

## September 2021

Thank you to everyone that has got in touch regarding helping the refugees. There is a dedicated page on the website and a link so that you can email/register your offer of support but for the time being it is welcomed that people are raising funds and not donating items now until more detail has been received. It is also difficult regarding covid to make sure that any clothing and other items are cleaned. Thank you to those that have already raised money locally. More details at the end of this report.

So far 85% of the high school children have carried out lateral flow testing and are encouraged, as we all are to keep on testing to keep our communities safe. My very best wishes to all of our local children starting and restarting their journey in this new school year.

Sizewell C hearings have been taken place, the next County Council Energy briefing will be on the 19<sup>th</sup> and as beforehand I will send through the notes from that briefing as soon as I receive them. As you are all aware the dates coming up are:

9<sup>th</sup> September Publication by the ExA

Publication by the ExA of:

- ExA's further commentary on, or schedule of changes to, the dDCO and s.106 documentation (if required)
- Third Written Questions (ExQ3) (if required)

14 – 17 September: hybrid Issue Specific Hearings on; Flood Risk & Water: Community impacts: Landscape & Heritage (contd) and Draft DCO (contd).

14<sup>th</sup> Issue Specific Hearing 11

15<sup>th</sup> Issue Specific Hearing 12

15<sup>th</sup> Publication by the ExA of:

- Report on the Implications for European Sites (RIES)

16<sup>th</sup> Issue Specific Hearing 13

17<sup>th</sup> Issue Specific Hearing 14

20<sup>th</sup> Request for further information Date reserved for issue by the ExA of:

- Any request for further information under Rule 17 of the Examination Rules (if required)

24<sup>th</sup> Deadline 8 (D8)

For receipt by the ExA of:

- Post Hearing submissions including written submissions of oral case (if required)
- Responses to the ExA's third Written Questions (ExQ3) (if required)

- Responses to ExA's commentary on, or proposed schedule of changes to, the draft DCO and s.106 documentation (if required)
  - If needed, comments on revised draft s.106, accompanying draft Explanatory Memorandum and draft Confirmation and Compliance Document
  - Updated Navigation Document
  - Comments on any revised/updated SoCG
  - Updated Book of Reference and Schedule of Changes to the Book of Reference (BoR)
  - Updated Statement of Reasons (SoR) Appendix B 'Status of Negotiations with Owners of the Order Land'
  - Updated SoR Appendix C 'Status of Negotiations with Statutory Undertakers'
  - Updated NPS tracker
  - Comments on any additional information/submissions received by D7
  - Responses to any further information requested by the ExA for this deadline
- [Make a submission against this deadline](#)

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/eastern/the-size-well-c-project/?ipcsection=submission&d=Deadline+8+%28D8%29>

and October:

6<sup>th</sup> October Deadline 10 (D10)

For receipt by the ExA of:

- Comments on the RIES
  - Comments on responses to the ExA's third Written Questions (ExQ3) (if required)
  - Final DCO to be submitted by the Applicant in the SI template with the SI template validation report
  - Final DCO Signposting Document
  - Final updated Book of Reference
  - Final SoCG
  - Final Statement of Commonality of SoCG
  - List of matters not agreed where SoCG could not be finalised
  - Final Navigation Document
  - Final Statement of Reasons (SoR) Appendix B 'Status of Negotiations with Owners of the Order Land'
  - Final SoR Appendix C 'Status of Negotiations with Statutory Undertakers'
  - Final NPS tracker
  - Final signed and dated s.106, final s.106 Explanatory Memorandum and final Confirmation and Compliance Document
  - Final ES signposting document
  - Final Mitigation Route Map
  - Comments on any additional information/submissions received by D8 and D9
  - Responses to any further information requested by the ExA for this Deadline
- [Make a submission against this deadline](#) link as above

14<sup>th</sup> Deadline for close of examination.

Livestream link: <https://www.liveeventstream.online/planning-inspectorate-sizewellc>

### **Statement on behalf of all Suffolk councils.**

“On Wednesday 18 August, the Government announced its new resettlement scheme for Afghan refugees. Whilst the full details are yet to be confirmed, it is crystal clear that the Government needs local authorities everywhere to step up and support this national effort.

“All councils in Suffolk are committed to this cause. We have already helped a small number of Afghan interpreters and their families to resettle in Suffolk, in addition to ongoing work to support unaccompanied asylum seeking children and other refugees entering the UK. In the coming days and weeks, the district, borough and county councils will continue working with the Government to do what we can to provide assistance to vulnerable refugees.

