

# GREAT BLAKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes

**Minutes of Gt Blakenham Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024 in the Parish Room, Stowmarket Road, Great Blakenham at 7.30pm.**

**Present:** Cllr Steve Plume (Chairman), Cllr Nick Leonard, Cllr Debbie Kemp, Karen Grimwood (Parish Clerk), MSDC Cllr Marriott.

1. To receive and approve any apologies for absence. - **Cllr Will Durrant & Cllr Chris Chambers**
2. Declaration of any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests
  - a. Councillor's declaration of interest appropriate to any item on the agenda. **None**
  - b. To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interest (if any) **None**
  - c. To grant any requests for dispensations as appropriate. **None**
  - d. Co-option of parish councillor(s) / to sign declaration of acceptance. **None**
3. Public Forum
  - a. To receive the report from the County Councillor – **See attached report**  
**Cllr Chambers to investigate the need for remedial work on Bramford Road to address the ongoing issue of flooding. Port One have advised that they have reported to Highways that where they have connected to the drainage the culvert is full of debris which is causing the flooding . They also advised that they have reported a water leak to Anglian water concerning Addison Way. The issues of various landowners agreeing to sort this issue is delaying any repairs.**  
**Highways are investigating and putting works into place for the blocked drain on Chalk Hill Lane.**  
**The flooding on gipping Road is still ongoing. Repairs will be very complex when they are agreed as it involves varies parties including network rail.**
  - b. To receive the report from the District Councillor – **See attached report.**  
**Cllr Marriott to investigate how many properties are empty in the village and how long they are empty for.**  
**Cllr Marriott to investigate who we send our questions to concerning who allocates housing to the flats in Masons Drive.**
  - c. To receive questions from members of the public – **None**
4. To approve the Draft Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024 – **Approved**
5. To note the Clerk's update from previous Meetings.
  - a. Tree guards have been purchased/installed for the trees on Hackneys Corner as agreed. **Noted**
  - b. Oak Tree on allotment has been crowned as agreed. **Noted**
  - c. Soil stack removal at cemetery not completed as let down by contractor. **Agreed to wait for drier weather before seeking another contractor as worried that the grass will be damaged.**
6. Planning
  - a. To consider the following planning applications.

DC/24/00645	Blue Leighs Caravan Park, Chalk Hill Lane, Great Blakenham, Suffolk	Reduce crown height and spread ,balance to reduce risk of failure in adverse weather conditions. Response by 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2024.Clerk responded with no objections  <b>Noted</b>
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Signed  Date 11.04.24

DC/24/00573	Gipping Valley Bowls Club, Masons Sports Field, Bramford Road, Gt Blakenham Suffolk	Erection of Bowls Pavilion (following demolition of existing portacabin). Response by 6 <sup>th</sup> March 2024. Clerk responded with no objections as PC already agreed support. <b>NOTED</b>
SCC/0083/22 MS	Masons Landfill, Bramford Road, Great Blakenham, Ipswich, IP6 0JX.	Construction and operation of a solar photovoltaic farm including ancillary equipment. The application is being considered by the Development and Regulation Committee on 19 March 2024.  <b>NOTED</b>

b. To note any planning determinations.

DC/24/00645	Blue Leighs Caravan Park, Chalk Hill Lane, Great Blakenham, Suffolk	Reduce crown height and spread ,balance to reduce risk of failure in adverse weather conditions. Approved 8 <sup>th</sup> March 2024. <b>NOTED</b>
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#### 7. Growth, Highways, and Infrastructure


- a. Update on CiL Monies owed. – **CIL money owed to PC in regards to housing development off Chalk Hill Lane called Cemetery Close. MSDC debt recovery are involved and will keep PC update as it progresses.**
- b. Update on flooded property on Stowmarket Road.- **Drain on Chalk Hill lane blocked and being investigated for repair by Highways**
- c. Flooding on Bramford Rd/Addison. Anglian water and highways responsible. **Cllr Chambers to investigate**
- d. Note large pothole/ dropped drain on Gipping Road near White bridge. **Appears to have been repaired**

