

# The Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan

Progress overview  
autumn 2025



# Welcome...

“It has been four years since the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan was published - four years of collaboration, innovation, and action to meet the targets we set in 2021.

In 2023, we paused to reflect on our progress. At that point, our efforts had led to 480 businesses accredited through the Carbon Charter, 1,900 homes fitted with solar panels via the Solar Together scheme, and 63 communities equipped to conduct heat loss surveys - among many other achievements.

Since then, our programme has continued to grow, driving forward a more Sustainable Suffolk. From local initiatives to county-wide partnerships, the momentum has been inspiring.

Thank you for your interest in our work, and to all the partners featured in the following pages for helping turn plans into real, positive change. A special thank you goes to Suffolk's Public Sector Leaders for their continued support.

We hope you enjoy reading about the successes, activities, and opportunities created through the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan. There's still much to do, but this overview celebrates how far we've come.

Welcome to the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan Progress Overview 2025.”



**Councillor Gerald Kelly**

Chair of the Suffolk Councils' Environment Portfolio Holders' Group

# Timeline

2021

◆ The Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan (SCEP) is published

2022

- ◆ The Climate Action Community Match Funder launches
- ◆ The Net Zero Business Advisor Service launches
- ◆ Warm Homes Suffolk launches
- ◆ The Suffolk Climate Tracker is published on the Suffolk Observatory's website
- ◆ Keep the Heat, a thermal imaging camera loan service is launched by the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership
- ◆ Support from Sustrans to identify schemes for active travel support leads to a successful application for £7.8 million of government funding

## 2023

- ◆ An Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Report recommends a strategic approach to improving access to charge points
- ◆ Suffolk's first Youth Climate Conference inspires young people
- ◆ The Community Energy Pathways project launches
- ◆ A cargo bike courier service begins to be trialled in Bury St Edmunds
- ◆ £5.3 million government funding received to install electric vehicle charge points across the county

## 2025

- ◆ The first Sustainability in Education Conference is held
- ◆ The third Suffolk Youth Climate Conference takes place
- ◆ The first Sustainable Suffolk Investment tranche opens
- ◆ The Solar Up project begins development
- ◆ Plug In Suffolk Car Clubs launch across the county
- ◆ A study on the transition of taxi and private hire vehicles to electric vehicles is concluded
- ◆ The District Heating Network Development Coordinator starts in post

## 2024

- ◆ The Suffolk Sustainable Schools Network is created
- ◆ A series of projects supported by the Net Zero Innovation Fund begin development
- ◆ An online energy advice tool goes live
- ◆ The 500th Carbon Charter accreditation is awarded
- ◆ The Suffolk Energy Efficiency Assessments are launched
- ◆ The Suffolk Retrofit Suppliers' Event is held
- ◆ An electric vehicle strategy is created
- ◆ The Green Suffolk website undergoes a refresh
- ◆ The High Energy Users' Network launches, in partnership with the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce

Over the following pages, you'll explore case studies from the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan themes:

- Collaborative action
- Cleaner power
- Sustainable homes
- Low carbon transport
- Industrial and commercial energy

You'll also learn about the impactful work our partners are doing to support a more Sustainable Suffolk, along with the broader benefits of our programme.

# Collaborative action

Suffolk is bursting with individuals, community groups, schools and businesses that are taking action right now and have been for a long time. This theme brings all these groups and individuals together and helps them on their journey to create real, long lasting and positive change for the environment.



COLLABORATIVE ACTION IN ACTION



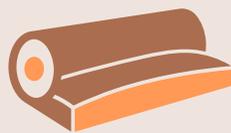
**500**

students attended the Youth Climate Conferences from 2023-2025



**258**

members of the Suffolk Schools Sustainability Network



**£158.45**

av. saving for residents using the Loft Insulation Offer



**28**

villages covered by a community energy network



**£503,578**

worth of project delivery made possible by the Match Funder



**21**

community projects benefitted from the Match Funder

## Community Match Funder

The Community Match Funder supports not-for-profit groups and organisations who are raising money to deliver local carbon reduction projects. The Funder will top up the last 50% of a project's cost to get it off the ground and creating impact.

Round two of the Funder has allocated £138,489, enabling £503,578 worth of project delivery. Following 21 successful applications, there is still just over £10,000 left to allocate. Twelve projects have been successfully delivered so far, including the Bury Bike Train which encourages families to swap the car bikes during the school run and the EcoCarriers who help transport goods and people around Bury St Edmunds completely carbon neutrally.



Bury Bike Train



EcoCarriers

Eyes Open CIC's Bank Arts Centre in Eye received £4,748.84 from the Matchfunder. They replaced their 25-year-old fluorescent lights with LEDs, cutting energy use by 66% and saving 500kg CO<sub>2</sub>e annually. A Light & Flux art exhibition marked the change, sparking sustainability conversations and strengthened The Arts Centre as a welcoming, sustainable community hub for 8,300 visitors each year.

WATCH OUR HIGHLIGHT REEL OF COMMUNITY ACTION TAKING PLACE IN SUFFOLK BY SCANNING THE QR CODE



## Suffolk Sustainable Schools Network

Suffolk's first ever Schools Sustainability Lead joined the Sustainable Suffolk team in July 2024. Since then, the offer of support for schools has boomed.

A new Suffolk Sustainable Schools Network launched in September 2024. This network brings together 145 academy trusts, secondary schools and primary schools with those who can support them to create their climate action plans, provide essential training, share best practice and source funding. This group of 258 members receives helpful newsletters and both virtual meetings and in-person events that equip them to tackle the task before them in their own schools.



Joe Billington, Department for Education

The first Sustainability in Education Conference in our county was held in April 2025. 32 schools were represented and given the chance to engage in practical workshops, hear from inspirational speakers and find out about the real, tangible support available to them.