“Times like this call for acts of humanity. Suffolk will play its part.”

### **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

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.

### **Suffolk plans climate change events ahead of COP26**

It was announced on August 11th that in the build-up to COP26, events around Suffolk will showcase local businesses and people who are tackling climate change, to inspire others to follow. The events aim to encourage businesses and residents to do more personally and professionally to reduce carbon emissions and therefore slow the increase of climate change.

One of the events confirmed to be taking place in Suffolk is the visit of the national Zero Carbon Tour, organised by Planet Mark. The Tour sees a fully electric 'Carbon Battle Bus' making visits around the country before arriving at the COP26 conference.

Councillor Richard Rout, member of the Suffolk Climate Change, Environment and Energy Portfolio Holders' Group, and deputy leader and cabinet member for Finance and Environment at Suffolk County Council, said:

"I'm delighted that Suffolk has been chosen to be part of the national Zero Carbon Tour, as I'm proud of all the climate change work that is going on here. I want more people to hear about it. Although many local authorities declared climate emergencies in the last couple of years, I want people to know that Suffolk has been addressing climate change for many years before that.

"But we must all be doing more to reduce our carbon emissions. Which is why colleagues from across the county have recently worked hard to produce and approve the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan. This gives Suffolk's public sector organisations a framework and commitment to each pursue our own net zero strategies, whilst working together for the benefit of Suffolk. Together, we are supporting and guiding our residents, communities and businesses to make the changes required to best set Suffolk on the path for carbon neutrality by 2030.

"I think the COP26 conference will be an influential moment in our ambitions for Suffolk to achieve net zero by 2030. Coupled with the recent IPCC global warming report, it should focus everyone's minds that each resident and business must be doing more and doing it more quickly."

The purpose of the Zero Carbon Tour is to discuss the concept of net zero carbon and why it is critical for businesses. Suffolk's businesses, organisations and community groups will share their stories about how they have started their journeys to net zero. This will inspire and give confidence to those considering how to reduce their carbon emissions.

Steve Malkin, Founder and CEO, Planet Mark, said:

"There is no doubt, we are living in a seminal and historic moment in time. 2020 – 2030 has been coined the Decade of Action, a period in which we need to tackle the climate crisis and halt biodiversity loss. The global pursuit of net zero carbon

emissions is a huge undertaking, and only possible with help from businesses and communities alike.

“We are excited to bring the net zero message to Ipswich, and share the ‘carbon stories’ of organisations, community groups and individuals playing their part in creating a sustainable future for Suffolk, the United Kingdom and beyond.” It will be visiting the University of Suffolk in Ipswich on 1 September 2021 and you can register your place here.

This event and others are taking place across Suffolk in the lead up to COP26, as part of Suffolk’s collective campaign of Creating The Greenest County, and be net zero by 2030. As part of the Suffolk

Climate Emergency Plan, these events look to encourage collaborative action by educating and engaging with residents and businesses to develop net zero journey.

Other events which are being planned in Suffolk in the lead up to COP26 include:

- August/September – Webinars for Suffolk’s voluntary sector (Suffolk County Council)
- 1 September – Zero Carbon Tour visits Ipswich
- 12 October – Ten Steps to Net Zero (Suffolk Chamber of Commerce)
- 21-22 October – Local Energy Showcase (Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council)
- TBC October - A Greener NHS day
- 12 November – Greenest County Awards (Suffolk County Council)
- 23-25 November – Low Carbon Homes All events are subject to change, visit [www.greensuffolk.org](http://www.greensuffolk.org) for the latest details and information about starting your journey to net zero.

### **Suffolk’s new Chief Fire Officer appointed**

On August 12th, Jon Lacey was appointed to the post of Suffolk’s Chief Fire Officer and Executive Director for Fire and Public Safety.

Starting in November, Jon will lead Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service and its staff, as well as having responsibility for Suffolk County Council’s Trading Standards and emergency planning services and being a member of the corporate leadership team.

Jon will bring a wealth of experience to Suffolk, gained from a 24 year career with fire and rescue services. He began in 1993 as an on-call firefighter with West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, before becoming a wholetime firefighter.

He is currently Assistant Chief Fire Officer at West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and has responsibility for Prevention, Protection and Response, as well as the county council’s Resilience and Emergency Team, a service like Suffolk’s Joint Emergency Planning Unit.

