

August report.

'Thanks for thinking of others' – praise for public for continuing to take COVID precautions

Health chiefs in Suffolk thanked the public for continuing to wear masks and observing COVID precautions since the lifting of restrictions.

The Government removed the remaining coronavirus rules last month under step four of its roadmap out of lockdown.

The easing meant people are no longer required to wear facemasks in public places such as shops, although they are recommended for crowded areas such as public transport.

Venues such as nightclubs can re-open, and employers can begin to phase in a return to the workplace for staff working from home.

However, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has urged people to use common sense and personal judgement by considering the risks to themselves and others.

Stuart Keeble, Director of Public Health for Suffolk, said feedback seemed to suggest that many people had taken this advice to heart.

“Of course, some people have stopped wearing masks, that is their right and their choice as there is now no longer any legal obligation to do so. However I am encouraged when hearing of examples of many other people continuing to wear masks in public. It shows they recognise that this pandemic is far from over, the virus is still very much out there, and they take their sense of responsibility to others seriously by doing what they can to prevent its spread. I thank everyone who is doing so and urge others to follow that example.”

Mr Keeble also thanked employers whose staff were wearing masks, particularly when engaging with the public in venues such as pubs, shops, or doctors' surgeries, and asked people to be supportive even if they were not wearing a mask themselves.

“Employers have a duty of care to their staff and the people they come into contact within the workplace,”

Businesses urged to keep COVID-19 safe

Businesses across Suffolk are being urged to keep COVID-19 safe and follow guidance as well as remembering their legal duty to staff and customers.



With the relaxing of guidance and some laws, Public Services and Public Health want to make sure businesses are aware of their duties and provide help if they can.

Businesses also have a duty of care under law to their staff and customers and need to make sure they have the right protection and procedures in place.

The latest information is provided by the Government at [Working safely during coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19)

Other useful information can be found at Suffolk Growth which draws together all the guidance from Government and has been developed with Environmental Health Officers, Licensing, Police and Trading Standards [PowerPoint Presentation \(filesusr.com\)](#).

People using local businesses, visiting tourist attractions and using hospitality services are also asked to spread kindness and not COVID-19 by following local guidance and where they are able to wash hands, wear masks and leave space.

This is part of the #AddKindness campaign being run by the Suffolk Resilience Forum across the county. Materials are being made available for businesses to remind people who use their or other premises across Suffolk to follow local guidance and help keep businesses open.

The reminder has also been given that the symptoms of COVID-19 may vary. The latest advice can be found at [Main symptoms of coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/)

Fiona Quinn, Lead of the Suffolk Safer Places Partnership, said:

“We want to thank everyone who has been looking after one another and supporting local businesses who are trying hard in challenging times. But we would also ask them and businesses to remain cautious and spread kindness, not COVID.

“While guidance has been relaxed and, in some cases, legal responsibilities changed businesses still have a legal duty to protect their staff and customers. Government is asking everyone to be cautious and we would add to that to also be kind. Look out for one another and take precautions or follow the rules asked of you by businesses.”

The Suffolk Resilience Forum is made up of Suffolk Public Services and has been continuing to help provide support to communities and businesses throughout the pandemic.

Suffolk recycling centres open

Suffolk continued its path of working towards full capacity at recycling centres.

Much like many other recycling centres across the country, Suffolk's Recycling Centres have been operating a socially distanced system during the pandemic.

There will be some changes to the rules when visiting the county's recycling centres, but you will still need to book, pending a full review of arrangements.

The changes will take place in two phases to enable a managed increase in the number of bookings and to ensure that sites are operating safely and effectively.

Phase one from Monday 19 July

- The one visit per week rule will remain in place, but an extra 3,760 slots will become available per week
- Cars with small trailers will now be able to book a 15 min car slot (750kg max gross weight, single axle and unbraked) and will also be allowed at Haverhill Recycling Centre
- Cars with large trailers will now book a 30 min large trailer/van slot (over 750kg max gross weight, double axle or braked), apart from at Haverhill Recycling Centre due to its size
- Vans without trailers will be able to book at all Recycling Centres (including Haverhill). Vans must book a 30 min van slot
- Vans with trailers are still prohibited from using any of the recycling centres
- Social distancing will be removed from all sites. Cars can park next to each other (as directed by site staff) and restrictions on number of people on walkway/gantry removed
- Staff will be able to assist visitors if requested. (All staff will wear FFP3 standard face coverings when assisting and follow good practice on Covid hygiene)
- More than one adult will now be allowed to unload per vehicle
- Guidance will remain for the public to continue wearing face coverings if possible. Face coverings for staff remain optional except when assisting the public

Phase two from Monday 16 August (In addition to changes in phase 1)

- An additional 4,500 slots will be made available per week, taking Suffolk's Recycling

Centres to full capacity (weekly total to 27,422)

- Removal of one visit per week rule for household waste
- Trade waste will remain restricted to one visit per week (to ensure fair usage of the system which is mainly designed for residents' household waste)

A customer survey from March 2021 revealed 91% of booking system users were satisfied or very satisfied (with a further 4% being neutral) and 92% of customers had a problem-free experience when using the booking system.

