



98% of pupils receive a place at one of their preferred Secondary Schools on National Offer Day

This year parents and carers of 98% of children were offered a place on National Offer Day at one of their three preferred schools and 93% were offered a place at their first preference school.

Suffolk County Council received 7,867 applications from parents and carers indicating which secondary school they would prefer their child to transfer to in September 2024.

Families who applied online can log in to the online service from today to see the school their child has been offered. They will also receive an email to confirm this offer, unless they have indicated that they do not wish to. Letters will be sent to parents who made a paper application by second class post today (1 March 2024).

Once school places have been confirmed, parents and carers need to consider how their child will get to and from school. If their child is eligible for Suffolk County Council funded school travel, they will receive an email by the end of March 2024 with details of how to opt-in.

Further information on secondary school admissions can be found at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions.

Parents can now opt-in for Suffolk County Council funded school travel for 2024/2025

If parents have a child who is already receiving SCC funded school travel, they must opt-in by 31 May 2024 to continue to receive it.

Families of children starting secondary school in September 2024 will receive an e-mail by the end of March if they are eligible for SCC funded school travel.

If parents have a child starting primary school in September 2024, they should not opt-in until they receive the offer of a school place. If they are eligible for SCC funded school travel they will be contacted by 10 May 2024.

If a child is not eligible for SCC funded school travel but their parents wish to purchase a spare seat, they may do so from 1 July 2024.

To opt-in or for more information on the SCC school travel policy please visit: www.suffolkonboard.com/opt-in



Council objects to pylons between Bramford and Twinstead

Suffolk County Council has formally objected to National Grid's plans for 29 km of electricity pylons and cabling between Bramford and Twinstead.

The Planning Inspectorate has just concluded its Examination period for the proposal (12 March), where the county council concluded that National Grid has failed to adequately safeguard Suffolk's environment and communities affected by the scheme.

The council says that proposals do not go far enough to mitigate the impact of the scheme, and that supervision of construction would be inadequate.

The project would see 18 km of overhead lines and around 11 km of underground cable through the Dedham Vale National Landscape and in the Stour Valley.

Inspectors will now prepare a report for the Secretary of State at the Department of Energy and Net Zero, with a decision expected later in six months' time.

Empowering Suffolk's Future: Have your say on proposed devolution deal for Suffolk

People across Suffolk are being asked for their views on a proposed, in principle, devolution deal that would hand Suffolk greater decision-making powers and control of more than half a billion pounds of public funding.

In December 2022, Suffolk County Council and the Government signed an in-principle deal to transfer certain powers and funding from London to Suffolk.

Residents and businesses can now share their views about important aspects of the deal, including:

- Control of a new investment fund worth £480m over the next thirty years
- Local control of the Adult Education Budget each year (worth £9.4m in 2025/26)
- £5.8m one-off funding to prepare brownfield sites for development
- Multi-year transport funding plus an additional £500,000 over two years to finalise Suffolk's Local Transport Plan.

If agreed, the proposed deal would also mean that, for the first time, the leader of Suffolk County Council would be directly elected by the people of Suffolk – rather than by county councillors. Once every four years, residents would vote to elect both their local county councillor (as they do now) and the leader of the county council.

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Supporting information and details on how to respond are available at www.suffolk.gov.uk/devolution. The consultation opens at 2pm today.

Once the consultation has closed, Suffolk county councillors and Government ministers will consider a report on findings as part of the decision-making process on whether or not to proceed with Suffolk's devolution deal. A decision is expected in July 2024.

Suffolk to benefit from huge £7.3 million EV investment

Suffolk County Council has secured millions of pounds of funding to help develop electric vehicle (EV) charging across the county.

The county council has been allocated the money after successful bids to the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund, which supports local authorities to plan and deliver charging infrastructure for residents without off-street parking.

Suffolk residents without off-street parking will benefit from £5.9 million to support EV charging, and a further £1.4 million will be used to develop the county's existing EV charging network in community locations.

Homes without a driveway face challenges when it comes to charging an EV - in some cases it is just not possible, and it is unsafe and hazardous to run cables across pavements. Along with inconvenient access to public charging, these are common reasons that people give for not choosing an EV.