#### 8. Governance

- a. To note internal audit for 23/24 will be booked with SALC as soon as available. **Noted**
- b. Request for support for Barham Picnic Site project.- **Clerk to gain clarification on legal situation on Picnic site,Business plan details and invite to the next meeting to provide an overview.**
- c. Hedgehog Highway project.- **Clerk to purchase one box of hedgehog highways to see what interest we get from parishioners.**
- d. Update on Gipping Valley Bowls Club project – **Club have obtained 106 funding from BMSDC to demolish existing building, excavate and build new foundations to receive a new wooden clad pavilion. Further funds will be required to fit kitchen, installing heating etc. Hope work will start mid-September and completed by March 25.**
- e. Review policies – **Whistle blowing, Noticeboard, Complaints, Dignity at work policies reviewed and agreed.**

#### 9. Allotments.

- a. Update on availability – **Plot 25 has been allocated and the tenant has agreed to clear the plot and signed a disclaimer for injury/accidents. Clerk to contact the other people on waiting list to see if they would like to clear a plot or to wait until a contractor is found.**
- b. It should be noted that the initial overview of plans for Stowmarket Rd indicates that the allotment will remain in its current location. **Noted**
- c. Discuss enquiry to solicitors for licence of allotment. **Clerk to contact Salc for advise**
- d. Discuss application for community asset. **Clerk to contact Salc for advise**

Signed  Date 11/04/24



**10. Village Maintenance**

- a. Discuss damage to verges on Hackneys Corner/Hoods Drive etc from vehicles - **Cllr chambers to investigate if we need to have permission to place bollards or planters on verges to stop cars parking on verges.**
- b. Update from district and county Cllrs for who responsibility for painting of White Bridge, Gipping Rd. **No update**
- c. Update on village hall refresh programme. **Trustees are looking to have a public consultation day for villagers to say what they would like to happen at the hall. Ongoing work to obtain funding and businesses to start phase one of work required on the village hall.**

**11. Churchyard and Cemetery.**

- a. Discuss review of Cemetery Fees – **Cllrs to obtain comparison fees from surrounding villages and Ipswich cemetery**
- b. Update of Cemetery Policies – **Agreement to start reviewing policies and handbook.**

**12. Training and Development for Councillors and Clerk**

**Cllr Leonard and clerk interested in attending burial course.**

**13. Finance**

- a. To consider approving and making the following payments:

Shades	B	Hackneys Corner maintenance as per tender - 2433	£197.00	LGA 1972 s111
Shades	B	Grounds Maintenance as per tender - 2434	£507.50	LGA 1972 s111
Shades	B	Street cleaning as per tender - 2435	£1316.67	LGA 1972 s111
Payroll	B	Ending 29 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2024	£976.30	LGA 1972 s111
Three	D	Clerk Mobile	£11.00	LGA 1972 s111
Clerk	B	EE - Chair Mobile and Wifi Hub	£26.00	LGA 1972 s111

- a. Payments outside of meeting agreed in previous minutes

Fisk Tree Services	B	Oak tree crowning on allotment	£445.00	LGA 1972 s111
Gt Blakenham Village Hall	B	Money to support purchase of table/chairs curtains	£4078.24	LGA 1972 s111
Designer Metal	B	4 x Tree guards Inv 5668	£576.00	LGA 1972 s111

**14. Reports -To receive reports from Councillors assigned to the following:**

- a. Suez Annual Report – **See attached**
- b. Village Hall – Cllr Kemp –  
**There has been some changes to trustees due to the secretary resigning but has now been rectified.**  
**Trustees are very grateful for the donation for new chairs and tables and these have now been purchased.**  
**The bar takings have been very good at all the events and will need more volunteers going forward.**  
**The cycle speedway members Rep has changed.**  
**Looking for funding for ongoing works required.**
- c. NSIP Update – **see attached**

**15. Correspondence**

- a. Request for update on concrete blocks on footpath off Bramford Road – **This has been reported to highways again by PC to see if private landowner can come up with an alternative way to stop motor bikes using the lane but allowing the public to walk through. PC unable to do anything more than this as have no rights.**

Signed  Date 11/01/24

- b. **Anti-social behaviour near and around Budgens Store. Issues with shoplifting, violence to staff and anti-social behaviour in area around store . Issues to be looked at by all parties to see what can be done and to contact the police commissioner.**

**16. Future meetings**

- a. To note invitation for items to be considered in the next meeting.
- b. To note the date of the next scheduled Meeting on **11<sup>th</sup> April 2024** and any items for the agenda.

