calling: Official canvassers are now calling on Suffolk Coastal residents who have not yet responded to their annual voter registration form.

The forms, which are pre-printed with the names of any occupants currently registered to vote at each address, were sent to all Suffolk Coastal households earlier this year. Residents are legally required to confirm or update the details of anyone at the address who is eligible to vote in the UK to ensure they remain registered to vote for future elections.

Over 88% of households have now responded, with 7,000 households yet to reply who will be visited by an approved Suffolk Coastal canvasser.

Anyone concerned about the identity of a canvasser can contact Suffolk Coastal Customer Services on: 01394 383789.

Canvassers will never ask residents for money, and anyone claiming to be a canvasser who is asking for money should be reported to Suffolk Police by calling 101.

Residents are still able to respond to their form themselves, which will remove the need for a visit from a canvasser. The simplest way to respond is online, by text or by calling the free-phone number.

If there are no changes to be made, there are 3 different ways to confirm your details:

- Go to www.elecreg.co.uk/suffolkcoastal

- Call free-phone 0808 284 1563
- Text 07537 410063
- Sign and return the form using the enclosed envelope

To change the details on your form:

- Go to www.elecreg.co.uk/suffolkcoastal

- Amend, sign and return the form using the enclosed envelope

Once responses have been received by all properties, an up-to-date Register of Electors can be published.

Following a decision by Parliament to reduce the number of constituencies in the UK to 600 from 650, and to ensure that the number of electors in each constituency is more equal, the Boundary Commission for England is conducting the necessary review of all English constituencies.

You can view the proposed changes and see what other people have already said about your local area online until 11 December 2017. You will find an interactive map that's quick and easy to use to respond to the consultation in minutes.

Making it easier to apply for Universal Credit

New technology installed at Felixstowe Citizens Advice is now making it easier for the public to apply for Universal Credit.

Two new public access terminals have been installed at the Citizens Advice office on Orwell Road in Felixstowe to give residents online access. They'll be free to use, without a need for an appointment in the office's reception area.

Universal Credit was introduced in May 2016 to simplify the benefits system and help ensure people are better off in work. It is paid as a single monthly payment direct to the customer, similar to a wage. Applications can only be made online and claimants must have an active email address and bank account.

Universal Credit is being introduced gradually and the Full Service is set to be rolled out across Suffolk Coastal from June 2018 and means that any new claims for older-style 'legacy' benefits would become claims for Universal Credit instead.

Cllr TJ Haworth-Culf, cabinet member for Customers, Communities and Leisure, said:

“By providing the new public access terminals through Citizens Advice, we hope they’ll help our residents who don’t have access to the internet apply for Universal Credit as well as providing support to those making their application. “We’re very grateful of the work carried out by our local Citizens Advice offices as they’re a vital part of the community and they play a key role in supporting our residents through the introduction of this new service. “We would encourage anyone worried about the changes to come and talk to them now to help prepare them for the new system.”

Universal Credit has replaced six ‘legacy’ benefits; Housing Benefit, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance.

Public access terminals are also available at Felixstowe and Woodbridge Libraries within Suffolk Coastal’s Customer Services, with staff available to help people get online. A new terminal is also being provided at Leiston CAB.

Universal Credit is assessed and awarded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Council has worked proactively with the DWP to support customers and communities with the rollout.

- Find out more about Universal Credit.
<http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/benefits/universal-credit/>

Women On Wheels rescheduled for April 2018

A date has now been set for the rescheduled Women On Wheels event in Rendlesham after October’s event was cancelled due to bad weather.

The cycling event which supports the Suffolk Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal has been rearranged in the spring, on **Sunday 22 April 2018**.

Women and girls of all ages and abilities are invited to take part in the event at Army Rock Barracks, Sutton.

There will also be plenty of activities for everyone to get involved in on the day including a one mile dash competition, balance bikes for children, the Royal British Legion and information from local cycle shops.

Cllr TJ Haworth-Culf, cabinet member for Customers, Communities and Leisure at Suffolk Coastal District Council, said: “We were sad to have to cancel October’s event, but we’re excited to be back in the spring and are ready and raring to go! “We’d like to thank our organisers and participants for their continued support, including the WI who provided refreshments for the event and we hope we’ll inspire some more to join us for this fun cycling challenge. “As the two rides take place on the airfield at Army Rock Barracks, it’s a safe and quiet place for cyclists to ride on at their own pace. We’re not looking for professional cyclists to join in, but rather, those who are maybe unsure about getting back on a bicycle and looked for a relaxed but fun event to take part in. “Last year we had a real party atmosphere with a mixture of ladies and girls taking part, and, at the same time we raised nearly £500 for the Suffolk Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal, which was fantastic.”

