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Parish Report

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Increasing School Places for SEND Students

On Tuesday 1 April, Cabinet voted to increase the number of school places in the county for children and young people with special education needs and disabilities (SEND), using £18.6m of available capital funding. The plans agreed include opening specialist units within existing mainstream schools, which would create around 100 new places for SEND students for the academic year beginning in September 2025. The second proposal agreed was to allocate up to £12m to create satellite provisions of the existing special schools in Suffolk, with a view that these would open in September 2026 and create another 100 places. The possibility of the council opening its own independent school was also discussed, and may be explored in the future. Since the Cabinet report was tabled, the government has announced that Suffolk will receive an extra £9,441,348 from the Department for Education to invest in new SEND school places. Plans will now be drawn up by the Local Area SEND Partnership on how to spend the money.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service Action Plan

Cabinet on 1 April also discussed the proposed action plan to improve the Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, following the Home Office's recent publication of their inspection report which found several areas for action, including improvement to the leadership and culture of the service, and ensuring members of staff felt confident about raising concerns. Cabinet agreed to approve to £1.6m to fund the necessary improvements, and reversed planned IT savings of £0.106m this year to fund the IT improvements needed. Progress on the action plan will be monitored by the Fire Service Steering Group, which is chaired by the Cabinet Member, Steve Wiles. The Action Plan will also be examined by the council's Scrutiny Committee. The next inspection of the fire service is due in 2027.

New Government Funding for Adult Learning

The Department for Education has allocated Suffolk County Council up to £4m to be spent delivering free skills training to an extra 1,345 adults across Norfolk and Suffolk this year. The money will be used to support the council's 'Skills Bootcamps', which help residents gain the specific skills they need to gain well-paid jobs with local employers. Courses last up to 16 weeks and offer a combination of online and in-person learning to suit a variety of schedules, this flexibility makes them ideal for people looking to

upskill, change their careers or return to work. The funding also enables local businesses to train new staff or upskill existing employees, with many of the training costs covered. Employers can work directly with training providers to create courses that align with their needs. Those interested in taking part in the Skills Bootcamps can find more information here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/business/supporting-employers-training-your-workforce/skills-bootcamps>

6,000 Public EV Chargepoints Planned

Suffolk County Council will be installing around 6,000 new public electric vehicle (EV) chargepoints across the county. From the summer, thousands of charging points will be installed on residential streets, with many locations suggested by local residents following the survey which was undertaken last year, or by liaison with communities and district/borough councils. The majority of installations will be bollard-style units at the kerbside, suitable for long-stay or overnight charging, when drivers will be able to benefit from an overnight off-peak tariff, and there will also be a dedicated resident's tariff which features discounted charging at all times. Public car parks will also see a number of rapid and ultra-rapid chargepoint installations, for quicker charging. This project has been made possible due to a successful £5.3 million bid by SCC to the government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund. This summer's roll-out will use a proportion of this funding, with a further £16 million of funding provided by the chargepoint operator, *Believe*.

Suffolk Councils Supporting Sustainability in Schools

32 Suffolk schools recently attended a conference to help them write their climate action plans and deliver sustainability initiatives. The Suffolk Sustainability in Education conference, held at St Joseph's College in Ipswich, is the first of three events in the East of England to support schools to deliver on the objectives set out in the Department of Education's Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy. The government has said that all schools should have a Sustainability Lead and Climate Action Plan in place by the end of this academic year. The event was co-organised by the Suffolk Sustainable Schools Network, an initiative funded by Suffolk's public sector organisations and delivered by Suffolk County Council, to support the delivery of Suffolk's Climate Emergency Plan.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Suffolk County Council has drafted a new strategy to help restore and enhance nature across Suffolk, and has launched a consultation so residents can share their views. The county's Local Nature Recovery Strategy is one of 48 across the country, aimed at addressing the decline in nature and identifying a network of areas to help nature and biodiversity to recover. The plan is for the 48 strategies to create a national 'nature network', proposing actions such as the creation of new habitats, planting of trees and hedgerows, and more sustainable management of existing woodlands and other habitats like grasslands.

The consultation on the Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy is open to everyone in Suffolk - residents, landowners, land managers, farmers, businesses and the wider community. There is also the opportunity to view and respond to maps of local areas, where specific measures to help nature could be taken. Both opportunities to provide feedback will close on 11 June 2025, and can be found at www.suffolk.gov.uk/consultations

Social Media and Useful Links

Follow us on:

Twitter - [Suffolk Green, Lib Dem & Independent Group \(@SuffolkGLI\) / Twitter](#)

Instagram – https://www.instagram.com/suffolkgli_group/

Facebook - [Suffolk GLI - Green, Liberal Democrat & Independent Group | Facebook](#)

Website - [Suffolk Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent Group – The GLI Group at Suffolk County Council \(suffolkgli.wordpress.com\)](#)

Cost of Living help and advice:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/family.page?familychannel=6>

Benefits advice and support:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/adult.page?adultchannel=0>

Flood preparation advice: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolk-fire-and-rescue-service/fire-and-rescue-safety-advice-in-the-community/what-to-do-in-a-flood>

<https://suffolkprepared.co.uk/get-prepared/risk-advice/flooding/>

Flood recovery advice and support: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/flood-recovery-information-for-suffolk>