Karen Grimwood - Clerk to Great Blakenham Parish Council  
Email: [pc@greatblakenham.suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:pc@greatblakenham.suffolk.gov.uk)  
Phone: 07508830777  
Parish Council website: [www.greatblakenham.suffolk.cloud](http://www.greatblakenham.suffolk.cloud)  
Date : 9<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Signed ..... Date .....



## Public consultation on Suffolk County Council's proposed devolution deal starts on 18<sup>th</sup> March

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A 10-week public consultation on our proposed devolution deal with the Government will start on 18<sup>th</sup> March and run through until 26<sup>th</sup> May. The consultation will be in two main parts – an open survey, hosted by Suffolk County Council, that any residents can complete and a sample survey of 1000 Suffolk residents conducted independently by Ipsos Mori. The consultation will be available through our website [www.suffolk.gov.uk/devolution](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/devolution) and social media. There will also be media coverage highlighting the consultation.

## New Cabinet structure will strengthen SEND reform

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A column by Matthew Hicks, Leader of Suffolk County Council.

In recent weeks, readers will no doubt have seen a lot of news stories about SEND services in Suffolk, following the latest inspection report published by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). This week I have taken decisive action to strengthen my cabinet in a reshuffle – including creating a much greater focus on improving SEND.

Experienced cabinet member Cllr Andrew Reid will take the role of cabinet member for SEND and education. The role previously included oversight of skills, but to enable more political focus and accountability on urgent improvements on SEND services, this has now been moved to Cllr Richard Smith to sit alongside his existing responsibilities for economic development, transport strategy and waste. Cllr Debbie Richards will support Cllr Reid as deputy cabinet member for SEND. Working with the DfE, we are also establishing a new SEND Improvement Board, with an independent chair. This is a requirement following the Ofsted/CQC inspection.

Continuing the changes to children and young people (CYP) leadership, serving cabinet member Cllr Bobby Bennett has been appointed as cabinet member for CYP services. Two deputy cabinet members have been promoted to cabinet roles – Cllr Philip Faircloth-Mutton is now cabinet member for equality and communities and Cllr Craig Rivett is cabinet member for public health and public protection.

Alongside these changes, further new faces come in as deputy cabinet members. Cllr Nadia Cenci becomes deputy cabinet member for property and county farms, Cllr David Roach becomes deputy cabinet member for fostering and adoption and Cllr Heike Sowa joins as deputy cabinet member for transformation.

I am confident in the determination and tenacity of both Andrew and Debbie to help council officers drive those improvements forward. As a cabinet, we have a collective mission - we must see real and lasting improvement in SEND services and deliver on the wider ambitions of this council. The people of Suffolk deserve nothing less.

**Chris Chambers - County Councillor for the Gipping Valley Division**  
**Mob : 07595310290    E-mail : [chris.chambers@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:chris.chambers@suffolk.gov.uk)**





Separately, there has also been change at a senior officer level within SEND services, with two senior leaders having left the organisation late last year and interim leadership in place. A new executive director of children and young people is in the process of being recruited. The application window closed last week. This will be a key executive role and we are specifically looking for someone who understands SEND, knows what success looks like and who can deliver the much-needed cultural change that is needed and that Suffolk children and their families deserve.

I am sorry and deeply disappointed that the speed of change has been too slow and am determined to deliver improvements through leadership change, investments and culture change. Most importantly, I want the experience of children and families to be far better, emotionally sensitive and timely.

Getting this right for the children and young people in Suffolk is my top priority – a commitment shared by councillors and senior leadership team. This is not an empty pledge. We remain steadfast and resolved to go further and faster with our reforms.

Driving forward SEND reform will be paramount. Our job will be to build on the good work that is already underway, including investing more than £55 million to create more than 1,250 additional places in specialist and mainstream schools and the creation of specialist SEND support teams and training for all Suffolk schools to support them to meet the additional needs of children in mainstream schools.

### **Dragon Patcher lands in Suffolk to bolster response to rural potholes**

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Suffolk Highways has welcomed the new pothole-repairing machine to help fix the growing number of potholes experienced nationally during the winter season, with a trial set to initially target defects in rural Suffolk.

The Dragon Patcher is a machine that releases compressed air which cleans the surface of the road, before heating the surface to a temperature that enables repair material to bond effectively with the road surface, allowing the pothole to be repaired with an aggregate and hot bitumen material.

Compared with the traditional approach of repairing potholes, the Dragon Patcher can work five times faster. This trial is in addition to the potholes being repaired around the clock as

part of our routine repair programme, during the past two months Suffolk Highways has repaired 2,851 potholes across Suffolk.

Fuelled by the biodiesel, HVO (hydrotreated vegetable oil), the patcher reduces raw material use and creates zero waste and has shown to provide significant carbon savings when compared to traditional patching techniques.

**Chris Chambers - County Councillor for the Gipping Valley Division**  
**Mob : 07595310290    E-mail : [chris.chambers@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:chris.chambers@suffolk.gov.uk)**



Once the trial ends in Suffolk, a decision will be taken on whether to roll out the technology across the county.

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### Councils' loft insulation offer for Suffolk homes

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Suffolk's Public Sector Leaders have launched a Suffolk Loft Insulation offer, teaming up with builders' merchant Travis Perkins to offer Suffolk residents a significant reduction on loft insulation.

There are four product options available, and residents will receive a 50% discount off their purchase (up to £200), with free delivery.

According to The Energy Saving Trust, it is estimated that an uninsulated home loses a quarter of its heat through its roof. An effective way to reduce this heat loss, and heating bills, is to insulate your loft, attic or flat roof. Correctly installed insulation should pay for itself many times over in its 40-year lifetime.

The offer is open to anyone and will close once the allocated funding has been spent. To find out more visit [www.greensuffolk.org/at-home/grants/](http://www.greensuffolk.org/at-home/grants/). Simply fill out the [online order form](#) and Travis Perkins will be in touch to arrange payment and delivery.

The Loft Insulation Grant is being funded by Suffolk's Public Sector Leaders and Travis Perkins and will help contribute to Suffolk's Climate Emergency Plan and our vision for Suffolk to become Carbon Neutral by 2030.

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### Have your say on Suffolk's local transport plan

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Residents are invited to share their views on how they travel to help inform Suffolk's Local Transport Plan.

The plan sets out a long-term vision for transport in Suffolk and covers key themes such as decarbonisation of transport, strengthening the local economy, promoting health, wellbeing and social inclusion, and creating better-connected places that encourage a range of transport choices.

Suffolk County Council is asking for feedback on the key themes proposed for the fourth version of the plan, which will cover the period until 2040 and respond to long-term transport opportunities and challenges facing Suffolk and the UK as a whole.

A link to the survey can be found at <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/ltp4>. The consultation will run for eight weeks until 8 April 2024.

**Chris Chambers - County Councillor for the Gipping Valley Division**  
**Mob : 07595310290    E-mail : [chris.chambers@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:chris.chambers@suffolk.gov.uk)**





Feedback from the consultation will be collated and inform the production of the draft local transport plan. The full draft document will then be subject to further consultation later in the year.

### Council to review weed control for roads and pavements

In February 2022, the council agreed to stop using glyphosate in its routine weed treatment programmes, to find more natural alternatives to help protect the local environment.

However, the alternative products proved unable to meet requirements, which was further exacerbated by exceptional growing conditions. Multiple applications were sometimes needed which could introduce other negative environmental impacts.

It has proved a challenge to reduce high performing treatments, whilst significantly mitigating the environmental impact. Other local authorities locally have experienced a similar situation.

Regular weed treatment on our highway network will continue using a variety of methods, with plans for glyphosate being considered only when appropriate – the ambition still remains to reduce the use of glyphosate as far as possible.

Teams will continue to monitor and research the different approaches being used to remove weeds on our roads and pavements. Where needed, glyphosate would be used responsibly as it is one of the most cost-effective and long-lasting solutions.