Councillor Andrew Reid, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Public Protection and Communities at Suffolk County council, said:

“I welcome Jon’s appointment, he will bring great experience and knowledge to Suffolk. The role is a very important one to keeping Suffolk safe - of course he will lead our Fire and Rescue Service, but also has responsibilities across the council, including Trading Standards and emergency planning. It is an exciting time for him to be joining us, following the Service’s ‘Good’ rating by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate and the investment we are putting into operational equipment and new fire stations.”

Nicola Beach, Suffolk County Council Chief Executive, said:

“I am delighted that Jon has accepted the offer to join us in Suffolk. We put all candidates through an extremely thorough process over a number of weeks, in front of wide-ranging and diverse panels. Jon presented himself very well during interviews and presentations and we all felt that he is someone who brings strong experience to the team and someone we would enjoy working alongside.”

Dan Fearn, Suffolk’s Deputy Chief Fire Officer will continue in the role of Chief Fire Officer and Executive Director on an interim basis until Jon starts his role in November.

Suffolk targets devolution talks with Government

It was announced on August 17th that public sector leaders in Suffolk say they welcome early discussions with Ministers about a possible devolution deal for Suffolk.

In a joint letter sent to Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, the leaders of all of Suffolk’s six councils and Police and Crime Commissioner Tim Passmore, said:

“Suffolk has already demonstrated its credibility as a place where Government will find strong and ambitious delivery partners.

“The Suffolk Public Sector Leaders (SPSL) group...has a track record of effective partnership working. These robust relationships enable more innovative ways of working, including exploring opportunities for devolution as part of a County Deal.

“Suffolk...is an ideal place to help Government demonstrate how levelling up can work in diverse geographies. Suffolk has a strong offer to make to Government and we would welcome early discussions with MHCLG Ministers to explore proposals for a County Deal ahead of the White Paper being published.”

The Government wrote to councils in July 2021, setting out its ambition to make available to county areas the kind of devolved decision-making powers and public funding currently enjoyed by larger cities and urban areas. It’s part of the Government’s Levelling Up agenda and will see a White Paper published in the coming months.

Councillor Suzie Morley, Leader of Mid Suffolk District Council and chair of the SPSL, said:

“Suffolk is known for working well together. Whether it’s partners joining forces during the COVID-19 pandemic, pooling public funding for the greater good or developing shared strategic priorities, collaboration is what we’re good at.

“From inclusive economic growth and community safety to climate change and strong communities, we’re focused on collaborative actions that deliver the biggest and best additional benefits for our communities.

“We believe this makes Suffolk a strong contender to work with the Government as part of its Levelling Up agenda.”

It is understood that Suffolk’s approach involving all councils is rare among other expressions of interest being submitted to Government, a point that has been welcomed by the county’s seven MPs.

In an accompanying letter to Robert Jenrick MP, they said:

“We are...writing to wholeheartedly support the vision set out, collectively, by Suffolk County Council and all of Suffolk’s District and Borough Councils. We believe this unity of purpose behind taking the next step in devolution through a County Deal can not just help persuade you that we should be in the vanguard of the next stage of devolution, but also that Suffolk can use such a deal to deliver better services locally.

“This is not a recent or short-lived view. For many years local leaders in Suffolk at all levels have worked more closely together, and have put forward constructive propositions for further

improvements. We hope to work with you on your forthcoming White Paper to show that strong local leadership and strengthened local governance can deliver better.” Read a copy of the letter sent to Robert Jenrick MP (PDF, 207KB), as well the supportive letter from Suffolk’s seven MPs (PDF, 205KB).

### **Suffolk homeowners can cut carbon emissions as successful solar panel buying scheme returns**

On August 25th it was announced that Suffolk residents will come together to invest in renewables through a group-buying scheme for solar panels and battery storage.

Solar Together Suffolk, in conjunction with Suffolk County Council, helps homeowners feel confident that they are paying the right price for a high-quality installation from pre-approved installers.

This innovative scheme builds on three years of the highly successful Solar Together programme run in Suffolk. Since 2018, the scheme has installed solar panel systems in 1,028 households across the county. On average, homeowners have saved 33% on installation costs, £263 on energy bills in year one, and stopped harmful carbon emissions entering the atmosphere.

Suffolk residents have until 27 September 2021 to register their interest, for free and with no obligation, to join the group-buying scheme to have solar panels installed at their home. Not only does Solar Together Suffolk offer solar panels,



but also optional battery storage and retrofit battery storage for residents who have already invested in solar panels.

