

Extra COVID-19 support heading to Suffolk

Public health bosses in Suffolk have welcomed the Government's commitment to provide extra resources to help fight COVID-19 in the county.

It comes as pressure on the county's hospitals is reaching critical levels due to more people needing treatment - and some of the highest rates of infection in the country. A request for additional support was submitted earlier this week by Public Health Suffolk - on behalf of public sector partners - and is intended to secure in additional support, funding and resources to help the NHS avoid unsustainable pressure. The additional support will include:

- Support for the vaccination efforts by extending opening hours and creating pop up vaccination clinic within our communities
- Help to coordinate on the ground door knocking campaigns
- Help to reduce transmission in schools with increased testing and additional temporary powers
- Funding for COVID-19 awareness raising communications and advertising.

Cllr Matthew Hicks, chair Suffolk's Local Outbreak Engagement Board and leader of Suffolk County Council, said: "I very much welcome this additional help and funding from the Government. It will support our already considerable efforts to get more people vaccinated and to slow the spread of COVID-19 in Suffolk. Throughout the pandemic, Suffolk has been effective at keeping our COVID rates low compared to other parts of the country. This is because we have worked hard and been proactive at every stage. The situation facing Suffolk now calls for the same forward-thinking and preventative work to protect residents, businesses and our way of life. As we learn to live with COVID-19, it will be actions such as this that prevent COVID from having an even worse impact and, ultimately, holding back our recovery."

From Monday 1 November, Suffolk will therefore become an 'enhanced response area' (ERA) for up to five weeks. This approach has already been used in other parts of the country to help reduce the rate of COVID-19 transmission within the community and is also being taken in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough at the same time.

To help reduce the spread, residents in Suffolk are now being encouraged to:

- Get fully vaccinated and your booster when it's due
- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water
- Always wear a face covering in crowded areas
- Ventilate indoor spaces
- Get tested regularly and stay at home if you feel unwell

Stuart Keeble, Suffolk's director of public health, said:

"Every day since the beginning of the pandemic, we have been closely monitoring the impact of COVID-19 in Suffolk and taking action to protect people and save lives. That work hasn't stopped, even when rates of infection slowed during the summer. We have a new challenge

now – high infection rates and continuing hospitalisations at exactly the same time that NHS is trying to catch up on delayed treatments for millions of people.

That is why, after assessing all the data and options available to us, we have made this bid for extra help from central Government. We want to get ahead and stop COVID before our NHS reaches the point of no return.”

It’s the latest move to slow the spread of virus which has made a particular impact among Suffolk’s school age children and, consequently, their parents and grandparents. Earlier this month, additional measures, including siblings of children with COVID self-isolating, restrictions on visits to schools and older children and adults wearing face masks, were reintroduced. The face mask policy starts on Monday 1 November.

Any such support does not mean any additional restrictions on people’s movements or actions. It is not a lockdown or like the tiering system that was trialled in England in 2020. Instead, it will boost the county’s ability to raise awareness, tackle outbreaks and encourage people to get vaccinated.

Cabinet to study plan to boost Suffolk bus services

On October 7th it was announced that wider coverage, cheaper fares, improved ticketing, and better evening and weekend services are among proposals forming part of a £50 million plan.

Subject to approval by the Suffolk County Council Cabinet, the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) will be submitted to the Government by the end of the month.

Following on from the submission of the BSIP, the council, bus operators and other stakeholders will be working together to establish a countywide Enhanced Partnership.

This will enable the BSIP proposals to be delivered, building on experience gained from the existing Ipswich Quality Bus Partnership.

The funding bid is being made to the government’s £3 billion fund under its Bus Back Better national bus strategy for England.

Suffolk County Council will be asking for a minimum of £50m over three years - £15m each for the first two years and £20m for the third.

A report to Cabinet members said:

“The Bus Back Better National Bus Strategy provides a real opportunity to be ambitious in delivering a bus service for Suffolk that will support sustainable transport and the Council’s carbon reduction ambitions.”

