

**BELIEVE**

**IN**

**SUFFOLK**

**PROUD OF OUR HERITAGE,  
AMBITIOUS FOR OUR FUTURE.**

**SUFFOLK LABOUR**  
MANIFESTO 2021

# BELIEVE IN SUFFOLK

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PROUD OF OUR  
HERITAGE,  
AMBITIOUS FOR OUR  
FUTURE.



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## EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

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### INVESTING IN SUFFOLK'S FUTURE



## HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE & COMMUNITIES

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## **Labour believes in Suffolk - we will:**

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**SUFFOLK LABOUR; Proud of our heritage, ambitious for our future.**

# FOREWORD:

**It is time for change. One that looks to help people and businesses recover, not only from the pandemic, but from a decade of Conservative cuts, incompetence and complacency too.**

This is their record of failure: public services eroded as council tax increases year on year. Children's centres, health visitors and school transport have all been cut. Millions spent on infrastructure projects that will never see the light of day.

People are using food banks in record numbers. Unemployment has more than doubled. Incomes have stagnated, businesses lost. More than 50,000 children live in poverty. Enough is enough.

**Labour believes in Suffolk - we are proud of our heritage and ambitious for our future.** We want to protect the things that make our county great by safeguarding our beautiful countryside; reconnecting our rural communities; and helping our tourism industry get back on its feet.

We also want to unlock our potential, by offering a high-class education to every child; supporting all of our residents, from young families through to our loved ones in care; and creating well-paid employment through a green recovery.



We need a new plan for Suffolk. This is ours. **Vote Labour on 6 May** and, together, we can deliver a better future for our county.

## Sarah

**CLlr Sarah Adams**

Leader of the Labour Group  
Suffolk County Council



# ECONOMY, BUSINESS & LIVING STANDARDS

**Suffolk's Conservatives have wasted council taxpayers' money on an epic scale - we are all paying the price for their record of failure.**

Conservative councillors have increased our council tax bills by £170 for the average household over the past five years while making cuts to children's centres, health visitors and school transport. They refused to pay workers a Real Living Wage and more than 50,000 children now live in poverty in Suffolk.

Suffolk cannot afford another four years of Conservative financial incompetence - we are paying more and more only to get less and less in return.

We must help our businesses recover, give people a decent wage for a hard day's work, and make Suffolk a place where people can do business. This is how Labour will **rebuild Suffolk's economy:**

# LABOUR will:

**Secure a pay rise for our heroic key workers** - A Labour Council would pay a Real Living Wage - £9.50 an hour - to all of Suffolk County Council's employees and guarantee that all new tenders are only given to companies paying the Real Living Wage. Key workers such as care staff sacrificed so much during the pandemic; it is time to pay them properly.

**Lift people out of poverty** - Hunger and poverty is a scourge on our society and has grown after a decade of Conservative austerity. The fact that more than 50,000 children now live in poverty is a damning indictment. A Labour administration will immediately implement a Food Justice Action plan - we will ensure that people are not only fed and warm, but also eradicate the causes of poverty itself.

**Rebuild Suffolk's economy** - Labour will establish a SME business fund to help our local businesses - particularly in the tourism and hospitality industry - recover; introduce a new apprenticeship and graduate scheme which will deliver high skilled, well-paid, secure employment for our young people; and expand our adult learning services to help people re-skill and re-train, removing the barriers for those who have lost their jobs.

**Drive Suffolk's broadband into the 21st Century** - With more people now working from home and businesses adapting how they operate, Labour will prioritise a rapid rollout of ultrafast and Full Fibre broadband coverage in Suffolk.

**Conserve our countryside and regenerate our towns** - Instead of pursuing housing developments on greenfield areas and high-grade farmland, a Labour-run county council would instead seek to deliver quality, affordable housing on brownfield sites. This will help protect our precious countryside and help regenerate our town centres.



# EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

From chaotic school closures in January, to leaving thousands of children without access to learning and refusing to extend Free School Meals over the school holidays for hungry children, Boris Johnson has treated children, families, teachers and schools as an afterthought.

This is nothing new - look at the Conservative's record of failure over the past decade. Cuts to school transport. Cuts to health visitors. Cuts to children's centres. A failure to tackle exclusions and off-rolling. A failure to adequately support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). A failure to ensure that every school in Suffolk is rated 'good' or 'outstanding'.

Even in opposition, Labour have led the way on education and children's services in Suffolk. Fighting for the rights of children and families. Initiating the development of a plan to tackle food poverty. This is how Labour will **invest in Suffolk's future:**



# LABOUR will:

**End the digital divide** - The government's failure to provide laptops and other IT equipment when schools closed left thousands of children without access to learning. Labour would make 'IT Kit for Kids' permanent, guaranteeing every pupil in Suffolk access to a laptop and the internet.