The 5km starts at 11:30am for £5 and the 15m ride starts at 10:30am for £15. Under 16's are free if accompanied by an adult and all money raised from the event will go to the Suffolk Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal.

Females of all ages can register [online](#).

You can also inspire others to join in on the fun on the group's [Facebook](#) page:

Anyone who had originally booked to take part were given the option to transfer their booking onto the rescheduled event or receive a refund.

If you would like to contact our event organiser, Sarah Shinnie, please email: sarah.shinnie@eastssuffolk.gov.uk or phone: 01394 444652.

Success of Suffolk Armed Forces Weekend Leads to New Fund

As we approached Armistice Day, a new fund was set up to support service personnel in this area.

The fund has been created to provide a lasting legacy following the success of the Suffolk Armed Forces Weekend earlier this year.

Thousands of people flocked to Felixstowe for a fun-filled weekend to celebrate Suffolk Armed Forces Weekend 2017 on 24 & 25 June.

As well as providing fun for all the family, the event had a serious side - recognising the huge contribution made by our servicemen and women, as well as marking the important 350th anniversary of the Dutch attack on Landguard Fort (which was the last time foreign forces launched an armed landing on English soil).

Now the money that was raised through the event is being used to start up a new fund, which military charities and not-for-profit organisations can apply for grants to benefit Armed Forces personnel, their families, veterans and cadet organisations that live, are stationed or operate in the Felixstowe and the Suffolk Coastal District area.

The organisers are particularly keen to hear from people who may need money to support events being organised to mark the centenary of WW1 next year (in 2018).

“The Armed Forces Weekend was a fantastic event for the county of Suffolk, Suffolk Coastal District Council and the town of Felixstowe itself. The mix of historic re-enactments, thanking our Armed Forces for their work and varied programme of entertainment for all the family was a great hit with everyone,”

said Cllr TJ Haworth-Culf, Suffolk Coastal's cabinet member with responsibility for Customers, Communities and Leisure. “There was a great atmosphere in Felixstowe and the weekend really showcased what the resort has to offer. Now we are able to set up a fund to provide a legacy from the event to provide continued support for service personnel in the area.”

The Suffolk Armed Forces Weekend was a county event, hosted by Suffolk Coastal District Council and held in Felixstowe.

This was very much a community event, supported by a variety of organisations such as the Suffolk Armed Forces Community Covenant, Royal British Legion, Felixstowe Town Council, Suffolk County Council, Landguard Fort Trust and the Royal Marines Association, as well as Suffolk Coastal District Council.

And this partnership working is continuing through to running the new fund. Felixstowe Town Council is taking the lead in administrating the fund, through its grants programme.

Mayor of Felixstowe, Cllr Nick Barber, said

“Money was raised from a wide range of sources within the local community to stage the Armed Forces Weekend, so it is only fitting that it should be used to benefit, commemorate and celebrate armed forces groups in the area.”

“This is a great way to continue to thank our armed forces, past and present, and it is very appropriate that we should launch this ahead of Armistice Day, as we are particularly interested in supporting events being planned to commemorate next year’s centenary of WWI.”

A sub-committee has been set up by the Town Council, to consider any applications received and applicants are encouraged to contact Felixstowe Town Hall for details of how to apply.

System recognised with second national award

The hi-tech system, developed by Suffolk Coastal Port Health Authority for handling imports at the Port of Felixstowe, has been shortlisted for another national award.

The Port Health Interactive Live Information System (PHILIS) has been shortlisted for a Local Government Chronicle Award in the Innovation Category.

This is the second time the software system has been shortlisted, after it was named a finalist in the Technological Innovation category of the APSE Environmental Services Innovation Awards 2017 in October.

A specially-commissioned film has been made to showcase the success of the system, developed by Suffolk Coastal’s Port Health team, made by local company, Bruizer.

Cllr Steve Gallant, Suffolk Coastal’s Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health, said:

“It was great to see the success of PHILIS being recognised nationally and now being captured on a high quality film. Initially, the system was developed in-house to speed up our Port Health teams ability to handle the massive amount of imports that come through the Port of Felixstowe on a daily basis,” said Cllr Steve Gallant,

“Now it has been licenced to all the other major sea ports, handling 85% of all the food imported into this country, as well as also being adopted by Heathrow Animal Reception Centre to help handle live animals travelling into the UK.”

