

## Have your say on council budget

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The Suffolk Council has launched an online consultation to inform residents about its current financial situation and to gather opinions on proposed changes to Council Tax and spending priorities. The consultation will cover how the council manages its finances, cost-saving measures, and potential ways to raise funds to support services.

It seeks feedback on which services residents use, their views on increasing Council Tax, and areas they believe should be prioritized in the budget. Responses will be considered along with input from businesses, public sector partners, and council members as part of the budget planning for 2025. The consultation runs from November 1st to December 16th, 2024, and the results will be included in the final budget report in February 2025. To participate, visit [www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/2025\\_26\\_budget](http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/2025_26_budget)

## Suffolk Launches Good Health at Work Programme

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Suffolk County Council has launched the Good Health at Work Programme, aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of the working-age population in Suffolk. The 18-month initiative will support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), particularly those with employees at higher risk of health inequalities, such as low-income workers or those with long-term health conditions. Delivered by Get Set UK, the programme includes:

- Online Resource Hub: Provides tools, advice, and strategies for creating healthier workplaces.
- Ambassador Network: A community of employers committed to promoting good work practices, with tiered recognition for progress.
- Navigator Service: Offers personalized support to SMEs, helping them assess and improve their workforce wellbeing.
- SMEs in Suffolk are encouraged to participate and access these resources.

Businesses can explore the available resources and learn more about the Good Health at Work Programme by visiting [www.goodhealthatwork.co.uk](http://www.goodhealthatwork.co.uk)

## Suffolk celebrates as local organisations are awarded the King's Award for Voluntary Service

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It has been announced that five voluntary organisations in Suffolk have been awarded the King's Award for Voluntary Service.

Created in 2002 to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee and previously known as The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (QAVS), the Award has been shining a light on the fantastic work of voluntary groups from all across the UK for many years.

Equivalent to an MBE, KAVS is the highest Award given to local voluntary groups in the UK, and they are awarded for life.

The local organisations are:

- **Ipswich Outreach**  
Supporting the homeless people of Ipswich to improve their health, wellbeing and life opportunities.
- **Let's Talk Reading**  
Working to improve literacy of children and adults in Ipswich.  
Website:
- **Still Good Food**  
Rescuing surplus food, reducing waste and redistributing it to benefit the community.
- **Tattingstone Good Neighbour Scheme**  
Providing vital support, promoting social interaction and community integration in Tattingstone.
- **The Caribbean and African Community Health Support Forum**  
Promoting a community legacy of health and wellbeing in Suffolk.

## Department for Education welcomes SEND improvements and evidence of impact, but recognises challenges

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The Department for Education (DfE) met with senior leaders from Suffolk County Council and the NHS to assess progress on special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) services. A letter from the DfE highlighted the positive developments, acknowledging improvements in Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs), academic progress for children in specific interventions, better collaboration between partners, and a decrease in permanent exclusions.

However, challenges remain, including improving governance, data use, consistency across families, and ensuring children and families' voices remain central. The meeting reviewed progress since the November 2023 Ofsted and CQC inspection, with the next review scheduled for May 2025.

## EPIC new strategy positions Suffolk at cutting edge of UK economy

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Suffolk County Council's Cabinet will review an ambitious new Economic Strategy, developed by the Suffolk Business Board, which aims to position Suffolk as a leader in sustainable growth and innovation. The strategy, focusing on clean technology and economic prosperity, outlines key goals for 2045, including a £14 billion increase to the economy, 45,000 more people qualified to Level 3 or higher, and 35,000 more people participating in the workforce.

Central to the strategy is the EPIC Suffolk framework, built on Economic Wellbeing, Productivity, Inclusivity, and Clean Growth. Key growth sectors identified include clean energy, agri-tech, ports and logistics, and technology industries such as ICT and AI. The strategy also emphasizes workforce development and infrastructure investments to support continued growth.

A comprehensive investment plan aims to attract £4 in private investment for every £1 of public funding. The Suffolk Business Board, established in May 2024, is responsible for overseeing the strategy, and the Economic Strategy will be discussed at the Cabinet meeting on December 3, 2024. Papers for the meeting can be viewed at <https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk>