

County Council report – July 2022

Council objects to Norwich to Tilbury pylon proposals

On June 8th, Suffolk County Council confirmed its intention to object to the proposals for National Grid's East Anglia GREEN pylon run.

A new network is needed to deliver electricity between Norwich, Bramford and Tilbury, to cope with the increasing amounts of renewable and low carbon electricity being generated around East Anglia.

This is National Grid's East Anglia GREEN proposal, which would see many pylons installed across the county, affecting the Suffolk countryside and its communities.

But the council does not support this proposal as it stands. It believes that there are better ways to manage the project, for example involving an undersea network which has not been fully investigated.

The council has been campaigning for government ministers and officials to introduce a more co-ordinated offshore approach to meet the demands of all the energy projects in the region.

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Environment, has written to the Minister of State for Business, Energy and Clean Growth:

"The council absolutely supports ambitions for renewable energy and the government's commitment to meet the target of Net Zero by 2050. We recognise the benefits that can come from this project, and we continue to work with the government to develop coordinated offshore transmission.

"However, the council objects to the proposal for National Grid's East Anglia GREEN as it stands. I am determined that Suffolk will not suffer unnecessarily therefore, we will continue to protect our communities, residents and natural environment.

"Suffolk County Council has been lobbying government for 11 years on the issue of better coordination for offshore transmission. We are demanding that a more collaborative solution is found to manage the different network connection requirements coming into Suffolk and East Anglia, and that all network options are fully explored.

"Alongside other regional councillors and MPs, through our OffSET group (the Off-Shore Electricity Grid Task Force), we regularly speak with government ministers and officials to express our concerns about the impact of these projects on Suffolk, and East Anglia. Last week I wrote

directly to the Minister, to continue to represent Suffolk's communities and residents, to re-emphasise the recent points made by OffSET."

Successful communities awarded £6.4m to 'Reclaim the Rain' and tackle flooding

Norfolk and Suffolk County Council's joint Reclaim the Rain project, which aims to implement innovative and sustainable water management projects, progressed on June 14th.

The Norfolk and Suffolk County Council's joint Reclaim the Rain project, which aims to implement innovative and sustainable water management projects progresses as six communities are selected across both counties.

The project team received 37 formal applications from communities keen to be involved in Reclaim the Rain. These applications were carefully considered and whittled down to three communities in Suffolk and three in Norfolk.

The three chosen communities in Suffolk are:

- Boxford – this community displayed a strong interest in sustainable water management and ways in which the community could be more involved with water management.
- Friston – who are exploring innovative ways of resolving long-standing hard-to-resolve flood issues.
- Little Blakenham – they identified some excellent opportunities to work with upstream landowners, allowing them to have a more proactive approach in managing flood water running off their land.

The selection process was based on various factors, including each community's vulnerability to surface water flooding, water resource needs, rurality and the likelihood of attracting funding outside of our project.

In the coming months, Reclaim the Rain will be working closely with these communities to develop projects which maximise the opportunities to manage risks from both flooding and droughts. The overall project objective is to identify new ways of working that can be learnt from and evidenced to inform and influence future policy, approaches to, and investments in how flood risk is managed nationally in the coming years.

Suffolk leading the way in UK's water conservation

Announced on June 16th, a new scheme based in Felixstowe reuses over 800,000 tonnes of water.

Since its launch in February 2021 a unique scheme to the UK, based in Felixstowe, has saved over 800,000 tonnes of water being lost to the North Sea - and reused it to grow Suffolk crops.

Drainage water has traditionally been pumped away to the River Deben and North Sea, damaging saltmarsh along the way. Instead, it is now pumped back inland, conserving the saltmarsh and refilling 14 reservoirs, which six local farms are using to irrigate their crops.

Last week (9-10 June 2022) local landowners and national organisations were invited to visit the site, to hear first-hand from the scheme's operators, Felixstowe Hydrocycle, and from farmers who are benefitting from the scheme.

Organised by Suffolk County Council, working with the Environment Agency and University of East Anglia as key partners of the project, the event aimed to inspire more schemes to be trialled around Suffolk, the UK and Europe.

Extra funding agreed by Cabinet to fund new SEND places

Funding for second phase of £45 million five-year project agreed by Cabinet.

Suffolk County Council's Cabinet has today agreed an additional £15.9million to complete the funding for the creation of at least 879 specialist places for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

This money marks the second phase of a £45million five-year project to deliver specialist provision for SEND students in Suffolk. These places include units attached to mainstream schools and three new special schools.

So far, 500 new places have opened across the county, with another 325 due to open between September 2022 and September 2024 under phase 1. The additional money will enable the completion of phase 2 of the project, and the creation of between 54 to 72 new places, depending on design and planning.

The new SEND places support the growing number of children and young people in Suffolk who need specialist help at school. Between September 2021 and May 2022 there have been 1,333 referrals for specialist placements for children currently in mainstream schools.