Other proposed features include:

- Reviewing service frequency on Suffolk’s key corridors, including evenings and weekend services
- Simplified services - including regular timetabled buses and 'demand-responsive' services

- Expanding the experimental Katch electric demand-responsive bus, which is currently being piloted between Framlingham and Campsea Ashe for Wickham Market station to other rural areas
- Identify and implement bus priority opportunities and changes to parking on key corridors, with particular focus on the 'last mile' where buses are delayed by congestion approaching key destinations
- Lower fares for those aged up to 25
- Contactless touch-on and touch-off ticketing and daily fare caps
- Multi-operator ticketing o Expanding rail and bus ticket options (PlusBus)
- Develop existing park and ride sites as mobility hubs and identify new ones to serve rural areas or new development sites o Explore merging Ipswich's two bus stations into one main hub

The Cabinet meeting takes place on Tuesday 12 October at 2pm.

Read the: · agenda containing the full report · Bus Back Better strategy for England (GOV.UK)

MPs from Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex and County Councillors, unite to protect the countryside and communities from the worst impacts of new pylons and cables

It was announced on October 12th that the Off Shore Electricity Grid Task Force (OffSET) has been set up to review and respond to the Government's Offshore Network Transmission Review (OTNR).

A new group of MPs from across the region, under the chairmanship of Sir Bernard Jenkin, and including County Councillors from the region, has been set up to ensure that the emerging proposals of the Government's Offshore Network Transmission Review (OTNR), and proposals to change the Nationally Significant infrastructure Planning regime, are effectively scrutinised.

The Off Shore Electricity Grid Task Force (OffSET) supports the government's commitment to meet the target of Net Zero by 2050, and the aspiration to deliver 40GW of Offshore Wind, by 2030. However, this will result in a succession of electricity generation and connection projects in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex, over the coming decades, which will have significant impacts on the environment and communities of the region.

The group believes that these ambitions and targets cannot be met, on an "at any cost" basis. Therefore, the further development of the onshore transmission system, and the connection of offshore wind farms, and interconnectors, will require a new deal for communities and the environment. It remains a key priority that we speed up the Government's timetable to transition to the offshore transmission system, in order to protect our communities from the damaging effects of multiple cable corridors.

As well as scrutinising and responding to new policies and initiatives, the group will be a contact point for Ministers and senior officials, as well as for the National Grid, Crown Estate, and Ofgem, to engage with Regional Leaders. The group will also be inviting key stakeholders and community groups to meet with them, to better understand the impacts, and opportunities, of Net Zero transmission and generation infrastructure in the region.

OffSET's mission statement:

“OffSET exists to promote strategic leadership of the development of a coordinated offshore electricity grid, to address the need for increased grid capacity which off-shore wind, coastal new nuclear, and international interconnectors will demand, while standing up for the countryside of East Anglia so that the welcome transition to net zero electricity generation does not do unnecessary damage to our communities or the environment.”

James Cartlidge MP, South Suffolk, said:

“OffSET will play a vital role in ensuring that our region's voice is heard in the national conversation about how we boost the output of renewable energy. I am proud of the huge contribution that our region is making to reaching our net zero targets, but this cannot come at a disproportionate cost to our beautiful countryside. It is vital that at all times we balance the need to reinforce the electricity grid against minimising detriment to our landscape, e.g. by using undersea cables and undergrounding through sensitive landscapes.”

The Rt Hon Therese Coffey MP, Suffolk Coastal, said:

“Whilst integrating multiple projects is undoubtedly the right thing to do, rather than having separate connections, it's essential our precious landscapes and communities are protected by placing the infrastructure in the appropriate place, preferably on brownfield land, like Bradwell.”

Councillor Richard Rout, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Environment for Suffolk County Council, said:

“The County Council has long stated its support for renewable energy generation and the Government has quite rightly set ambitious targets in this area. However, to deliver on these it is essential that public support is maintained for the necessary transformation of the energy system. This means a much more coordinated approach is needed, with more transmission being delivered offshore. We must also see full engagement with our communities so that they and our unique natural environment are protected.”