“PHILIS has been a great success. Suffolk Coastal’s Port Health team has developed cutting-edge bespoke technology, which has been adopted nationwide to make handling huge amounts of imports faster and more efficient, saving time for our staff but also helping speed up the import process that our country depends upon.”

Since its development and launch at Suffolk Coastal’s Port Health Authority in September 2009, PHILIS has been developed to incorporate a scanning module to handle the high volumes of paperwork and original certification that accompanies imported food consignments.

LGC editor Nick Golding said:

“To be shortlisted for an LGC Award shows a council service is among the country’s most innovative, and doing the most to support the needs of local residents as councils face continuing budget cuts.

We should salute the council officers and councillors doing the most to ensure our vital public services thrive in the era of austerity.”

A mobile module allows officers to check certification using a hand-held devices, while out on the port examining consignments. High resolution cameras within the mobile devices allow officers to capture information, such as seal numbers, labelling on packaging, establishment numbers and the condition of consignments, then quickly and easily link the photograph evidence to the job reference and case file within PHILIS.

This has proved invaluable when importers have challenged us on damage to a load during transit, providing the evidence to allow the Council to defend against insurance claims, which might otherwise have been difficult to fight against.

As well as enabling Port Health to deliver a quicker, more effective and efficient service, PHILIS has meant that increases in workload over the last nine years have been met without the need to increase the size of the team.

In addition to benefiting the Port Health service at Felixstowe, the software has now been licenced to all of the major sea ports: London, Mersey and Southampton. During 2016/17, the system has also been developed by the team to manage animal welfare requirements at Heathrow’s Animal Reception Centre (HARC).

The system now:

- Manages 85% of food imported into the UK from outside of the EU
- Supports 100 users operating from 4 Port Health Authorities and HARC
- Handles over 3million containers a year through the 4 ports
- Has delivered at least a 20% saving in officer time at Felixstowe
- Scans around 1 million documents a year
- Generates income for the Council through licence fees

Winners will be announced on 21 March 2018 at Grosvenor House on London’s Park Lane which will be attended by 1,100 people from local government and its partner organisations.

Have you made your nominations for the SCBCA Awards?: There's still time to make your nominations for next year's Suffolk Coastal Business and Community Awards on 15 March.

Categories this year focus on teamwork, growth, services to the community, health & wellbeing, customer service and tourism and more!

Each award aims to recognise the contributions, initiatives and successes of businesses, groups and individuals within the Suffolk Coastal District over the past 18 months. The winners will be announced at a black-tie awards dinner at The Hangar, Kesgrave Hall on 15th March 2018.

We'd like to thank our line-up of fabulous and generous sponsors includes: Christies Care, EB Carpets, EDF Energy, Gotelee Solicitors, Places for People Leisure, Suffolk Places, Ufford Park and Suffolk Coastal District Council and Suffolk Coastal Norse.

The full list of awards and sponsors is as follows. · New Business of the Year sponsored by EB Carpets Felixstowe · Business Growth Award sponsored by Suffolk Coastal District Council · Customer Focus Award sponsored by Christies Care · Encouraging Tourism sponsored by Suffolk Places · Services to the community (group) sponsored by Suffolk Coastal Norse · Services to the community (individual) sponsored by Places for People · Big Bang Award sponsored by EDF Energy · Club of the Year sponsored by Ufford Park · Great Idea Award sponsored by Suffolk Coastal District Council · Food & Drink Retailer of the Year sponsored by East Suffolk Food Trails · Health & Wellbeing sponsored by De Vere Care

· People Development

· Team of the Year Check out the categories and enter: <http://scbca.co.uk/enter-now>

The closing date for nominations is 5 January 2018.

National first for east Suffolk

The plan to create a brand new 'super district council' for east Suffolk has achieved a national first – by being given the seal of approval by the Rt Hon Sajid Javid, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils are leading the way by being amongst the first councils in the country to proceed with creating a new 'super district council' to deliver vital services to their communities.

And the proposal moved an important step closer today (Tuesday, 7 November, 2017) by gaining the formal backing of the Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government.

In a written statement to the House of Commons, the Secretary of State confirmed that he is 'minded to' support the proposals of Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils to create a new single authority for the area.