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

“I’m delighted that we’re able to run Solar Together Suffolk for another year, as we have seen a real appetite amongst residents to play their part and invest in ways to reduce their carbon emissions. This is one of the many schemes we are offering, as Suffolk County Council aims to make the county net zero by 2030.

“The council itself has had solar panel installations for many years, which are located on around 100 of our properties. We have also been trialling battery storage too. This means that we rely less on the grid for our energy, by harnessing energy from the sun. Suffolk’s councils have worked together for many years to reduce carbon emissions and slow climate change. We now do this through the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan, and with COP26 on the horizon we will all need to focus on how we can all lower our carbon footprint and help make Suffolk a carbon neutral county.”

How does it work?

- Until 27 September: Householders can register to become part of the group, for free and without obligation, at [www.solartogether.co.uk/suffolk](http://www.solartogether.co.uk/suffolk)
- 28 September: Pre-vetted UK solar PV installers participate in an auction. They are able to offer competitive pricing as the volume and geographic concentration makes it possible for them to realise greater efficiencies, which they pass on with lower prices for installations.
- After the auction, registered households will receive a personal recommendation which is specific to the details they submitted in their registration.
- If they choose to accept their recommendation, the specifics of their installation will be confirmed with a technical survey after which a date can be set for the installation of their solar PV system.
- Telephone and email helpdesks are on-hand throughout the whole process which, together with information sessions, will allow households to make an informed decision in a safe and hassle-free environment.

Suffolk County Council brings Solar Together Suffolk to residents as part of the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership, on behalf of all of Suffolk’s local authorities. This is in partnership with independent experts iChoosr to make the transition to clean energy as cost effective and hassle-free as possible. Across the UK, iChoosr has delivered almost 5,000 installations to date and over 80,000 tonnes of avoided lifetime carbon emissions.

Marie-Louise Abretti, iChoosr UK Solar Manager added:

“The Solar Together group-buying scheme offers a simple process and the reassurance of a trusted and vetted installer for residents of Suffolk who are

looking for ways to reduce their carbon emissions, save on energy bills and increase their independence from the grid.”

What other Suffolk residents have said:

“All very painless and straightforward. Being part of a large group gives you the confidence that problems will be resolved should they arise, but none did!” Peter, Bury St Edmunds; 16 panels installed.

“Excellent! Solar Together Suffolk took all the hassle of finding a provider, and the group-buying secured me a better discount than trying to do this on my own. It was a no-brainer. Richard, Bures St Mary; 24 panels installed.

### **Suffolk health chiefs alarm as covid cases shot up ahead of sunny bank holiday weekend**

On August 26th it was stated that the number of Covid cases in Suffolk have risen by 22% from the previous last week and this increase is set to continue.

This has prompted Suffolk’s Director of Public Health to issue an urgent warning ahead of the Bank Holiday weekend.

Stuart Keeble made the warning after Suffolk’s weekly case hit 231.1 cases per 100,000 population.

This is in comparison to 189.9 per 100,000 the previous week and is a steep rise compared to case growth in the East of England.

In the week to 25 August, there were 1,904 new cases of COVID-19 in Suffolk, compared to 1,597 cases up to 18 August. Each of the five districts have experienced a week-on-week increase, with a high number of cases recorded in Newmarket and Lowestoft in the last two weeks.

Areas around north Newmarket have the highest weekly rates with 702.7 cases per 100,000 population and Lowestoft and Kirkley are the second highest with 517.1 cases per 100,000 population. Other areas around Lowestoft are also seeing higher than average cases (Gunton West with 392.5 per 100,000 and Lowestoft Central 379.1 per 100,000).

There has also been an almost doubling in the case rate in Suffolk’s 60+ population over the last month with a rate of 80.9 per 100,000 on 19 August, up from 42.2 per 100,000 on 17 July.

The number of hospital beds occupied by positive patients has also risen in Suffolk’s four hospitals with 76 patients and there have been two COVID-19 deaths in the most recent week of data.

Ahead of the Bank Holiday Weekend, Mr Keeble, Director of Public Health at Suffolk County Council, is encouraging people to enjoy the weather but warning them do it carefully and with consideration for other people. This including sticking to Covid-safe measures, such as mask wearing and keeping your distance.