Suffolk businesses work hard to ensure we achieve net zero carbon by 2030.

Creating the Greenest County Awards 2021 sponsors show how they are making a difference.

Suffolk facilities management company Vertas, Opus People Solutions and design and property consultants Concertus are coming together to sponsor Suffolk's Creating the Greenest County Awards, taking place on 12 November at The Hold in Ipswich.

As we approach the United Nations COP26 event in November, all three companies are working hard to improve their environmental credentials and help Suffolk move towards its net zero carbon 2030 target.

Vertas has committed to minimising the impact of its operations on the environment, particularly emissions to air, land and water, and continually improving its environmental performance. Driving positive change through its supply chain has eliminated the use of single use plastic cutlery throughout its sites, instead using wooden alternatives, removing over 1,000,000 plastic items a year.

Vertas has also focused on eliminating the waste it produces, over the last 12 months it has collected 18,720 litres of cooking oil to turn into biodiesel and recycled 500,000 kilos of waste paper back into paper products, which is the equivalent of saving 8,500 trees.

Opus has recently achieved ISO14001 certification for environmental management, offering green travel discounts, a Cycle 2 Work scheme and ensuring printed materials are made from recyclable/sustainable materials and come from environmentally responsible suppliers to encourage positive change.

Concertus is passionate about using sustainable design to reduce its carbon footprint whilst delivering the best engineered solutions for the built environment. Adopting the approach of Fabric First, it is committed to recommend environmentally friendly and sustainable materials, and is currently delivering two Passivhaus certified care homes – Hockliffe Road (one of the first registered Passivhaus care homes in the UK) and Steppingley Road (the largest registered Passivhaus care provision in the UK).

Councillor Richard Rout, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Environment for Suffolk County Council, said:

“The county council has the ambitious goal to be Net Zero by 2030 and further countywide aspirations set out in the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan. So it’s important that we are actively reviewing all the choices we make across the council and our wholly-owned companies. Vertas, Opus and Concertus are great examples of this, from making seemingly small changes such as swapping out canteen cutlery, to larger infrastructure decisions. But for me, these are perfect examples that every carbon reduction change we make, is a positive one.

“Every decision we make as individuals or businesses will have a positive impact on carbon emissions, energy saving and climate change. Of course, the council and its companies still have work to do, but we’re proud of the progress we’re making, and I thank all staff who are making positive choices, no matter how small.”

The Awards provide an excellent opportunity for individuals, businesses, communities, schools and voluntary organisations to be celebrated for the environmental work they do to combat climate change, or simply for improving the area where they live.

Nominations for the Awards are now open and have been extended to close on Thursday 21 October 2021. Nominations can be submitted online at greensuffolk.org/awards

Suffolk continues to create the greenest county with £150,000 for new trees

It was announced on October 15th that a joint bid by a number of Suffolk's authorities has secured funding from the Forestry Commission to plant around 3,000 trees this coming planting season.

Suffolk County Council submitted the bid on behalf of itself, Ipswich Borough Council, Babergh District Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and West Suffolk District Council. The successful bid will see £149,712.55 come into the county for new trees, from the Local Authority Treescapes Fund.

The fund targets treescapes that have been neglected or suffered damage in the past, including disused and vacant community spaces and those affected by tree diseases such as ash dieback. The locations are chosen where they are likely to be experienced directly by people, as well as on improving the age structure of trees in all the project areas.

One of the interesting methods being adopted to re-establish woodland as part of this project, is the Miyawaki method.

It is regarded as one of the most effective tree planting methods for creating cover quickly on neglected land, or land that has previously been used for construction or agriculture. It uses natural principles, such as using trees already native to the area and replicating natural regeneration processes, and is particularly effective in the urban environment.

Councillor Richard Rout, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Environment at Suffolk County Council, said:

“I'm delighted to have secured this funding, as it means Suffolk will benefit from even more tree planting this coming season and we can make more progress towards the county's joint ambition of Net Zero by 2030. We are also supporting our wildlife and biodiversity, and offering more green spaces for people to get in touch with nature and support their health and wellbeing.

“Last year, the county council committed £228,000 to treeplanting and hedgerows, with 100,000 planted already and the same amount to be planted this coming season. With the Suffolk Tree Warden Network, we are following the 'right tree, right place' policy, to be sure that the planting is effective and has the best chance of establishing itself.”

One example of tree-planting with this project, is the planting of over 100 trees at Needham Lake. The lake is actually a flooded gravel pit close to Needham Market, with part of the site a nature reserve with wetland areas, meadows and a small woodland. The project will create an area of wet woodland alongside the river to link two small, wooded areas together. The trees will include Alder, Downy Birch, White and Grey Willow.

The planting will also contribute to Suffolk's commitment to support the Queen's Green Canopy project. Suffolk is working towards linking up existing woodland with the planting of new trees and hedges to connect communities and encourage natural corridors for biodiversity, aiming to plant a tree for every resident.

Councillor Jessica Fleming, Cabinet Member for Environment at Mid Suffolk District Council:

“This is welcome news and a vital step in achieving our biodiversity ambitions for the district – protecting and strengthening our plant life and wildlife.

“Covid has highlighted the importance of our green spaces and nature, and their impact on our wellbeing, more than ever before – with our Needham Lake site, set to receive new trees thanks to this funding, having also been ranked Visit England’s 12th most visited free tourist attraction in the UK during 2020.”

Suffolk County Council pledges to take its outstanding Sizewell concerns to the Secretary of State and the Government

As the Sizewell C Examination draws to a close, Suffolk County Council has set out in its final response.

The council has raised a number of important concerns that it now feels must be taken up directly with the Government’s Secretary of State on behalf of the communities of Suffolk.

Throughout the many rounds of consultation and examination of EDF Energy’s plans and proposals for a new nuclear plant on the Suffolk coast under the name SZC Co, the county council has used every opportunity to promote the community’s response, influencing and moving many aspects of the initial proposal into a much more considered proposition.

The latest proposals include a promise of a great deal of new investment from the energy supplier into local infrastructure, upskilling local people and compensating the local economy and environmental impacts that the project would pose if it went ahead.

In its final response, submitted to the Examining Authority on Tuesday 12 October 2021, Suffolk County Council has made its position clear that while much has been achieved during the last 12 months, the additional pylons around the site continue to pose significant blight to the natural landscape and character of the area. This comes after alternative options were rejected by EDF Energy. There remains concern that EDF Energy’s current surface water drainage strategy is not fit for purpose which is very important given the scale of the development. The county council is therefore saying there is still more work to be done.

The council wants to see the removal of the planned Sizewell Link Road after the power station is built to avoid a lasting impact on the environment.

At present, an auxiliary car park used during station maintenance outages is planned for land which is classed as part of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty at Goose Hill, this would damage natural habitats unnecessarily.

The other area of concern is the design of the planned road crossing through the local Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI). Although the design has moved in the right direction through positive stakeholder discussion, it does not represent the desired ‘Three-Span’ Bridge which the council has pushed for to provide greater protection to local wildlife and natural habitat.

Suffolk County Council’s Deputy Leader, Councillor Richard Rout said:

“As the examination into the proposed Sizewell C development closes, the County Council still has a number of concerns that we feel we must raise at the highest level with the Secretary of State on behalf of the communities we represent. We need to ensure that the mitigation put in place for such a huge development offers the maximum protection of Suffolk’s unique natural environment and our communities. We will continue to put forward a voice for Suffolk.

“Over the last 12 months we have made great progress seeking maximum value for Suffolk. We have secured pledges for investment in the region of £175m, covering environmental protection, highways development, and increasingly delivery in local housing, skills and tourism. We have also secured concessions which would ensure far more of the construction materials required for the development will be delivered by rail and sea, reducing the number of lorries on our rural county’s roads.