However, the funding will start to provide solutions to some of these issues, with opportunities to develop:

- kerbside charging points
- community charging hubs
- car park charging points
- fast and rapid charging point infrastructure improvements

Suffolk residents are invited to 'nominate' their street for consideration for on-street charging points, using [this online form](#). Although not every road may be suitable, suggestions from residents will help indicate where there is demand for charging points.

This investment continues the council's contribution to the https://www.greensuffolk.org/about/sccp/climate_emergency_plan, which identifies that the decarbonisation of vehicles in Suffolk is a key aspect of meeting the net zero by 2030 target for the county.

Complementing the new funding, is Suffolk County Council's recently published [Suffolk Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy](#). It has been written with the input of all borough and district councils, aiming to improve the EV charging experience for drivers in Suffolk.

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Even more potholes filled as Roadmender trial hits Suffolk

The Roadmender has arrived in Suffolk, as the county sees a 34% increase in pothole repairs through extra investment, more resource, and new ways of working.

The county council has been working to repair the increasing number of potholes which have been breaking out following very wet and cold weather recently. One way in which the council is increasing its repair rate is by trialling new methods of fixing potholes.

Suffolk Highways welcomed 'Highway Workforce' with their Roadmender Elastomac solution - a repair method which results in sealed, longer-lasting pothole repairs; which are quicker to carry out.

The trial which began on 11 March, is eco-friendly and lowers the carbon footprint of repairs by 80% is effectively supporting Suffolk Highways in its fight against the rising number of potholes on the county's roads.

The 'Roadmender' works on both asphalt and concrete roads and is designed for repairs to all types of road defects and is capable of overlaying areas with multiple defects in a single visit. The process is more efficient, reducing material and waste by 90% and avoiding unnecessary disruption on roads.

Council appoints new Executive Director for Children and Young People

Sarah-Jane Smedmor, currently Director of Children's Services at Central Bedfordshire Council, will be joining the council in July. This newly created senior position holds significant responsibility including children in care, education and SEND, safeguarding, youth justice and fostering and adoption.

Sarah-Jane started her career as a social worker and worked her way to Head of Safeguarding and Standards at Cambridgeshire County Council and then Corporate Director Care and Protection for Children's Services at Dorset Council before moving to Central Bedfordshire.

One of Sarah-Jane's priorities when she starts will be to oversee the continued improvement of SEND services. This includes the delivery of the Priority Action Plan as agreed by Ofsted following an inspection in November 2023, and the implementation of a new SEND strategy. Sarah-Jane has managed significant improvement within SEND services in Central Bedfordshire under its Accelerated Progress Plan since her appointment.

She must also address a challenging budgetary situation within children and young people's services, driven in part by significant demand.

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Council welcomes £11 million new investment into SEND services

Suffolk County Council is set to receive an additional £ 10.9 million to create new specialist places for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

The money, announced by the Department for Education, will be used to create new places in mainstream and special schools, as well as other specialist settings, and to improve the suitability and accessibility of existing buildings.

This new funding is in addition to the £55million already invested by Suffolk County Council into creating more than 1,000 new places for students with SEND. Nearly 750 of these places are now open and in use.

The Department for Education also announced it was funding a new SEND school in Suffolk. The Unity Schools Partnership has been selected to sponsor the new Unity SLD School which will provide 126 vital new places in Suffolk for pupils aged between three and 16 with severe learning difficulties. Earlier this month, the Chancellor also announced a new Alternative Provision (AP) free school, the SENDAT New AP Suffolk Free School, in West Suffolk.

Suffolk Business Board appoints interim chair

Mark Pendlington, local business leader and former High Sheriff of Suffolk, has been appointed interim chair of the new Suffolk Business Board.

The appointment is on a one-year interim basis to help mobilise the new Board, which has been created following the integration of Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) functions into Suffolk County Council.

The Business Board has been established to represent the local business community, to help steer Suffolk's economic strategy and to help create a stronger and higher-skilled economy for Suffolk.

Mr Pendlington has worked across the public and private sectors in industry, national and regional voluntary organisations, further and higher education, economic development bodies and academia, and also served as the High Sheriff of Suffolk from 2023-24.

Recruitment is underway for the rest of the Board, which will include representatives from business, education, and Suffolk's other local authorities.

The Business Board will be supported by Suffolk County Council's Economic Development team, which includes officers who have transferred into the council from the LEP.

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