### £4.4 million to be spent on additional staff to strengthen SEND reform

Suffolk County Council's Cabinet confirmed that 60 new members of staff will be recruited to drive forward important reform to the way special educational needs and disability (SEND) services are delivered in Suffolk.

New Cabinet Member for Education and SEND, Andrew Reid, reaffirmed Suffolk County Council's commitment to ensuring improvements to the SEND service go further and faster. This includes an increase in permanent SEND staff of nearly 15%.

These new posts will support the improvement of the quality and timeliness of assessments, plans, reviews, and communications with families.

In January, a report by Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) found significant concerns with the way SEND services are delivered by the NHS and Suffolk County Council. In response to this, the Local Area Partnership, made up of Suffolk County Council, the NHS Suffolk and Northeast Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB) and NHS Norfolk and Waveney ICB, must submit a Priority Action Plan by March 7 outlining the improvement programme.

**Chris Chambers - County Councillor for the Gipping Valley Division**  
**Mob : 07595310290    E-mail : [chris.chambers@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:chris.chambers@suffolk.gov.uk)**





In order to support this improvement programme, an additional £4.4million was signed off during the budget discussions at Full Council on February 15. Of this, £3.4million will provide 46 new full-time posts – a increase of 14.76% in current staffing levels. An additional £1million will be spent in 2024/25 to fund 14 temporary posts.

Cabinet today agreed to delegate authority to approve the priority action plan to be submitted to Ofsted and CQC on March 7 to the statutory director of children’s services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and SEND. The priority action plan is also being approved at the Suffolk and North-East Essex ICB Executive and the Norfolk and Waveney ICB Executive on 4 March 2024.

### Suffolk’s wettest ever winter breaks highway response records

Storm Babet saw nearly two months’ worth of rain fall in 24 hours, the subsequent storms and severe weather events saw more sustained rainfall, leading up to what Met Office described as the fifth wettest February on record since 1836 with several days still to go.

As a result of the extreme weather, Suffolk Highways has seen an 82% increase in requests for action on the highway - 18,000 additional customers reports so far during the 2023/24 financial year.

The number of drainage and flooding issues have increased by a staggering 364% in the last five months when compared to the same period in 2022/23. Suffolk Highways has also responded to 2,117 emergency incidents in the same period, which represents a 64% increase on last year.

The increased wet weather coupled with occasional freezing temperatures this time of year results in a sharp rise in pothole breakouts. Despite these challenges, highways has completed 34% more repairs to potholes in 2023/24 when compared with the previous year.

To help keep up with this unparalleled increase in demand, Suffolk County Council is investing more resource and trialling new ways of working, including:

- Increased highway funding allocated to fix potholes, resurface roads and repair drainage
- 70% increase in highway crews to maintain and repair the roads
- Launching a trial of new ‘Dragon Patcher’ equipment – a pothole-repairing machine which can repair potholes up to five times faster than traditional methods
- Trailing a ‘Road Mender’ – a patching machine used in urban areas which will help boost productivity and present more environmental benefits

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**Mob : 07595310290 E-mail : [chris.chambers@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:chris.chambers@suffolk.gov.uk)**

## **DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT MARCH**

### **Aggregated Council Tax Requirement**

At the MSDC Council meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> February members agreed that the General Fund Council Tax requirement should be increased by 2%, i.e. rising from £171.59 to £175.03 for a Band D property. The maximum suggested by the Government was an increase of 2.9%. Suffolk County Council had set their precept at £64, 828,416 which results in a Band D council tax of £1,571.04. The Police and Crime Commissioner had set their precept at £11,371,712, giving a Band D council tax of £275.58. Aggregated this gives a Band D council tax of £2,021.65.

The Parish precepts for Great Blakenham and Little Blakenham are forecast to increase from 23/24 to 24/25 with corresponding rises in Council Tax Band D. The precept for Somersham is forecast to remain unchanged; however, their Tax Base is forecast to increase slightly, giving a slight reduction in the Band D rate.

The Council introduced an ongoing 100% Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme last year. It is proposed to update the Income Bands by the Consumer Price Index (6.7%) to ensure that the scheme continues to support the most vulnerable households.