Climate Fresk workshop

"FEELING MUCH LESS OVERWHELMED"



WATCH OUR HIGHLIGHT REEL FROM THE DAY BY SCANNING THE QR CODE



Learning through Landscapes workshop

"SO GRATEFUL"

Following appetite for a primary school offer, a new Schools Sustainability Support Officer was recruited to lead this new venture. Suffolk has now joined five other councils across the country on a transformative whole-authority approach to climate change in schools. The 23 pioneering schools in Suffolk are receiving bespoke all-staff training, resources to help 'green' their curriculum and expert support with creating a climate action plan.



Our Schools, Our World training

The schools team have also been heading out to as many schools, conferences and events as they can to lead training sessions. Their outreach has spanned from hosting a dedicated teacher session at the Youth Climate Conference to visiting the Forrest Heath Physical Education Partnership.

Thanks to the team's hard work, 18 schools have now undertaken energy audits of their school premises, making them one step closer to a more sustainable school.

## Next steps

"WE HAVE A BUSY 12 MONTHS AHEAD, WITH LOTS OF PROJECTS ON THE AGENDA. WE ARE PLANNING TO INCREASE SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS CREATING THEIR CLIMATE ACTION PLANS, DELIVER TWO COUNTY-WIDE NETWORKING AND LEARNING EVENTS AS WELL AS DEVELOP A TRAINING AND KNOWLEDGE PLATFORM FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS, AND SUPPORT THE CREATION OF THREE NEW ENERGY HUBS IN SUFFOLK. JUST TO NAME A FEW!"



**Emma Dixon**

Partnership Manager, Sustainable Suffolk and Collaborative Action Theme Lead

# Cleaner power

We all need electricity but how that electricity is generated makes a big impact on Suffolk's emissions. The cleaner power theme is growing Suffolk's capacity for low carbon energy production so we can make more renewable energy and support the development of a smart and flexible grid.



CLEANER POWER IN ACTION



**£4.2m**

awarded to West Suffolk Council to upgrade leisure centre energy efficiency



**£484k**

awarded to East Suffolk Council for leisure centre decarbonisation



**10MW**

of roof mounted solar PV generation installed at West Suffolk Council



**5**

active community energy groups operating across Suffolk



**£50k**

of solar generation each year from Beacon House's solar canopy



**1**

Local Area Energy Plan bringing together Norfolk and Suffolk

## Low carbon heat networks

Since 2021, Suffolk County Council have been exploring the potential for a heat network - a system that uses a singular central heat source to distribute hot water through a network of insulated pipes to multiple individual dwellings - in Ipswich.

After a huge amount of work and planning, a business case for the network, that would source heat from the River Gipping and supply government and commercial buildings before expanding across the town to educational facilities on the waterfront, has been created.



Location of proposed heat network

It is possible that the Ipswich low carbon heat network could also expand further to include more businesses and possibly homes.

£9.8 million of funding was secured in December 2025 from central government's Green Heat Network Fund to commercialise the project and help with the cost of building the network. It is hoped that construction will start in 2027/2028.

Other possible heat network locations are also being explored. In West Suffolk, AECOM has been appointed to complete a heat mapping and masterplanning study for Bury St Edmunds. Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have successfully been awarded funding from the Heat Network Efficiency Scheme to undertake three optimisation studies across three communal heat network sites. Expressions of interest have also been submitted to the Heat Networks Delivery Unit (round 15) for a possible project in Lowestoft.

## Local and regional energy planning

Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils have teamed up with City Science to develop a Local Area Energy Plan. The National Energy Systems Operator is also planning to develop a Regional Strategic Energy Plan that will cover Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex. This provides a unique opportunity for the regions to join together for a more connected future.

## Public sector renewables

The Suffolk public sector continues to increase renewable energy capacity across the county. Beacon House in Ipswich is now home to a 155kW solar canopy.

The 360 bifacial solar panels will provide £50k of solar generation each year, with a complete return on investment in twelve years. The site is also home to two 11kW solar battery storage towers coupled together which is one of the first uses of this new product in the country. They will store excess solar for use overnight.



Beacon House solar canopy

Additionally, West Suffolk Council have been granted £4.2 million from phase four of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and plan to use the funding to install air source heat pumps, insulation, building management systems and solar canopies at Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill Leisure Centres.

## Community energy

We have been working to establish a Community Energy Network with a programme of community-led energy decarbonisation projects.

The Deben Climate Centre, part of the Sustainable Suffolk

Community Network and recipient of the Community Match Funder, has taken to the water with a new floating hub. Aboard the houseboat, the Centre is a driving force for community energy, helping residents cut carbon and lower bills through practical advice and support. By bringing people together to explore renewable solutions and energy efficiency, the Centre empowers Suffolk communities to take control of their energy future. The Centre also monitors pollution and water quality of the River Deben from the vessel, another of their many projects to shape a more resilient future.



Floating climate hub

## Next steps

“THE NEXT 12 MONTHS WILL BE PACKED FULL OF EXCITING DELIVERY. OUR NEW SOLAR UP PROJECT WHICH AIMS TO PUT SOLAR PANELS ON SECONDARY SCHOOLS, HELPING THEM TO CUT THEIR CARBON FOOTPRINT WHILST CUTTING THEIR ENERGY BILLS, IS LOOKING TO COMPLETE ITS FIRST INSTALLATION IN THE NEXT YEAR. ADDITIONALLY, WE'RE HOPING TO MOVE AT LEAST ONE OF OUR HEAT NETWORK PROJECTS INTO THE FEASIBILITY STAGE.”



**Andy Oswald**

Energy and Sustainability Manager, West Suffolk Council and Cleaner Power Theme Lead

# Sustainable homes

Being able to heat our homes and keep them warm is important for our health, our finances and the planet. The sustainable homes theme supports Suffolk residents to make changes at or to our homes that will lower our carbon footprints and save us money in the long run.