“However, there remain a number of issues outstanding that we want to see addressed, most notably the blight of the additional pylons at the main site, the unnecessary and damaging outage car park at Goose Hill, and our firm view that the Sizewell Link Road should be removed after

construction to prevent lasting damage to the environment. These issues are of such importance to us and to Suffolk that we feel the Secretary of State should consider them when reaching a final decision.

“The County Council and the Suffolk community, in giving such effective evidence as part of the examination, has significantly improved EDF Energy’s proposals but we still believe there are areas that should be improved further to make the project the very best it can be, should the Secretary of State approve it.” Read the county council's response in full on the Sizewell C nuclear power plant page. <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/major-infrastructure-projects/sizewell-c-nuclear-power-plant/>

Face masks back as additional measures brought in to reduce Covid-19 transmission in Suffolk schools and education settings

From October 20th face masks and restrictions on visitors are to be reintroduced to Suffolk schools to help slow the current rate of transmission in education settings.

SCC are advising that the following measures be implemented from the 1 November 2021.

- Staff in all education settings (primary, secondary, and higher education) to wear face coverings in communal areas outside of the classroom, unless exempt for medical reasons.
- Students in all secondary and higher education settings to wear face coverings in communal areas outside of the classroom, unless exempt for medical reasons.
- All education settings to restrict entry to their site to essential visitors only.
- Any visitors to wear a face covering while on-site, this includes adults collecting children in the playground.

On October 6, SCC introduced a new sibling policy, which advised children and young people aged between 4 and 18 years to stay at home when a sibling they live with tests positive for COVID-19. This applies to schools with an outbreak of Covid-19 and is still in place.

The number of cases within children and young people aged 10-14 has increased by almost 15% and cases amongst 15–19-year-olds has increased by 32% in the past week of data. This means that in October alone school children in Suffolk have lost 26,264 days of education due to positive cases of Covid-19. There has also been an increase in cases amongst other age ranges across Suffolk, which may be due in part, to family transmission. These measures will be reviewed during the week commencing Monday 15 November 2021. Stuart Keeble, Director of Public Health said:

“We have seen the number of Suffolk pupils with covid-19 increase so are working with schools to implement these additional measures immediately to help break the chain of transmission.

“We are taking these numbers seriously and school leaders are being extremely vigilant to ensure children and staff safe. If parents have concerns, we would advise them to speak to their schools who will be able to reassure parents of the measures they are taking.

“Our main focus is to balance pupil and staff safety whilst giving children as positive and normal education as possible.”

88 local leaders come together before COP26 to set ambitious Net Zero targets

On October 21st Suffolk County Council signed up to the NGO UK100’s ‘Net Zero Pledge.

There are now 88 cross-party local leaders, representing over half of the UK population and 34,030,804 million people, committed to meeting Net Zero at least five years earlier than the UK government.

In the weeks ahead of COP26, the annual UN climate conference hosted in 2021 by the UK, 23 more council leaders from all four corners of the UK signed up to the NGO UK100’s ‘Net Zero Pledge’.

The new UK100 members include South Tyneside Council, Suffolk County Council, Portsmouth City Council, East Ayrshire Council and Greater London Authority.

Mayor Sadiq Khan, who represents 8.9 million Londoners, joins UK100 as its biggest member and with some of the most ambitious local climate action in the country.

The new commitments, from rural and metro councils alike across the UK, come just over a week before COP26, with Councillor Douglas Reid highlighting the “innovative thinking and practical work” to meet Net Zero in East Ayrshire, Scotland.

Councillor Matthew Hicks, Leader of Suffolk County Council, said:

“Rising to the challenge of climate change has long been a top priority for Suffolk County Council; our Greenest County Awards started back in 2007, we were amongst the first

councils to declare a Climate Emergency, and we've an ambitious goal to be a net zero authority by 2030.

"In Suffolk, we're planting hundreds of thousands of trees, rolling out over 100 rural EV charging points, ensuring battery storage and renewable energy generation are a firm part of our estate, installing intelligent LED street lighting, and much more. So I'm delighted to join the UK100's Net Zero Pledge.