### **MSDC Housing Revenue Account Budget**

At the February Council meeting members agreed to a proposed increase of 7.7% in council house rents (£7.33 for social rent and a 9.4% increase for affordable rent (RPI+0.5%). Other items agreed were:  
An RPI increase of 8.9% in garage rents, equivalent to an average rent increase of £3.84 a month  
An increase of 18% for sheltered housing service charges, equivalent to £27.10 a month  
An increase of 44% for sheltered housing utility charges, equivalent to £29.63 a month.

### **Empty Homes and Second Homes – Council Tax Charges**

At the February MSDC Council meeting the vote was carried to introduce a premium of 100% for second homes from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 and to increase charges for empty homes left unoccupied as follows:

Dwellings left unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for 12 months or more should incur a premium of 100% - going up to 200% after 2 years and 300% after ten years.

### **New Sports Facilities in Stowmarket**

Plans for new sports facilities in Stowmarket, including a 3G football pitch, sports pavilion, multi-use games area, sports hall and mini athletics track, have been given the green light.

Mid Suffolk District Council had already agreed a full business case for the first part of its Stowmarket Health, Education and Leisure Facilities (SHELF) project.

Mid Suffolk's planning committee granted full planning permission for the first two parts of the scheme, and outline permission for the third – meaning the council's major investment in the town sporting facilities can now get under way.

The proposals focus on land surrounding Stowmarket High School and Chilton Fields, and follow extensive engagement with partner organisations and sports clubs.

The initial work also includes an improved pitch for Stowmarket Rugby Club, active track, cricket nets and additional paths and fencing.

These new facilities would be available for use by residents, sports groups and clubs.



## **Brownfield sites planning consultation opens**

The government has announced on 13 February that councils in England will need to [prioritise brownfield developments](#).

The bar for refusing brownfield plans will also be made higher for those not reaching their locally agreed housebuilding targets. Planning authorities in England's 20 largest cities and towns will need to follow a 'brownfield presumption', if housebuilding drops below expected levels.

This will make it easier to get permission to build on previously developed brownfield sites.

[A consultation on these proposals](#) has launched today (13 February) and will run until Tuesday 26 March.

Additional consultation details:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/strengthening-planning-policy-for-brownfield-development/strengthening-planning-policy-for-brownfield-development>

## **Consultation opens on changes to various permitted development rights**

On 13th February DLUHC launched a [consultation seeking views on changes to several existing permitted development rights](#) that allow for householder development, building upwards to create new homes, the demolition of certain buildings and rebuild as homes, electric vehicle charge points and air source heat pumps.

The consultation closes on 9 April 2024. If you have any questions, please contact [PDRconsultation2024@levellingup.gov.uk](mailto:PDRconsultation2024@levellingup.gov.uk)

Consultation:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-various-permitted-development-rights-consultation/changes-to-various-permitted-development-rights-consultation>

## **Expansion of the Affordable Homes Guarantee Scheme 2020**

On 12th February DLUHC announced the [expansion of the Affordable Homes Guarantee Scheme](#), which provides low-cost, flexible and long-term loans to housing providers. The scheme can also now be used to upgrade existing properties.

A £3 billion increase in the government-backed loan will fund 20,000 new affordable homes.

As part of the scheme, providers will be able to apply for loans to help make homes fit for the future and to carry out vital building safety works, such as the removal of dangerous cladding.

The loans are funded by a capital markets bond programme. For further information about the scheme, the scheme rules, and how to apply, contact ARA Venn, which is delivering the scheme, at [ahgs@ara-venn.com](mailto:ahgs@ara-venn.com)

Guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-guarantee-scheme-rules-affordable-homes-guarantee-scheme-2020>

### **Reforms to social housing allocations consultation – reminder**

On 30 January, DLUHC launched [a consultation on reforms to social housing allocations](#).

The consultation seeks views from the public, councils, social housing tenants and providers on a range of reforms to how social housing is allocated in England, including to eligibility and qualification criteria, as well as proposals for the social housing waiting list and grounds for eviction.