SUSTAINABLE HOMES IN ACTION



**1,450**

enquires submitted for the Suffolk Energy Efficiency Assessment scheme



**410**

retrofit assessments completed in Suffolk for free



**100**

retrofit professionals attended the Suffolk Retrofit Suppliers' Event



**£3m**

loaned to Suffolk residents to install energy efficiency measures at home  
(led by Warm Homes Suffolk)



**200**

people have accessed the Homewise online energy tool



**80**

retrofit suppliers fed into a sustainable homes action plan

## Suffolk Energy Efficiency Assessments

Right now, people across Suffolk are living in homes that are not well-equipped to keep the heat they generate inside. This means that people are either living in a cold home over winter or spending too much money on heating that is escaping through their windows, roofs, doors and walls.

Every degree of heating generated also has an impact on the environment. That's why we've been helping Suffolk residents to understand how energy efficient their homes are and how they can make them even more efficient, and in turn, keep their families warm and lower their energy bills.

Since November 2024, we've been encouraging all homeowners and landlords in Suffolk to apply for an energy efficiency assessment. These assessments are usually £350 but, thanks to Suffolk's Public Sector Leaders, are free for homes under 98m<sup>2</sup> and just £30 for bigger properties.



Retrofit assessment

In the first year of the project, 1,450 people in Suffolk had submitted an enquiry and over 400 assessments were completed, with about a third of those taking up retrofit measures either with or without further financial support from complimentary projects led by Warm Homes Suffolk. The scheme is due to end in May 2026, and the team predicts that all the available assessments will be taken up.

HEAR FROM SUFFOLK RESIDENTS WHO HAVE BENEFITTED FROM THIS PROJECT



## Retrofit Suppliers' Event

Suffolk's public sector organisations are supporting Suffolk residents financially to install retrofit measures such as solar panels, heat pumps, double and triple glazed windows and doors, and improved insulation. But what about the companies who are required to deliver these millions of pounds worth of energy efficiency improvements?

In November 2024, the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce and Suffolk's public sector organisations invited businesses that sit within the retrofit supply chain to join them to hear about the support available to them as suppliers.



Suffolk Retrofit Suppliers' Event

The 80 organisations in attendance were able to feedback during roundtable discussions about the opportunities and challenges to retrofitting. They were also encouraged to input ideas about how they'd like to be supported as they transform people's homes, making them more energy efficient and cheaper to run. These discussions have helped shape the sustainable homes programme of work. For instance, a new framework is now being created that helps residents connect with Suffolk retrofit firms, ensuring this vital work is being carried out by local businesses.

They also heard from guest speakers such as Natural Building Systems, on their innovative carbon capture products, as well as Suffolk New College, on how they are supporting the training required through their Net Zero Skills Centre.



WATCH OUR HIGHLIGHT REEL  
OF THE DAY BY SCANNING  
THE QR CODE

## Homewise online energy tool

In 2024, we launched a new way that Suffolk residents could find out how to make their homes more sustainable. The Homewise energy tool, built by Energy Saving Trust, was completely free to use and could be accessed by anyone online. After asking a series of questions, the tool created a plan tailored to the homeowner, taking into account their building, how they use energy and their budget.

It even told homeowners exactly how much their energy bills would be if they adopted the retrofit measures suggested, gave information about the practicality of each option, what the impact would be on the appearance of their home, and how much carbon they would save from being emitted into Suffolk's atmosphere.

Over the year that the tool was active, the team saw hundreds of people in Suffolk use it. Importantly, this free, online option provided people who might struggle to engage with a more formal process (for any number of reasons) with an easy way to engage, breaking down some of the barriers to living more sustainably.

## Next steps

"OVER THE NEXT 12-18 MONTHS, THE SUSTAINABLE HOMES TEAM ARE PLANNING ON ADOPTING A SUFFOLK-WIDE AND LONG-TERM RETROFIT STRATEGY. WE'RE ALSO LOOKING FORWARD TO CONCLUDING OUR SUFFOLK RETROFIT ASSESSMENT PROJECT, REVIEWING ITS SUCCESS AND DETERMINING WHETHER SUFFOLK RESIDENTS WOULD BENEFIT FROM AN EXTENSION OF THE SCHEME."



**Rob Hancock**

Assistant Director for Housing, Economic Growth and Planning,  
Suffolk County Council and Sustainable Homes Theme Lead

# Low carbon transport

Transport is the UK's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions. The low carbon transport theme supports the shift from carbon-intensive methods of travel to more environmentally-friendly methods. This ranges from making freight more efficient to implementing community electric vehicles for local people to use.



LOW CARBON TRANSPORT IN ACTION



**1st**

local authority to award a contract for Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure works



**36**

participants of a trial testing charging channel products



**100**

new and 'adopted' sites providing electric vehicle charging in the community



**Over 30**

events attended in 2024 to myth bust electric vehicles in the community



**10**

Plug In Suffolk Car Clubs locations



**15**

private cars could be replaced for every Plug In Suffolk Car Clubs vehicle

## Public transport provision

By making catching the bus easier and more enjoyable, we can encourage Suffolk residents to utilise public transport - a more carbon conscious choice to lone, car travelling which is heavily depended on across our county.

To make sure these improvements serve the community, the public were asked to suggest improvements to their local bus service. Over 80 applications were received. 18 of these have already been funded.

So far, our improvements to Suffolk's bus service have resulted in an increase of 3.75% in passenger numbers during 2024/25 compared to the previous year. These improvements are all included within the latest edition of the Bus Service Improvement Plan, published in June 2024.

## Local Transport Plan

Over 2024, the Suffolk Local Transport Plan 2011-2031 underwent an update and has now become Suffolk's Local Transport Plan 2025-2040 and is extended in 15 area transport plans and supported by a suite of documents such as the Suffolk Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. This new version was adopted officially by Suffolk County Council's cabinet in February 2025.

