

## SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2021

### *Cllr Stephen Burroughes - Framlingham Division*



- **STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF ALL SUFFOLK COUNCILS REGARDING AFGHAN REFUGEES**

**This Statement is 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.”

- **SUFFOLK PLANS CLIMATE CHANGE EVENTS AHEAD OF COP26**

It was announced on August 11<sup>th</sup> 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.”

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 12<sup>th</sup>, 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.

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.

• **SUCCESSFUL SOLAR PANEL BUYING SCHEME RETURNS**

On August 25<sup>th</sup> 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.

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.

#### • **SUFFOLK HEALTH CHIEFS ALARM AS COVID CASES SHOOT UP**

On August 26<sup>th</sup> it was stated that the number of Covid cases in Suffolk have risen by 22% in the 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.

A new video was 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 & RESCUE ADDS 4 NEW ENHANCED APPLIANCES FITTED WITH SOLAR PANELS**

On August 27<sup>th</sup> 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.

For further information from my report or questions please contact me at:

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