Mr Keeble said:

“We want people to get out and about this bank holiday weekend – whether that’s building sandcastles at the beach, enjoying a proper pint with friends or going on adventures throughout our beautiful county. But we need everyone to do so carefully, and be kind to people who are still very vulnerable to COVID. Sadly, this disease is still very much in our communities – and while it is hugely important that we live our lives to the fullest and enjoy all that Suffolk has to offer, we must do this with caution.

“This means wearing a mask or keeping your distance when you feel it is appropriate or to protect vulnerable people around us. Every act of kindness and consideration to those around you, helps us keep one another safe and stop the spread of the virus.”

A new video has been launched by the Suffolk Resilience Forum ahead of the Bank Holiday to encourage people to Add Kindness to their daily lives and help keep people Covid-safe. View it here. The Add Kindness campaign aims to encourage people to act with consideration for others when out and about. This may include wearing a mask, or keeping your distance, when appropriate.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service adds four new enhanced appliances to its fleet, fitted with solar panels

On August 27th Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service unveiled its state-of-the-art rescue vehicles and equipment to equip firefighters with the latest technology for rescues.

Four new “enhanced rescue tenders” will be based at Bury St Edmunds, Lowestoft, Newmarket and Princes Street (Ipswich), giving cover across the county and strengthening the emergency response across Suffolk’s communities.

The new equipment and vehicles are also the latest innovations in green technology, supporting Suffolk County Council’s climate emergency declaration and ambitions to be net zero by 2030. The fire appliances are the first in Suffolk to be fitted with solar panels, have more fuel-efficient engines and also carry battery powered hydraulic rescue equipment.

Dan Fearn, Temporary Chief Fire Officer, said:

“This is a significant investment in the Service’s capability to deal with many types of rescues, including those on Suffolk’s roads. To make sure we get the best equipment possible, we’ve carried out extensive operational testing and spent time getting feedback from staff.

“The equipment carried on-board is dedicated specialist equipment for carrying out rescues, ranging from car crashes to building collapses and making the scene of an incident safe.

“My team is made up of exceptional operational and non-operational staff. I want to give them the best possible equipment so that they can carry out their work to the best of their ability.”

Councillor Andrew Reid, Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member for Public Health, Public Protection, & Communities, said:

“The vehicles are strategically placed across the county to deliver the fastest response to the community of Suffolk. I’m delighted that we’ve been able to add this next-generation equipment to our growing fleet. We have also recently introduced three new command support vehicles and we have further investment in the pipeline.

“Suffolk County Council aims to be a net zero authority by 2030, and I applaud the Service for setting an excellent example by embedding this ambition in its procurement.”

### **Protection for Suffolk’s Blue Badge holders**

The first of a number of ‘enforcement days’ has taken place in Suffolk, aimed at protecting genuine Blue Badge holders.

On 1 September 2021, officers from Suffolk County Council and West Suffolk Council patrolled Bury St Edmunds, to talk to badge holders and listen to their experiences. They were also on the lookout for anyone exploiting the system. Further enforcement days are planned in the coming months across Suffolk.

A Blue Badge is for the benefit of eligible people with severe mobility difficulties or severe non-visible disabilities, to enable them to park closer to their destination.

Suffolk County Council is working with all borough and district councils to take a tougher stance on those that misuse Blue Badges. Anyone that uses stolen, lost or fake badges can face prosecution, along with those who use a badge without the holder being part of the journey.

### **Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger, Cabinet Member for Adult Care at Suffolk County Council, said:**

"We have around 42,300 Blue Badge holders in Suffolk, who we want to protect and who should not be denied appropriate parking spaces or access, because someone else is illegally using a Blue Badge. Just from our first day in Bury St Edmunds, badge holders we spoke to were very happy to have their badge checked and welcomed the action that we were taking.

"As the Blue Badge issuing authority, the county council wants to ensure a consistent approach across Suffolk. We have been working closely with all our borough and district councils, since civil parking enforcement became the county council’s responsibility in April 2020."

On this first enforcement day, 172 badges were inspected with the vast majority being used legitimately. Two expired badges being displayed were confiscated, one expired badge was handed in and one badge was confiscated due to being used by a non-badge holder.

### **Mark Walsh, Director of Operations at West Suffolk Council, said:**

"We welcome this joined up approach across Suffolk, and being part of this move to work together to protect our blue badge holders in West Suffolk as well as informing the public about the issues. It is only a small minority of drivers that abuse parking restrictions and we would like to thank all motorists who follow guidance. Bad parking or abusing the blue badge system may mean people who have a right and need to park, can't. Also bad parking obstructs emergency vehicles, hurts the local economy and can cause pollution and congestion."