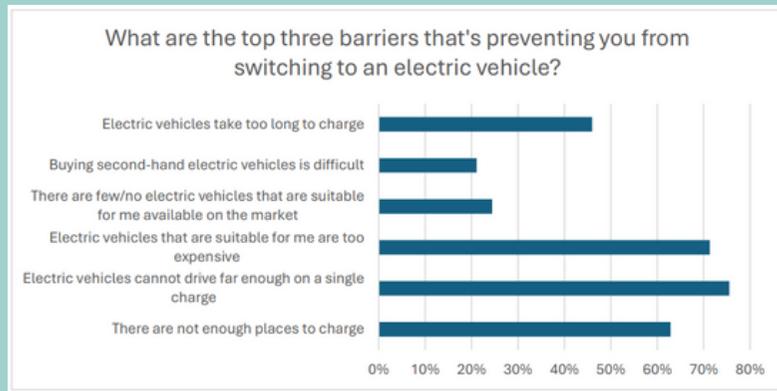


Updated Local Transport Plan

## Learning from Suffolk's taxi drivers

In 2024, Suffolk's taxi and private hire vehicle fleet emitted 9,118 tonnes of CO2. Suffolk councils conducted a survey to find out how they could support drivers to make the transition to electric vehicles. The county-wide survey identified three widely believed barriers:

1. Electric vehicles cannot drive far enough on a single charge
2. Electric vehicles that are suitable for me are too expensive
3. There are not enough places to charge



To facilitate effective and meaningful change, a range of measures are needed including an educational campaign that tackles persistent misconceptions, financial support especially in relation to the upfront cost of electric vehicles, developments to licence policy as well as improvements of infrastructure, which will be supported through the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund.



Electric taxi

## Plug In Suffolk Car Clubs

Electric cars have been placed across Suffolk for communities to use as part of the Plug In Suffolk Car Clubs. The locations include:

- Station Yard Car Park, Needham Market
- Maiden Way Car Park, Hadleigh
- Girling Street Car Park, Sudbury
- Cannon Street, Bury St Edmunds
- Norfolk Road, Ipswich
- Crown Street, Stowmarket
- Castle Street, Woodbridge
- Ann Street, Ipswich
- Granary Road, Newmarket

Further locations will be announced in Leiston and Lowestoft.

Similar trials elsewhere in the country have proven to improve air quality, reduce congestion and parking pressure and increase mobility to those without access to their own car. Over an 18-month period, local people are encouraged to use their local community cars and feedback about their experience.



Norfolk Road, Ipswich

## Next steps

"WE HAVE LOTS OF NEXT STEPS ON THE HORIZON INCLUDING EXPLORING ZERO-EMISSION BUS OPTIONS. WE'RE ALSO LOOKING TOWARDS A MORE JOINED UP APPROACH, IMPLEMENTING MORE THAN ONE ACTIVE TRAVEL INITIATIVE IN COMMUNITIES WHERE THEY WOULD HAVE A GREATER IMPACT TOGETHER."



**Graeme Mateer**

Head of Transport Strategy, Suffolk County Council and Low Carbon Transport Theme Lead

# Industrial & commercial energy

This theme gives businesses, small and large, information and support that encourages real climate action, whilst also decarbonising your council and other public sector organisations.



INDUSTRIAL & COMMERCIAL ENERGY IN ACTION



**1043**

businesses  
accessing advice  
services



**76**

businesses  
received in-depth  
energy audits



**£90k**

awarded to  
businesses  
developing carbon  
cutting products



**869**

accreditations  
through the  
Carbon Charter



**Over 50**

large businesses  
attended the High  
Energy Users'  
Network event



**196**

businesses with  
active Charter  
accreditations

## High Energy Users' Network

For large businesses, lowering their carbon emissions can be a huge task but a necessary one. One that can absolutely be achieved when working together. Helping them on their way are the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, the University of Suffolk and Groundwork East, who are leading the High Energy Users' Network. Through the network, businesses can share best practices and work with the University of Suffolk to identify innovative solutions to reduce emissions and energy costs.

In July 2025, delegates from over 50 large businesses attended the first High Energy Users' Network event - a day of talks, panels and case studies, all demonstrating how large businesses can lower their impact on the environment.



High Energy Users'  
Network event



High Energy Users'  
Network event

Speakers from British Sugar, Greene King, Mizkan, Groundwork East, University of Suffolk, Opergy, Sizewell C and Freeport East inspired delegates, talking through their own efforts to cut the carbon in their organisations.

WATCH OUR HIGHLIGHT REEL FROM  
THE DAY BY SCANNING THE QR CODE



## Net Zero Innovation Fund

Since 2023, the Net Zero Innovation Fund has provided £100k worth of grants to businesses in Suffolk who are developing products and services for a more sustainable future.

### EEZYBIKE

The fund helped EEZYBIKE to design, develop, and trial new keypad technology for their off-grid solar-powered EEZYPODS. This means that members of the community can access their hire bikes more easily, encouraging more sustainable travel in Suffolk. Take a look at our partners section to learn how Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils helped to bring EEZYBIKES to Suffolk. A brilliant example of partnership work!



EEZYBIKE hire bikes

### Bury St Edmunds Rugby Club

Thanks to the Net Zero Innovation Fund, the club were able to develop a new and more sustainable approach to their pitch-side advertisements. Now, their sponsors are promoted on new recyclable boards, developed with support from the University of Suffolk.



West Suffolk College's sustainable sponsorship board

Fairfield Money's sustainable sponsorship board

## Net Zero Consultancy

The consultancy goes from strength to strength. It's in-depth energy audits, specialist reports, advice line, events and webinars have supported 906 businesses. This valuable advice to small and medium enterprises has saved 3,569 tCO<sub>2</sub>e being released and has saved businesses £1.04 million.