We are really pleased that we are able to start increasing capacity at our recycling centres by reducing some of the restrictions we had in place so we can soon be back to full capacity. We are doing this in two phases to ensure that our sites are operating safely and smoothly.

In response to overwhelming customer satisfaction, the booking system will remain in place for the moment at all of Suffolk's Recycling Centres. We have received many compliments about the staff on our sites and I would like to thank them for their hard work and dedication for what has been a difficult year."

SEND REVIEW

The review of Suffolk's SEND provision is now complete. The review sought to focus on the processes, communications and customer facing elements of Suffolk's SEND service.

Lincolnshire County Council were chosen to carry out the review due to their exemplary SEND track record. A multi-agency team from Lincolnshire County Council includes two senior officers, performance analysts and the chair of the County's Parent Carer Network.

We now await the final report and recommendations from the Lincolnshire review team.

To assist Lincolnshire with their review, Suffolk County Council provided the team with more than 100 SEND related documents, these included:

- Performance data
- Process documents
- Examples of co-production, and
- Feedback from children and young people with SEND

Additionally, over 25 meetings have taken place with more than 140 attendees, the included:

- Two groups of children and young people with SEND
- Four group of parents/carers
- 28 education settings
- A range of practitioners across Education, Health and Social Care.

Rachel Hood, Cabinet member for Education, SEND and Skills said:

"The recommendations made by the independent review will help us to fulfil our steadfast commitment to improve SEND provision in Suffolk. I recognise the issues facing SEND services at the moment, but significant progress has been made and will continue to be made. Improvement to SEND is one of the council's key priorities and I am determined to ensure this continues at pace and with the best outcomes for our children and families."

One Job is not enough

Men aged between 20 and 49 are being urged by health bosses to 'finish the job' and get

their second COVID vaccination, as figures showed they lag behind.

As of July 1st, Analysis from public health at Suffolk County Council shows that in the 20-49 age groups, 75% of eligible females have had their first vaccine dose and 42% have also had their second dose.

But in the same age range, 66% of eligible males have had their first vaccine dose and just 27% have had their second.

The figures come as Suffolk Resilience Forum unveiled a new video promoting the message

‘One Jab Is Half A Job’ to promote the importance of everyone getting fully vaccinated.

Stuart Keeble, Director of Public Health for Suffolk, said:

“One Jab Is Half a Job is a really important message.

“We know that after one vaccination you have about 33% protection but that it is more than 80% if you have your second, so it’s really important for protecting yourself and other people.

“We make the comparison that you would not do half a job in everyday things such as

washing the car or having a shave, so why skimp on getting vaccinated properly?

“We know there is a difference between the proportion of men aged 20 to 49 getting their first and second jabs compared to women. The gap is especially wide for that second jab, which is something we are keen to change.”

Mr Keeble said there could be many reasons why more women were having the second vaccine than men, with one example being that more women work in the health and care services so they may have had both their vaccines as part of their job.

“The most important thing is that whatever your gender if you’ve made the effort to get your first jab, go and have the second because it will provide you with the optimum level of protection,” he said.

On July 13th Suffolk County Council began the process of finding its next long term Highways Services partner.

The council is looking for a partner to deliver key operational projects after the current contract ends on 30 September 2023.

As part of preparations up to this point, the council has worked with leading industry analysts to understand the different types of arrangements that other local authorities have in place, to look at which specialist providers are in the marketplace and to find out what aspects of contract agreement may work best for Suffolk based on the range of outcomes the council wants to achieve from any new contract process.

The council is looking to develop a contract that utilises a blended ‘hybrid’ approach, enabling the council to enter into one contract that covers the majority of Highways Service functions and two contracts with specialist providers for streetlighting and traffic signals (ITS). The council will be looking for the new contract to focus on delivering greater social value, utilising local skills and talent, giving young people the opportunity to work in the sector as well as building on the council’s commitment to carbon reduction and protecting the environment.

The whole contract development process will take just over two years to complete. Once the appropriate tender documents have been prepared outlining the council's requirements, initial advertisements will go out in December 2021. Discussions will begin with any interested prospective contractors in early 2022. Following such a rigorous tendering process, the council hopes to be able to award its chosen contract in early 2023 with the new service provider beginning in October 2023.

The procurement process needs to begin now to provide enough time to go to the market to seek relevant specialist companies which may be interested in tendering for the contract which is worth in the region of £800m - £1 billion over a projected 20 year period.

Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member responsible for Ipswich, Operational Highways

and Flooding, Cllr Paul West said:

"This is the beginning of the process today towards finding the right partners to deliver aspects of Suffolk's Highways Services beyond the end of the current contract in 2023. We want to get the best value for money for Suffolk taxpayers and ensure that the contractors we choose through the hybrid contract approach are the best fit for what we want to achieve and deliver.

"We have learnt a great deal from our existing contract arrangements and going forward I want to ensure this new contract enables more young people across Suffolk to access apprenticeships and relevant work experience opportunities through the Kick Start scheme. We want to find the right partner who shares our ambition and ideas to innovate in improving delivery of services, communicating with customers and sharing our commitment to reducing carbon use as part of the Climate Emergency.

"In preparing for this contract we have rightly spent time considering how other local authorities manage their Highways contracts and which process would be best for Suffolk as we look towards finding the right long term service delivery partner."

Make one simple change today in a bid to tackle climate change

COP26 will bring into focus the need for us all to reduce our carbon emissions in order to slow climate change.



**UN CLIMATE
CHANGE
CONFERENCE
UK 2021**

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY

**A column by Councillor Richard
Rout, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Environment at
Suffolk County Council.**

In early November, the eyes of the world will be on the UK. Glasgow, to be exact.

This is when the COP26 conference takes places.

COP26 is the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties. It will be a momentous event and I expect some significant decisions and agreements to be made, as the world continues to combat climate change and reduce its carbon emissions.

But how will an international event affect each of us in Suffolk? Although COP26 will be an event attended by Presidents and Prime Ministers, it will impact us all.

COP26 will bring into focus the need for us all to reduce our carbon emissions in order to slow climate change. This has been the message for a long time of course, but we must all be changing our behaviours and choosing to use less energy.

And I do mean all of us.

Global industry, national corporations and governments must lead the way to enable us all to make greener choices. But slowing climate change is everyone's responsibility, we each have a duty to tackle this situation and play our part.

I'd suggest that there is at least one simple change or choice we can make immediately, which will help. My challenge to you is to make that one change today.

This could be to replace one meat-based meal each week with a plant-based one. Or start to swap over your traditional lightbulbs for LED ones. Or switching your gas or electricity tariff to one which uses 100% renewable energy. Or plan your food shopping so that you throw away less food. Or make purchases from businesses that are committed to reducing their carbon emissions. Or just boil the water you need for that morning coffee or cup of tea.

For me, making some of these changes has been a learning experience. I've discovered that it's easy to live with a plug-in vehicle without a home charger - I just need to plan my trips and use the chargers at the workplaces I visit. It was a change I made with trepidation but charging infrastructure is continually improving.

My partner is vegetarian and while I'm not, I enjoy some meat-free meals each week. Equally important for me is shopping local and making locally-sourced food choices. When I do eat meat or dairy, I choose local grass-fed options.

I now have LED lightbulbs at home and have installed smart sensors. The biggest change we've made is turning our back on fast fashion and spending a little more on clothes produced in this country and to a higher standard. It's too easy to order multiple cheap items online, only to return most of them! Shopping local isn't just good for the local economy but it's better for environment too.

I am not claiming that by doing these simple things, we are going to reverse climate change overnight. The point is to challenge the status quo in our lives and start to change our behaviours.

And yes, organisations like Suffolk County Council must lead by example. We continue to lobby Government to make the bigger changes necessary which enable each of us to make greener choices.

Suffolk County Council has been addressing climate change challenge for many years, but we know that the organisation must be doing more and doing it more quickly. This is agreed across all Suffolk's authorities which is why, together, we

have recently approved the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan - a document to keep us accountable in our ambition to make Suffolk a carbon neutral county by 2030.

I'm proud of the work Suffolk County Council has been doing for a number of years now. We are planting trees and hedgerows. We are supporting businesses with advice and funding to reduce their carbon emissions. We are running schemes to reduce the cost of solar panels on homes. We are providing the infrastructure to encourage walking and cycling. We are providing greener ways to travel. We are installing electric vehicle charging points in rural areas. There is much, much more besides, but we are working hard to develop this work.

Don't worry if you're still not sure what it means to you, your business or your community. With COP26 just three months away, organisations and authorities across Suffolk are planning events across the county to talk net zero and being carbon neutral. Whether at the start of your net zero journey, or you're looking to make the next step, these events will guide and inspire you.

The www.greensuffolk.org website will be updated soon with these Suffolk events. I'd recommend it as a great place to start finding out more.

For info:

Leiston Transport Strategy

Leiston residents are invited to give their views on a proposed Leiston Transport Strategy.

Leiston-cum-Sizewell Town Council, working in partnership with East Suffolk Council, is currently running a consultation on the proposals.

[Leiston Transport Strategy](https://www.leistontowncouncil.gov.uk/leistontransportstrategy/)

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Responses can be sent to feedback@leistontowncouncil.gov.uk or through the online feedback form by 30 August 2021.

Best wishes

TJ