**Brenda Joyce, Disability Development Officer for Suffolk Coalition of Disabled People (SCODP), said:**

"Sadly, we do hear from disabled people about abuses of the Blue Badge system in Suffolk. It can be extremely distressing for genuine badge holders to be denied parking close to shops or services to collect food or prescriptions, to attend medical appointments or to just carry out normal everyday activities just like everyone else.

"SCODP is delighted to hear that our local authorities are joining together across Suffolk and are prepared to prosecute anyone who exploits the Blue Badge system. We welcome these enforcement days and the chance for genuine badge holders to speak with officers about their experiences."

Blue Badge offences come under the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 which makes it an offence for a badge to be used for parking without the badge holder present and covers fake badges. Certain offences can also constitute fraud and cases can be prosecuted in the Magistrates, resulting in a maximum £1000 fine.

**Suffolk's first 'healing woods' locations announced**

Four locations have been announced by Suffolk County Council as 'healing woods and spaces'.

They will offer people better access to nature and provide a positive legacy to the pandemic.

The healing woods and spaces will be located in:

- Bury St Edmunds
- Combs and Little Finborough
- Eye
- Hopton

The council's healing woods project connects with the motion unanimously passed by the county's councillors earlier this year, to commit to developing mental health support in Suffolk, in response to the impacts of the pandemic.

Research, such as that recently published by the University of Essex with The Green Light Trust, demonstrated that access to woodlands and green space can significantly improve people's wellbeing.

The four sites will develop unused spaces and existing green areas, to make them more accessible and offer dedicated places for peaceful reflection and a positive focus.

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

“I’m delighted that we’ve been able to identify four suitable locations, the first of many I hope. We will be providing advice, technical support and some funding to help develop these areas.

“I’ve been extremely impressed by the vision and thoughtfulness of each of these projects. Across them we will see things like new seating areas, sensory gardens, vegetable growing plots, better connections between existing green areas, hedge planting and opportunities for community activities.

“The site in Hopton is particularly exciting as it will look to establish a community woodland on an area which was formerly used as a village tip and whilst rural, has fantastic accessibility. It is also a brilliant example of the expertise we have in our communities and the opportunities of partnership working.

“I’m really grateful to the parish councils, local councillors, and volunteers for all they have done to make these projects a reality - demonstrating the fantastic community ethos we have here in Suffolk.

“The inspiration for healing woods was as a memorial to those we have lost during the pandemic. These spaces will offer that opportunity for reflection, whilst also showing that nature is accessible to everyone and our mental health can benefit from being in touch with these outdoor spaces.

“Thank you to everyone who has contacted us with suggestions for sites. We’re still hoping to create more sites, and would very much welcome suggestions for Ipswich, East Suffolk, and anywhere else in the county that may be interested. Not every location can be suitable, but we will look into every site, and I hope to be able to announce more soon.”

If you would like to propose a suitable site which could be developed as healing woods or spaces, email [HealingWoods@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:HealingWoods@suffolk.gov.uk).

**Best wishes**

**TJ**

## **Supporting Afghan refugees**

Information for residents in Suffolk on how they can provide support to Afghan refugees.

**Last updated 31 August 2021**

On Wednesday 18 August, the Government announced its new resettlement scheme for Afghan refugees. Whilst the full details are yet to be confirmed, it's

likely that the Government will need Local Authorities to support this national effort. All councils and public sector leaders in Suffolk are **committed** to this cause.

We've already helped a small number of Afghan interpreters and their household to resettle in Suffolk. We're now committed to welcome more households in the coming days and weeks as part of our Afghan resettlement activities, in addition to ongoing work to support unaccompanied asylum seeking children and other refugees entering the UK.

#### How you can help

Because the numbers of people coming to Suffolk is very small at the moment, there is currently no requirement for items to be donated. However, this situation might change. Therefore, we are asking people who think they might be able to help to contact us in the first instance so that we have your details.

**Email [afghanrefugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:afghanrefugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk) if you think you might be able to help.**

#### COVID-19

Afghanistan is currently a red list country for COVID-19. People arriving from Afghanistan will have to quarantine in a hotel or other accommodation for 10 days and be given PCR tests.

#### Resettlement schemes

Suffolk County Council supports the Government's UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS). [Learn more about our support for existing refugees.](#)