In 2025, the theme began offering sector specific support through the Trailblazers project which is aimed at Suffolk's visitor economy sector, covering sites, visitors and the wider supply chain. Trailblazers provides tourism businesses with access to tailored and practical support on decarbonisation measures. Through downloadable sector-specific sustainable tourism toolkits, one-to-one sustainability assessments and action plans, training workshops and free carbon literacy training, Trailblazers is catapulting Suffolk's visitor economy sector towards a more sustainable future.

## Next steps

"I'M EXCITED TO SEE THE NEXT INNOVATIONS FROM SUFFOLK'S BUSINESSES, AND WE'LL BE INVOLVED WITH SOME LARGE PROJECTS FROM A HEAT NETWORK FOR IPSWICH THROUGH TO COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES TO SOLAR ON BUSINESSES, AND NEW IMPROVEMENTS TO OUR SUPPORT FOR THE SMALL AND MEDIUM SECTOR."



**Ned Harrison**

Carbon Negative Nature Positive Programme Manager, Suffolk County Council, and Industrial and Commercial Energy Theme Lead

# COMMUNICATIONS

Sustainable Suffolk has its very own communications function. They have the important role of telling the public about our projects whilst also delivering their own projects to increase our reach and encourage residents to take action for the climate at home.



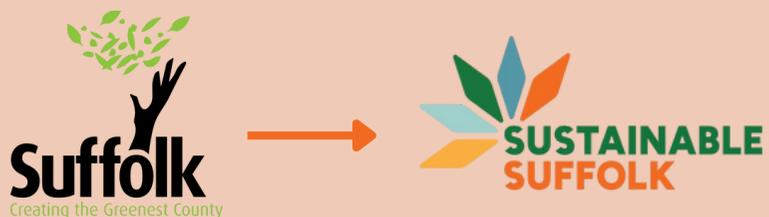
## A brand new hub of information

In December 2024, the refreshed Sustainable Suffolk website took flight. Over time, the website had become a jumble of information and was being used more by staff than the public. Our team reworked the site into an easily navigable, hub of information for the people of Suffolk. It's also stepped up in terms of accessibility and now hosts a clear explanation of who we are, what we do, support available to residents and community groups and how residents can join the journey to a sustainable Suffolk. Scan the QR code to explore the new website.



## Creating an identity

Following a consultative process between March - October 2025, Creating the Greenest County has now become Sustainable Suffolk. This new branding will allow us to better communicate the work we are doing to the general public. The new look is designed to cut through the digital noise, encouraging residents to become more sustainable at home, school, and at work, and features a palette of colours that are more accessible. The new name better represents the collaborative nature of the partnership and represents the idea that, if Suffolk comes together, we can tackle the climate and nature crises.



All projects within the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan will be able to use this new branding, avoiding the need for each project to fund their own project brand. By working under one name, we will build trust and recognition across Suffolk, boosting the credibility of our work.

## The new digital strategy pays off

In 2024, we devised a new approach to our social media channels. Inspired by the most recent research into local government social media, we altered the style of content, the images and graphics and the tone of voice we used across Facebook and Instagram. We saw immediate success. On Facebook, our net increase in followers during the first year of the new approach was 134% higher than the year before. On Instagram, likes increased by 124% compared to the previous year and comments increased by 1,384%. We also launched a new account on NextDoor which reaches approximately 10,000 residents with each post.

## Next steps



"WE HAVE A NEW BEHAVIOUR CHANGE CAMPAIGN IN THE PIPELINE WHICH WILL HELP TO INSPIRE RESIDENTS IN SUFFOLK TO COOK MORE SUSTAINABLY AT HOME."

**Bailey Tait**  
Senior Communications Officer, Sustainable Suffolk

# Beyond the plan

Though the following case studies are not included in the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan, we didn't want to miss an opportunity to showcase the incredible work led by our partners. Every project brings us one step closer to our collective goal of a sustainable Suffolk.

## Suffolk Climate Change Partnership

### Youth Climate Conference

For the last three years, the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership has organised a Youth Climate Conference which gives students and their teachers the tools to turn enthusiasm for the recovery of our climate into action.

2023



The first Youth Climate Conference at West Suffolk College. BBC Presenter, Megan McCubbin, left attendees bursting to take action in their local communities.

2024



250 Students flocked to Suffolk One to be inspired by Chris Packham, Kids Against Plastic, Lord Deben and Scarlett Westbrook.

2025



The conference welcomed Steve Backshall as the keynote speaker alongside Kids Against Plastic and Youth Climate Solutions.

During the whole day event, students hear from inspirational speakers, take part in a range of workshops and discuss topics such as electric vehicles, nature-based solutions, the global food system, coastal adaptation, plastic pollution, flood and water management, sustainable fashion and climate anxiety.



Green Futures exhibition

Students also visit the Green Futures exhibition where they can speak to and take part in mini activities with over 30 charities and organisations that are all working to improve the natural environment in Suffolk.

At the same time, teachers have dedicated talks and workshops to help them make a difference in their schools.



Rebecca Osbourne live illustration

Alongside the 2025 conference, the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership launched a biodiversity competition which encouraged entries from schools all over the county. Schools were tasked with creating proposals on how to increase biodiversity on their school grounds and won the funds to bring those ideas to life!