"Having carefully considered all the material and representations I have received, I am 'minded to' implement the locally-led proposal I received from Suffolk Coastal

and Waveney district councils in February 2017 to merge their two respective councils to become a single, new district council,” he said in the statement.

The Secretary of State explained he had made this decision because he considers that:

- The proposal is likely to improve local government in the area (by improving service delivery, giving greater value for money, yielding cost savings, providing stronger strategic and local leadership, and/or delivering more sustainable structures);
- The proposal commands local support, in particular that the merger is proposed by all councils which are to be merged and there is evidence of a good deal of local support; and,
- The proposed merged area is a credible geography, consisting of two or more existing local government areas that are adjacent, and which, if established, would not pose an obstacle to locally-led proposals for authorities to combine to serve their communities better and would facilitate joint working between local authorities.

He also confirmed that the east Suffolk proposal was breaking new ground, saying: “I intend to assess any further locally-led merger proposals that I receive against these criteria.”

It is believed this is the first time that the Secretary of State has given his backing to such a plan.

Before he takes his final decision, the Secretary of State has announced there will be a period of time, until 8 January 2018, during which those interested can make further representation to him, including making any suggested modifications to the proposals.

He will then make his final decision, which will be subject to Parliamentary approval.

The ‘minded to’ decision gives the councils the go ahead to proceed with getting everything in place to make the creation of a new council in May 2019 a reality. This is a significant achievement in its own right and is testament to the forward thinking approach the councils have taken in terms of ensuring our residents are served in the years to come.

Welcoming the news, the Leaders of Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Council, Cllrs Ray Herring and Mark Bee, said in a joint statement:

“This is great news for us and the people of east Suffolk. By creating a new, larger and more influential council, we will be able to continue to drive costs down, which maintaining services and investing in our local communities.

“We have a proud record of achieving success through innovative partnership working between Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Council. We are glad that the Secretary of State has recognised that the creation of this new ‘super district’ is the next logical step for us to take, if we are to keep on reducing costs while protecting frontline services.

“We need to evolve, if we are to successfully address the shared opportunities and challenges that both councils face, such as the significant reductions in Central Government funding for councils and the need for investment in growth and infrastructure projects, as well as providing more much-needed housing.”

In January 2017, Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils both voted to approve the proposals to create a brand new ‘super district’ council, delivering services to communities in the east of the county.

It is believed this is the first time two councils have voted to formally join together to create a single entity since the local government reorganisation in 1974.

A business case was then submitted to the Department of Communities and Local Government in February 2017.

With the Secretary of State’s agreement, the new Council would come into being, and begin operations, following the local council elections in May 2019. The two existing councils will then be formally dissolved with elections to the new authority.

Winners announced for inaugural East Suffolk Photo Competition

The winners of the first ever East Suffolk Photo Competition have been announced by Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils.

The five-week long competition, which ran during August and early September, invited amateur and professional photographers to submit their photos to the Councils under four categories; living in East Suffolk, working in East Suffolk, explore East Suffolk and under 16s. Entries were submitted via email or through the Councils’ joint Instagram account (@eastsuffolkcouncils) using #eastsuffolkphotocomp.

In October, the entries were judged by Cllr TJ Haworth-Culf, Cabinet Member for Customers, Communities and Leisure at Suffolk Coastal and Cllr Michael Ladd, Cabinet Member for Tourism and Economic Development at Waveney District Council.

In a joint statement, Cllr TJ Haworth-Culf and Cllr Ladd said:

“We were overwhelmed by the amount and the quality of the entries, especially given that this was the inaugural competition.

It was incredibly difficult to choose the winning photos as all the entries highlight East Suffolk as a beautiful and interesting place to live, work and visit however we felt that the chosen winners really captured the spirit of the area and the relevant categories.

We would like to thank everyone who took part and we look forward to running the competition again in future.”

The winners are:

- Living in East Suffolk
 - Winner: Gav Elliott, Orford lighthouse
 - Runner-up: Julia Penson, Lowestoft

- Working in East Suffolk
 - Winner: Matthew James, Aldeburgh fishing boats
 - Runner-up: Chris Arnold, harvest at Shipmeadow
- Explore East Suffolk
 - Winner: Ben Alder, Woodbridge
 - Runner-up: Charlotte Ford, Covehithe Church
- Under 16s
 - Winner: Jake Lain, Kessingland Beach
 - Runner-up: Jack Ibbotson, Felixstowe

Each winner will receive a shopping voucher and all the winners and runners up will receive a framed copy of their photo. The winning photos will also be displayed at the Councils' East Suffolk House or Riverside offices.

Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils have been working in partnership since 2008 and are working to create a new, single 'super district' council for east Suffolk.

According to GovRank, which monitors the digital performance of over 400 local authorities in the UK, @east Suffolk Councils is consistently featured amongst the best-performing council Instagram accounts in the country. Winning photos etc can be viewed online

Council Tax reduction Scheme - consultation

East Suffolk Councils are proposing to introduce minor **changes** to the local scheme for how Council Tax discounts are calculated for working age customers.

Discounts are currently given to those who find it hard to pay their council tax, for a variety of reasons.

The current scheme has not been changed since it was first introduced in April 2013, but now needs some minor changes in order to update it and bring it into line with other benefits.

Changes: Changes to the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

The east Suffolk councils of Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils are proposing to introduce minor changes to the local scheme for how council tax discounts are calculated for working age customers. Discounts are currently given to those who find it hard to pay their council tax, for a variety of reasons. The current scheme has not been changed since it was first introduced in April 2013, but now needs some minor changes in order to update it and bring it into line with other benefits.

What are the changes?

Our proposal is to update, modernise and streamline our council tax reduction scheme while keeping the same principles as our original 2013/14 scheme.

From 1 April 2018 we propose to:

1. Update the 'applicable amounts' to 2015 prices as they have not been updated since 2013. The 2015 rates will apply until 2020 as they have been frozen by the Government. Applicable amounts are the fixed amounts of money which you are considered to need to live on, and which are used when benefits are being calculated.
2. Incorporate changes that have occurred as a result of the Government's welfare reforms. This will mean that the way we calculate council tax reductions will take into account the changes to: family premiums; dependence allowances where there are 2 or more children; and eligibility of foreign nationals.
3. Streamline the scheme so that claimants in receipt of Universal Credit don't need to make a separate application to qualify for council tax discount.

What isn't changing?

Unlike some councils, the east Suffolk councils are not proposing to change the contribution levels that were established in 2013, or to change the arrangements for pensioners who are exempt. Instead, the councils are proposing to introduce a package of minor technical changes to ensure the scheme continues on the same principles, but is streamlined and enables administrative efficiencies for the claimants and councils.

Who will the changes affect and when?

Everyone who receives council tax support will benefit from the increase in applicable amounts.

Changes 2 and 3 above will affect people needing to make a new claim either through change in circumstances or making a claim for the first time. Existing claimants will have transitional protection until specific changes in their circumstances. We expect the number of people to be effected by these changes to be proportionately small.

What will the changes mean for claimants?

The changes to applicable amounts will mean an increase in the amount of discounts all claimants receive, to take account of inflation since 2013.

The changes to align council tax discounts with welfare reform changes may result in some claimants paying slightly more council tax compared to those who began claiming before 1 April 2018.

The changes associated with the introduction of Universal Credit will simplify the process for claimants of council tax discounts. Depending on the amount of hours a person works, their Universal Credit payment will increase or decrease. This fluctuation means that the amount council tax is reduced by can change each month. In order to keep this as simple as possible the east Suffolk councils want to make the award of council tax reduction conditional upon Universal Credit. This means that any new claimants will only need to make one application and we can make sure the correct entitlement to a council tax reduction is received.

Tell us your views

We believe that these few changes will update and simplify the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme and allow us to keep our reduction rates intact. But what do you think? Let us know your views on our proposed changes and any particular impacts they may have.

Let us know by filling out our response form online which will be available until 28 November 2017.

Collections that would have been made on: Will be made on:

Monday 25 December	Saturday 23 December
Tuesday 26 December	Wednesday 27 December
Wednesday 27 December	Thursday 28 December
Thursday 28 December	Friday 29 December
Friday 29 December	Saturday 30 December
Monday 1 January	Tuesday 2 January
Tuesday 2 January	Wednesday 3 January
Wednesday 3 January	Thursday 4 January
Thursday 4 January	Friday 5 January
Friday 5 January	Saturday 6 January

All recycling and refuse collections will return to normal from Monday 8 January 2018

Customer Services Christmas Opening Times at Felixstowe and Woodbridge Libraries

Friday 22nd December open as usual
Tuesday 26th December (Boxing Day) Bank Holiday - Closed
Wednesday 27th December substitute Bank Holiday - Closed
Thursday 28th December open as usual Friday
29th December open as usual
Tuesday 2nd January open as usual

Many thanks

TJ & Maureen