"We know that to address climate change everyone in our society needs to act; whether that's a local council, a school, community organisation, businesses, or each of us as individuals. We all need to think about the choices we make in our day to day lives. This is why Suffolk Public Sector Leaders have agreed the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan, which will help drive a green economic recovery in our county and make sure everyone in our communities can be involved.

"I'm delighted to see so many councils making our environment a clear priority and coming together under the UK100 banner. It's only by working together locally, nationally, and internationally that we'll deliver the change that's needed."

500th independent journey made by young people and adults with SEND

It was announced on October 22nd that students with special educational needs and disabilities have completed more than 500 journeys on public transport after taking part in travel training.

The travel training helps build self-esteem and confidence by supporting young people and adults to use all forms of public transport, or walking routes. Trainers work one-to-one with the students to enable them to travel to their place of education or for work.

Commissioned by Suffolk County Council in 2015, the Independent Travel Training Service is delivered by Essex County Council and has helped more than 500 students across the county.

Rachel Hood, Cabinet member for SEND, Education and Skills at Suffolk County Council, said:

"This travel training is an absolute lifeline for young people and adults.

"It teaches them very practical skills about how to use public transport which will stay with them through adulthood and gives them confidence in their own independence which undoubtedly benefits other aspects of their lives.

"My priority is to ensure all children and young people, including those with SEND, are given the very best start in life. This travel training is vital to achieve this aspiration."

Tony, 21, has just completed his travel training. He was shown how to get to school on two buses, before being taught another route to get to college and he now uses the bus to meet friends and watch Ipswich Town.

Tony said:

"I have become much more independent and can do it on my own now.

"It means I don't have to rely on my mum for lifts everywhere. I have learnt about road safety, what route to take and how to pay the bus driver."

Another student, Kelly, 21, said:

“I have learnt how to read a timetable and get on the right bus. I am a lot more confident on the bus now.”

Callum, 21, who has had training since 2017 whilst at school, then when he went to college and recently to his work, said he would recommend the training.

WS Training is one of the many establishments that support SEND students and the Travel Training Service in Suffolk. The company offers a diverse study programme including apprenticeships, work experience and employment support. For more information visit: [Home | WS Training](#)

“As we learn to live with COVID-19, it will be actions such as this that prevent COVID from having an even worse impact and, ultimately, holding back our recovery.”

Lorry Route Plan review in Suffolk

The technical and community led review of lorry routes that considers changes to the highway network since the plan was updated in 2011.

The technical and community led review of lorry routes that considers changes to the highway network since the plan was updated in 2011. This includes:

- new strategic roads
- new Lorry Watch areas
- Air Quality Management Areas in Suffolk

Councillor Richard Smith MVO, Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Transport Strategy and Waste responsible for the ongoing review of the county’s Lorry Route Plan.

The review will involve two parts and will update and validate the County Council’s existing lorry route network plan

The technical review is currently taking place. It’ll look at a range of evidence including:

- Collision records and traffic data
- Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) for weight, width and height restrictions
- The resilient road network and its strategic road network diversions as well as GPS data – showing the origin and destination of trips, routes taken and the locations of building strikes
- Public complaints
- Data from Lorry Watch schemes

Community led review

The community led review will run from 22 October 2021 to 17 December 2021.

Suffolk County Council is seeking the views of Parish and Town Councils about their local issues and intelligence.

Information will be gathered by a survey sent to all of Suffolk's Parish and Town Councils and their County Councillor will then be asked to endorse the key issues for their area. Each local council will be limited to three issues within their community to ensure fair and equal representation across the county.

The review will be completed in Spring 2022 where the County Council plan to publish a new interactive Lorry Route map.

For more information click here: [Lorry Route Plan review in Suffolk | Suffolk County Council](#)

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Others:

I'm not sure if you've all seen the netzeroleiston.info website page and video but please do have a look.