The consultation will run for eight weeks and closes on 26 March. For any enquiries about the consultation, please contact [socialhousingallocationsconsultation@levellingup.gov.uk](mailto:socialhousingallocationsconsultation@levellingup.gov.uk)

Announcement:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-social-housing-reforms-to-crack-down-on-rule-breakers>

### **Biodiversity net gain requirements**

[The legal requirement for developers to deliver at least a 10% bio-diversity net gain on new developments came into effect on Monday \(12 February\).](#)

On 14 February DLUHC published [guidance giving further information including on the biodiversity net gain statutory framework, planning processes, exemptions and appeals](#).



To help Local Planning Authorities integrate biodiversity net gain at a local level, £10.6 million of funding is being committed to help councils recruit and expand ecologist teams.

Further Information:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/biodiversity-net-gain>

## **Public health updates**

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### **Upcoming 'No Smoking Day'**

This March, the Department of Health and Social Care is launching a campaign to emphasise the health harms of smoking and encourage the 5.3 million smokers in England to quit.

Content will include the latest stats and facts about smoking, the harms of smoking and celebrating the 40th anniversary of No Smoking Day (13 March).

Any queries about the campaign can be sent to [partnership@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:partnership@dhsc.gov.uk).

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### **Latest measles statistics published and guidance for education settings – reminder**

On 22<sup>nd</sup> February the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) published the [latest number of measles cases in England in an updated epidemiological overview](#).

Since the last update a week ago, a further 60 laboratory confirmed measles cases have been confirmed in England. This brings the total number of cases confirmed since 1 October 2023 to 581. Although the outbreak in the West Midlands initially drove the increase in cases, clusters of cases in other regions have continued to increase in the past week.

There is a range of guidance available on GOV.UK and linked below.

The Department for Education has published an [Education Hub blog](#) with guidance on measles and the MMR vaccine for parents, nurseries and schools.

On 22 January, NHS England launched [a campaign for missed MMR vaccines](#). The NHS campaign will see all parents of children aged from six to 11 years contacted encouraging them to make an appointment with their child's GP practice for their missed MMR vaccine.

UKHSA has also produced [a measles communications toolkit to support councils with messages on measles and the MMR vaccine](#). For further information contact: [externalaffairs@ukhsa.gov.uk](mailto:externalaffairs@ukhsa.gov.uk)

### **Regulator of Social Housing publishes second fire safety remediation report for English social housing**

On 22nd February, the [Regulator of Social Housing \(RSH\) published the findings from its second survey on the fire safety of 11 metre plus buildings in the social housing sector](#).

All social landlords are required to submit quarterly data to RSH and DLUHC on the fire safety remediation of relevant buildings for which they are responsible.

The results show that fire risk assessments have been undertaken on around 98% of all buildings reported, and the majority of remaining buildings will have one carried out in the next nine months.

RSH's report highlights the responsibility of boards and councillors to understand landlords' legal obligations in relation to managing the safety of buildings, seek assurance that they are being met, and address issues promptly so that tenants are safe in their homes.

RSH will continue to monitor the performance of landlords in remediating 11 metre plus buildings and the progress they are making against their plans.

Announcement:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/rsh-publishes-second-fire-safety-remediation-report-for-english-social-housing>



## **Plan to reduce anti-social behaviour rolled out nationwide**

On 15th February [the government announced the latest step in the Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan launched last year](#). Every police force in England and Wales will receive at least £1 million to increase patrols to tackle violence and disorder, targeted in areas with high levels of anti-social behaviour.

This approach has already been piloted in 10 areas, with over 80,000 hours of patrols in the six months since it launched. The £66m of funding announced today will be targeted in areas where there is high prevalence of violence, anti-social behaviour, and illegal public drug consumption.

In addition, the government has also set a new target to dismantle another 1,000 county lines by August.

## **Council Leaders warn of 'catastrophic effect' of Suffolk County Council budget plans**

**13/02/24**

Proposed changes to Housing Related Support 'could impact on most vulnerable residents'.

The Leaders of Suffolk's district and borough councils have warned of "a catastrophic effect on hundreds of Suffolk's most vulnerable residents" should proposals contained within Suffolk County Council's Budget for 2024/25 be agreed.