2024



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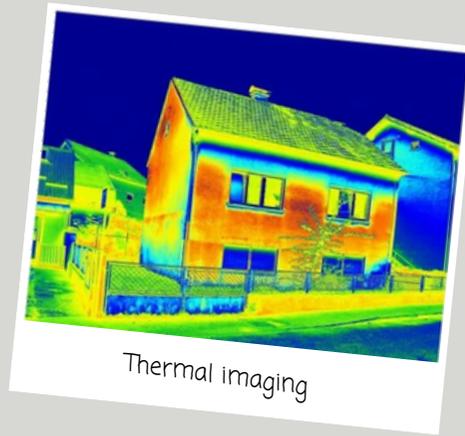
2025

“ THE DAY WAS INVALUABLE FOR THE NORTHGATE STUDENTS. TO BE ABLE TO BUILD ON THEIR CLIMATE CHANGE KNOWLEDGE IN THE PROFESSIONAL AND COLLABORATIVE SETTING THAT THE CONFERENCE OFFERED WAS A FANTASTIC OPPORTUNITY. THE TALKS...WERE SO INSPIRING, MOTIVATING STUDENTS TO BE CHANGE MAKERS AND CONTRIBUTORS TO CLIMATE CHANGE SOLUTIONS. ”

RYAN GRAVER, GEOGRAPHY TEACHER AT NORTHGATE HIGH SCHOOL

## Keep the Heat

Each winter since 2022, the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership have loaned out thermal imaging cameras to community groups and parish councils. These special devices can be used to see where heat might be 'leaking' from a building whether that's a home, community centre, or business.



Thermal imaging



West Suffolk College

## Solar for Business

Solar for Business is a scheme run by West Suffolk Council which provides and installs solar panels onto the roof of businesses for free. The electricity generated from the panels is then sold back to the businesses at a rate lower than their current electricity tariff to help them cut their energy bills as well as their carbon footprint!

Since project began, there has been 112 installations which equals 8.7MW total capacity and over 2,100 tonnes CO2 is being saved per year.

Local business, Unisurge, took part in Solar for Business and had over 2,700 panels installed across two sites. This saved them £40,917 on their energy bill during the 24/25 financial year and prevented 103 tonnes of CO2 being released.



Unisurge



Locations of groups that have taken part in Keep the Heat. The colours represent the local authority boundaries.

The latest round of the project (winter 2024/25) saw 58 different groups (presented on the map) take to the streets to assess properties. This total was made up of 29 parish councils, 24 community groups and 5 town councils, who together surveyed 550 properties!

63% of residents whose homes were surveyed and identified as needing energy efficiency improvements made at least one upgrade.

Since Keep the Heat was piloted in 2022:



153 groups have taken part (some took part in multiple years)



1,818 homes have been surveyed



The thermal camera equipment was booked out for a total of 512 weeks



Caps Cases

“THE WEST SUFFOLK SOLAR SCHEME HAS BEEN A TRANSFORMATIVE INITIATIVE FOR OUR BUSINESS, PROVIDING A SUSTAINABLE ENERGY SOLUTION THAT NOT ONLY REDUCES ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT BUT ALSO SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER OPERATIONAL COSTS.”

THE UNISURGE TEAM

## PowerPods

The largest share of the visitor footprint to the Broads National Park is in car travel to and from the park. It also leads to congestion and noise pollution.

E-bikes offer a way for people to access the park whilst leaving the car at home, and to enjoy more of the tranquillity on offer.

In 2024, the Broads Authority partnered with Intelligen International on a project funded by the Connected Places Catapult's Rural Transport Accelerator programme. The project developed off-grid solar-powered cycle charging pods to support use of e-bikes. As an initial trial these were deployed in the summer of 2025 at Reedham Ferry, Salhouse Broad and Carlton Marshes.

The Authority is currently working on expanding this offer to more sites to create a more joined up network in Norfolk and Suffolk.



Powerpods at Reedham Ferry Inn



Powerpods at Salhouse Broad

## Grant funded low-carbon rural transport pilots

In November 2024, Mid Suffolk District Council launched two new transport services to support rural residents with limited access to public transport and who are therefore heavily reliant on solo car travel. These community-run services are funded by Mid Suffolk District Council's £600,000 Rural Transport Grants Scheme.



Rural Connect

The Mid Suffolk Taxi Bus operates timetabled circular routes between Stowmarket and surrounding rural villages whilst Rural Connect utilises an electric fleet for pre-booked door-to-door trips in the north of the Mid Suffolk District.

Early uptake has bridged rural-urban divides, improved connectivity for all ages, and piloted two models (fixed route vs. electric demand-responsive) to gauge viability and community response. Next, Mid Suffolk District Council will be expanding the Taxi Bus routes, monitoring and evaluating demand trends and financial sustainability of the project and reviewing the potential to integrate this scheme with wider county schemes.



Mid Suffolk Taxi Bus and Rural Connect launch event



Rural Connect

# Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils

## Schools Green Skills Summit

In November 2024, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils hosted the first Schools Green Skills Summit, bringing together over 90 students from nine local schools for a day of climate action and learning. The event aimed to inspire young people from diverse backgrounds to understand the global climate crisis and explore how they can take local action and pursue green careers.



Schools Green Skills Summit

Held at Ipswich High School and facilitated by InterClimate Network, the summit featured a COP-style climate negotiation, a Q&A session with local leaders and businesses, and a green skills careers fair. Students represented 16 countries, debated climate policies, and proposed solutions on key themes like energy, food, and oceans



Schools Green Skills Summit

The event sparked enthusiasm and critical thinking among students, with many expressing a deeper understanding of climate issues and a desire to act. Teachers praised the event for its educational value and career inspiration. Following its success, the summit returned in 2025, hosted by Royal Hospital School, with support from new sponsors including GasWay, Taylor Woodrow and Carbon Numbers.



Schools Green Skills Summit

## Solar powered e-bike rental scheme

Suffolk faces a reliance on car journeys. E-bikes could be a game-changer for our rural areas, but often require an expensive upfront purchase, creating a barrier for many.



EEZYBIKE trial in Sudbury

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are helping to overcome that by funding EEZYBIKE trials in Sudbury, Lavenham and Needham Market. Residents can hire and use the e-bikes as an alternative to driving. What's more? They're powered by a solar-powered pod. The councils are now working hard to raise awareness of the trial, encourage and monitor the uptake and health benefits, and calculate CO<sub>2</sub> reductions.

## Public Health and Communities

### Exploring climate change through a health lens

In September 2023, a health and climate change workshop brought together 70 delegates to explore how Suffolk's changing climate is impacting, and will increasingly affect, the health and wellbeing of Suffolk people. This was the first time that climate change in Suffolk has been explored through a health and wellbeing lens.

The workshop showcased the co-benefits of reducing emissions including benefits to health and the economy. It also explored the importance of adapting and preparing for a changing climate and aimed to identify practical actions for delivering change across Suffolk.

Speakers on the day included representatives from the Climate Change Committee, the UK Health Security Agency and Imperial College London.

## Cutting our own emissions

The University of Suffolk is serious about protecting the environment. It doesn't just talk about sustainability—it takes real action. In 2023, the University cut its carbon emissions by 64% compared to 2015–2016 levels. This was the largest decrease among nearly 120 universities across the UK!

In 2025, it also earned the EcoCampus Silver Award, showing its commitment to going green.

## Saving energy on campus

Progress also continues toward the long-term goal of fully removing gas from campus operations. In 2024, the University worked with Carbon Numbers to upgrade its energy systems. This helped save over 217,000 kWh of energy in one year! The University is also working to stop using gas completely. For example, the Long Street building, now home to a new e-sports course, no longer uses gas. The goal is to reach zero emissions on campus by 2030.

## Sustainable travel for everyone

To make travel more eco-friendly, the University teamed up with First Bus to change bus routes so they go through campus.

The service now provides a convenient, reliable connection every 20 minutes across Ipswich and beyond, helping to create a more accessible and integrated campus.



First Bus 800 service

## Research that makes a difference

The Suffolk Sustainability Institute leads projects that help communities and the environment. One example is the Digitech Smart House, which now runs almost completely off-grid thanks to new technology like battery storage. Another project, HEED, studies air quality and comfort in social housing to improve health and cut energy use.



Smart house



Smart house

The University also works with citizen scientists to check water quality in the River Deben. Together, they've found 500 types of bacteria and discovered antibiotic resistance in the river.

## Buying better for the planet

The University has a new procurement policy that makes sustainability a rule, not just an idea. When buying goods and services, suppliers must prove they care about the environment and are aiming for zero emissions. Products that can be reused or have a low impact on nature are chosen first. Companies involved in unethical practices are not allowed.

## Looking beyond the campus

The University knows its choices affect more than just its buildings. Every supplier relationship is a chance to make a positive impact. By setting high standards for sustainability, the University encourages others to do the same.

### Electric refuse vehicle

One big change is the Council's investment in an electric refuse collection vehicle. This truck was half the price of a new diesel model and will help reduce pollution from waste collection. The Council tested electric trucks in summer 2024 and now wants to learn how they perform over time. This smart purchase saves money and cuts carbon emissions.



The last time Ipswich was serviced by an electric dustcart



New electric refuse vehicle

### Mobile sawmill

To cut transport emissions, the Council now uses a mobile sawmill to turn fallen trees into timber for bridges, benches, and wildlife homes. Using local wood saves energy and avoids harmful chemicals.

### 'This is Our Town' campaign

Litter is a big problem in Ipswich, with nearly two tonnes collected every day. To tackle this, the Council launched the 'This is Our Town' campaign. Local children designed posters to remind people not to litter and to take pride in their town. Over 100 entries were received, and the winning designs are now displayed on bins and banners around Ipswich. This creative project gives young people a voice and encourages everyone to keep the town clean.

Air pollution harms health, especially for children and older people. On Clean Air Day, the Council ran events to raise awareness. At Ipswich Hospital, they set up an information stall with tips on reducing pollution and held an anti-idling event to stop drivers leaving engines running. Council officers also visited schools, speaking to nearly 500 pupils about air quality and asking them to make pledges to help. Parents were reminded to switch off engines near school gates to protect children's health.

The Council also gave a webinar for healthcare professionals and checked local businesses like petrol stations and dry cleaners to make sure they follow rules that reduce emissions. These actions show the Council's commitment to cleaner air for everyone.



Cliff Lane pupils



St Mary's pupils

### Meadows and wild spaces

Across Ipswich's parks and reserves, the Council is managing hundreds of acres of grassland as meadows instead of cutting them short. These areas attract insects, birds, and other wildlife while storing carbon and reducing fuel use. Wetlands and heathlands are also being cared for to improve biodiversity. The Council balances nature with space for sports, dog walking, and events, asking residents for feedback and inviting volunteers to help.

## Cleaner vehicles

East Suffolk Council has been working hard to decarbonise its fleet of vehicles, a huge feat given that East Suffolk is the largest district in the country. Its heavy vehicles (such as its refuse lorries) are now fuelled by hydrotreated vegetable oil, a fuel that produces fewer emissions and is made from sustainable sources. Additionally, all of the Council's parking enforcement vehicles are now fully electric. To help local taxi drivers join the electric movement, the Council give those who switch to electric cars a 25% discount on their licence fee.

## Restoring habitats for nature and the climate

Nature is key to fighting climate change. The Council has created 120 Nature at Work sites where plants and animals can grow with little interference. They have also set up bee cafés to help bees travel safely across the district. In 2024, the Council promised to plant 250,000 trees and hedgerows. Planting started in 2025 and will keep growing every year.



Nature at Work site



Nature at Work site



Nature at Work site

## Better transport for communities

Working with Suffolk County Council, East Suffolk runs Buzzabout and Katch community transport schemes. These services help people in rural areas travel easily without needing their own car. The schemes increase mobility whilst decreasing the number of vehicles journeys. More people are using these services every year.



Katch community bus



Katch community bus

## Building better

Finding ways to supporting the construction of low carbon homes is a core focus for East Suffolk Council. In January 2025, the Council launched a Developer Charter in collaboration with local developers. The Charter helps to encourage builders to go above and beyond the basic requirements to make homes low carbon. A number of other guides and plans support this work covering everything from sustainable construction to healthy communities.

