



News release

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For immediate release:

Council continues to fight impact of climate change

East Suffolk Council continues to tackle the impact of climate change as it works towards becoming carbon neutral.

Since its creation in April 2019, East Suffolk Council has had an ambitious environmental vision to build the right environment for East Suffolk and it's committed to be carbon neutral by 2030.

To support this vision, the Council voted unanimously to declare a climate emergency in June 2019 in a bid to reduce its own carbon emissions and to encourage local communities to get involved in fighting climate change. Since then, the Council has taken a number of actions to help it achieve its ambitions plans and deliver its environmental vision to residents and stakeholders.

As a direct result of the declaration, a cross-party Environment Task Group was established to ensure the Council's policies meet its environmental vision and identify areas for improvement through the development of a Climate Action Plan.

In 2020, the Council adopted a new Strategic Plan in which the environment is one of the key five themes, meaning it plays a key role in decision-making and has become part of the Council's core business.

Furthermore, a new Housing Enabling Strategy and Environmental Planning Guidance Notes offer clean and concise information on a range of key environmental issuing in planning and development. The documents can assist those seeking to mitigate the contribution of construction and development to climate change and its impact on the environment. In addition, a Sustainable Business Toolkit was published in 2019 to help businesses reduce their environmental.

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Leading by example, East Suffolk Council are regularly improving its housing stock by installing new boilers, central heating, additional insulation and solar panels. For example, over 250 air pumps have now been installed in council houses which don't have access to gas, whilst ten retired living schemes have been fitted with solar panels.

To support and encourage sustainable travel, the Council is currently developing a Cycle and Walking Strategy for East Suffolk which will highlight the connectivity of key cycling routes and identify opportunities where cycle infrastructures can be improved in partnership with Suffolk County Council in particular, to support sustainable travel.

Even prior to Covid-19, East Suffolk Council made changes to the way it works by enabling remote working and meeting through the use of technology to reduce business travel and commuting. Alongside this, council staff and members also have access to EV pool cars and charging points, which are available at its offices in Melton and the Port of Felixstowe.

Last spring, East Suffolk Council launched its 'Pardon the Weeds, We're Feeding the Bees' campaign, in which over 40 wild spaces were created across East Suffolk, where grass was left to grow longer, and wildflowers planted to help wildlife to thrive. These spaces are cut back for winter and the signs removed but will be back in spring. We're keen to introduce even more mini conservation areas so please contact your town or parish council if you have any suggestions for wild spaces.

East Suffolk Council has spent many years promoting free and discounted insulation offered to homeowners and landlords by energy companies. The Council has made the enforcement of the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards introduced by the Government in 2018 a priority, meaning that any landlord who fails to act to improve the warmth of their properties will now face financial consequences. The Council's commitment to ensuring all tenants – social and private – are living in warm homes that are good for their health and their wallet was recognised in a report* last year which showed that East Suffolk Council has one of the best track records in the country for tackling energy efficiency in homes.

Cllr James Mallinder, cabinet member for the Environment, said: "East Suffolk Council is committed to tackling climate change and developing and delivering our environmental vision across East Suffolk for all residents and stakeholders, always with a focus to be carbon neutral by 2030.

"I believe this is somewhere where small changes can make big differences, so we're also encouraging our communities – individuals, businesses and town and parish councils – to join us in making changes that can make a big difference to our fragile environment.

"Taking positive action on environmental issues is not just about the plants and grass outside, it is about what we do in our homes and how our businesses work to reduce waste and pollution. By taking a practical, common-sense approach to this issue and building it into our Strategic Plan for the future, it has become part of our core business at the Council.

“Together we can and will make a difference. The time to talk is over and now more than ever, we all need to work together to tackle these issues and place the environment at the centre of everything we do.”

ENDS

Note to editors

Links to documents mentioned in the piece:

Strategic Plan: www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/yourcouncil/how-your-council-works/east-suffolk-strategic-plan/

Housing Enabling Strategy: www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Housing/Housing-Enabling-Strategy.pdf

Environmental Guidance Note: <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/environment/environment-guidance-note/>

Sustainable Business Kit: <https://eastsuffolkmeansbusiness.co.uk/business-support/resources/environmental-sustainability/>

Cycle and walking strategy: <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy-and-local-plans/cycling-and-walking-strategy/>

*The report included 268 local authorities and was undertaken by The Independent and covered in print on 11 Saturday 2020 (‘No punishment for landlords who flout energy rules’ by Madeleine Cuff) and is also available online at <https://inews.co.uk/news/environment/little-punishment-landlords-flouting-energy-efficiency-rules-527015>