Cllr John Ward (Babergh), Cllr Andy Mellen (Mid Suffolk), Cllr Caroline Topping (East Suffolk), Cllr Neil MacDonald (Ipswich), and Cllr Cliff Waterman (West Suffolk) have written to the County Council, expressing their grave concern with the proposed changes to Housing Related Support (HRS); a temporary housing scheme which assists people in the care of Suffolk's Social and Children's Services.

HRS is a model which helps individuals learn the skills needed to live independently prior to rehousing by district and borough councils, and it is a vital part of the pathway to prevent or relieve homelessness. However, Suffolk County Council now intends to remove all funding, and decommission the scheme by March 2025, having signed a five-year contract with support providers only just over a year ago.

In the letter sent to Suffolk County Council, the Leaders have urged the authority to work with district and boroughs, and to reverse this decision, which they believe does not consider the longer-term impacts - not just on the county's most vulnerable people, but on the budgets that this approach will supposedly relieve.

They wrote: "The Housing Related Support service provides over 700 accommodation places, delivered through multiple specialist providers. These specialist providers, many of whom are charities, provide support to tenants to help them live independently. This service is not available via any other route, and we understand that there is a waiting list of around 400 people.

"The client groups for Housing Related Support are amongst the most vulnerable in Suffolk. They include 16- and 17-year-olds who have no family with whom to live, 18-year-old care-leavers and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. They also include young people who are also parents. Without your supported accommodation, many of these children and young people will add further pressure to your Children and Young People Services budget.

"Clients also include adults with mental health conditions or learning disabilities, a history of drug or alcohol dependency, or those being released from prison. It's likely that the lack of supported housing for these individuals will place additional pressure on your other Adult and Community Services budgets.

"If people who previously qualified for Housing Related Support, are left without accommodation then rough sleeping will increase. We know that this will impact on these vulnerable people's health, that they are more likely to begin or

continue substance misuse, and to suffer from mental health issues. The impact of this will increase demand on other County Council services which are already stretched.

"We recognise that times are tough and that difficult decisions need to be made. But we believe that a decision to end Housing Related Support is short-sighted and will haunt Suffolk County Council in years to come as the implications come to fruition."

## **Councils' loft insulation offer for Suffolk homes**

**09/02/24**

Funding is available to help Suffolk residents make their homes warmer and save money on their energy bills

Funding is available to help Suffolk residents make their homes warmer and save money on their energy bills.

Suffolk's Public Sector Leaders, which includes Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils, have launched a Suffolk Loft Insulation offer.

Thanks to teaming up with builders' merchant Travis Perkins, Suffolk residents can get a significant reduction on loft insulation.

There are four product options available and residents will receive a 50% discount off their purchase (up to £200), with free delivery.

According to The Energy Saving Trust, it is estimated that an uninsulated home loses a quarter of its heat through its roof.

An effective way to reduce this heat loss, and heating bills, is to insulate your loft, attic or flat roof.

Correctly installed insulation should pay for itself many times over in its 40-year lifetime.

Cllr Gerald Kelly, chair of the Suffolk environment cabinet members group, said:

"Good insulation is a simple addition to immediately improve the warmth and comfort of your home. This should mean you have to put the heating on less, which will save you money and also be making a positive contribution to climate change.

"Suffolk Public Sector Leaders are continually looking for ways like the Loft Insulation Grant to support Suffolk residents to have more energy efficient homes, and drive down the county's carbon emissions for a more sustainable future."

Andrew Hunt, Account Manager at Travis Perkins has said:

"Travis Perkins is thrilled to be working with Suffolk's councils to offer this fantastic support for Suffolk residents.

"With energy prices still high and an ambition to reduce Suffolk's carbon emissions, we're delighted to offer a discount which will benefit and reach many."

The offer is open to anyone and will close once the allocated funding has been spent.

To find out more [visit the Green Suffolk website](#) and simply fill out the online order form.

Travis Perkins will then get in touch to arrange payment and delivery.

The Loft Insulation Grant is being funded by Suffolk's Public Sector Leaders and Travis Perkins and will help contribute to Suffolk's Climate Emergency Plan and our vision for Suffolk to become Carbon Neutral by 2030.



*Adrienne Marriott  
Blakenham District Councillor  
05/03/24*