## Community Action

Enabling community action is crucial for tackling the climate emergency. In 2024, the Council launched its first Youth Council, where young people focus on climate and nature. It also continues to fund and resource the Greenprint Forum, a network that helps local groups take action for the environment.

## Supporting local businesses

In 2024, the Council started the East Suffolk Business Move to Net Zero Programme. Local businesses could apply for grants of £10,000–£15,000 to pay for changes that reduce greenhouse gases.

## Cutting carbon and saving money

Since declaring a climate emergency in 2019, Suffolk County Council has nearly halved its emissions. This has avoided about 7,500 tonnes of carbon emissions and saved over £4.8 million on energy bills.

They've also focused on using only the energy they need. Upgrading all 43,400 of Suffolk's streetlights to LED cut their energy use by more than 75%. Building management systems have made big improvements too. At the Council's main offices in Ipswich, better controls reduced gas use by 42%, saving around £30,000 each year.

They're also looking to generate their own energy where they can. A new solar array has been built at Beacon House car park in Ipswich. The records archives at Gatacre Road were taken off grid in summer 2025 thanks to a solar array with battery storage. 2026 will see 14 libraries get solar panels too, cutting the Council's need to buy energy.

Emissions they don't control, called scope 3, are harder to tackle. They're helping suppliers create carbon reduction plans. This lowers the impact of their work on council contracts and makes them stronger against rising energy prices.

With every step we take, they are taking staff along with them with plenty of engagement events like the annual Eco Fair, the Environment Champions Network and the Eco Month events that take place for staff all across the county.



Eco Fair at Endeavour House

## A plan for nature

The 45 local organisations that make up the Norfolk & Suffolk Nature Recovery Partnership launched their Norfolk and Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) in 2025. These aim to address the region's decline in nature, identify ways to help it recover and deliver wider benefits such as reducing flood risk.

Together - with other regions' strategies - they will form a national nature network, reversing biodiversity loss, helping adapt to a changing climate and ensuring sustainable land use that benefits people and wildlife.

Suffolk's LNRS was developed in collaboration with landowners and farmers, conservation experts, local communities, Suffolk County Council and Norfolk County Council. It identified the following actions as priorities for thriving nature:



ENHANCING WOODLANDS AND HEDGEROWS SO THAT WILDLIFE CAN MOVE MORE FREELY ACROSS THE COUNTY



EXPANDING WETLANDS AND FENS TO IMPROVE WATER QUALITY AND CAPTURE CARBON



STRENGTHENING LINKS BETWEEN HEATHLANDS, GRASSLANDS AND FARMLAND IN THE BRECKS



RESTORING RIVER CORRIDORS, INCLUDING CHALK STREAMS, WHICH ARE GLOBALLY RARE

While these priority areas highlight where evidence suggests the biggest gains are possible, nature recovery can happen anywhere, and anyone can contribute. From creating a garden pond or planting a wildflower strip to managing farmland more sustainably or restoring a wetland, every action helps build a healthier natural network.

# LOOKING FORWARD

“Whilst I want to take this opportunity to look forward to our exciting plans for the coming years, it’s wonderful to look back over the many projects and services we’ve run since our last overview was published in 2023.

We hope this report captures the breadth of our work supporting Suffolk’s businesses, communities and residents to realise the health, wellbeing, and economic benefits of making low carbon choices. It’s all a testament to the collaborative approach we’re taking across the public sector to deliver against our commitment to tackle the climate emergency.

The benefit of all this work in our local areas goes far beyond the obvious reduction in carbon emissions. From helping residents to improve the energy efficiency of their homes, communities to improve the viability of their local facilities, and businesses to improve their profitability and economic, environmental, and social sustainability, we help improve the health and wellbeing of our county and everyone that lives and works within it. We help strengthen our local economy, as much of the work we encourage and, indeed, commission is carried out by local firms. We encourage people to protect and enhance our environment through our communications and engagement work. And working together to offer these services provides the best value for money approach for Suffolk’s taxpayers and has enabled us to bring in millions of pounds of external funding to deliver projects in the areas they live, alongside the clear social value benefits I’ve described above.

A completely new venture for us this year was the Sustainable Suffolk Investment. This was particularly exciting as it gave local people the chance to invest their money into local projects - delivered by Suffolk

County Council - that lower the county’s carbon emissions. During the first ever tranche, we had over 350 investors, including both local people and businesses as well as those elsewhere in the country with an interest in helping Suffolk become more sustainable. Every one of those investors will receive their money back with 4% interest in six-monthly instalments over a five-year period and will be kept updated about the projects that their investment is helping to deliver on the ground. In total, we raised £1 million. This new way of borrowing money is fantastic for people who want to invest ethically, make their income go further and take advantage of a low-risk investment opportunity. But it is also great for us, as it is more cost effective to borrow from local people as from anywhere else. A win-win!

Looking ahead, our collaborative public sector approach is going to be needed more than ever as we work together to get the best deal for Suffolk residents through the devolution and local government reorganisation processes. We want to maintain a focus on this area of work as we navigate the changes to local government structures. Our commitment to supporting our businesses, communities and residents to benefit from making low carbon choices is undimmed.

This means maintaining and building on the projects and services we’re already running, as well as testing and implementing exciting new ideas. Offering more services in Suffolk’s communities, helping volunteers to improve the lives of residents, growing our community energy sector, offering grants, loans and support to our businesses and householders, and continuing to support and promote active and sustainable travel across the county. While there’s still so much to do, I’m excited to see what we will achieve together in the coming years. Let’s make a Sustainable Suffolk together!”



**David Walton**

Programme Manager, Sustainable Suffolk



# Follow our journey to a more sustainable future

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