**Fix school transport** - It has been three years since the Conservatives forced through their dreadful school transport cuts, yet families are still feeling the effects. Labour would put a stop to the chaos by immediately fixing a policy which splits villages, separates siblings, is expensive, and provides no security around spare seats.

**Focus on early years** - In 2015, Suffolk had 49 full-time children's centres - in less than six years, the Conservatives have cut this number to 17. Labour would ensure that every family has access to a children's centre and expand existing services; support nurseries which have been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic; and increase the focus on early intervention and support.

**Expand adult learning** - The pandemic and the subsequent lack of economic support from the government has resulted in thousands of jobs being lost. Labour would expand and provide additional focus to the county council's adult learning service in order to help people retrain and get back into work.

**Give parity to Special Educational Needs and Disability** - Labour were instrumental in delivering the plans for 800 new SEND places, but this alone is not enough to fix the widespread failures in the system. Labour will look to accelerate and increase the delivery of new specialist places, ensure that all referrals and EHCP plans are delivered within the legal time frame, are high quality, and reviewed on time; and drive down exclusions, off-rolling and forced home learning.



# HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE & COMMUNITIES

**For years, the Conservatives have promised a landmark strategy to support our adult care sector, but this has repeatedly been kicked into the long-grass.**

We cannot afford to wait for Boris Johnson's Government any longer - a Labour-run Council would undergo an immediate review to deliver a system that guarantees good pay and conditions; ensures all settings are able to deliver high-quality care for our loved ones; and ceases all placements in inadequate care homes and sheltered accommodation.

Labour would also launch an inquiry into the scandal of hospital patients being discharged into care homes without being tested for Covid-19, a decision which led to one of the highest care home death tolls in the region. We would also ensure a readily available supply of PPE and testing, both of which were lacking over much of the pandemic. This is how Labour will **care for Suffolk:**

# LABOUR will:

**Address the county's mental health crisis** - Suffolk's mental health provision is patchy and poorly funded. Labour advocates the splitting up of the failing Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust to deliver better provision. We would also end the postcode lottery by securing long-term funding to roll-out successful pilots county-wide, and to support initiatives to combat isolation and loneliness. It is crucial that, whether you are a child in school, or someone living on your own, you can access the right support.

**Care for our elderly and vulnerable** - Labour will undergo an review into the care sector in Suffolk to deliver a local system that will guarantee good pay and conditions for staff; ensure all settings are well-funded to deliver high-quality care; and to cease all placements in inadequate care homes and sheltered accommodation. Labour would also launch an inquiry into care home deaths and ensure PPE and testing are readily available.

**Re-employ health visitors** - In 2019, the Conservatives cut a third of Suffolk's health visitors, despite their vital role in family health. Labour would restore our county's health visiting service in full.

**Tackle health inequalities** - Labour would reduce health inequalities and look to increase life expectancy across all of Suffolk, particularly in our urban areas. We will improve air quality in our towns and increase the access to medical services.

**Support our voluntary sector** - The Conservatives have cut the support to Suffolk's charities and voluntary organisations and Age UK Suffolk has already been lost as a result. Labour would look to safeguard the future of Suffolk's Citizens Advice Bureaus and other organisations by providing a long-term financial committment. Without the voluntary and charity sector, the pandemic would have been so much harder for people to live through.



# TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE

**For a decade, the Conservatives have slashed support for public transport, leaving vulnerable people - particularly in rural areas - more isolated than ever before.**

Communities face major delays in trying to implement schemes that will make their towns and villages safer and the Conservatives have allowed our roads to fall into disrepair.

They also threw away £8m on the Upper Orwell Crossings in Ipswich. The Gull Wing bridge in Lowestoft has gone over budget by a staggering £62m. The Ipswich Northern Bypass was canned after spending another £1m. The estimates for the Sudbury bypass ballooned to £70m before being scrapped. They've failed to secure a four-village bypass on the A12.

We need a Council that is ambitious, forward-thinking and proud of where we live. This is how Labour will **reconnect Suffolk**:

# LABOUR will:

**Reconnect Suffolk** - Labour will create Transport for Suffolk, a not-for-profit organisation that will reform public transport in Suffolk. Our fully integrated model will bring together buses, demand-responsive minibuses, community transport and taxis, as well as rural travel hubs and park and ride services. This approach will modernise transport in Suffolk and deliver a public transport network that is flexible, affordable and accessible for every resident.

**Make our roads safer** - Communities want to make roads in their towns and villages safer, but their ideas are often frustrated by long, drawn out processes. Labour would empower communities to help decide which local schemes to pursue - this could include the lowering of speed limits or introducing speed reduction measures. Labour will also keep more street lights on for longer, reversing the cuts made by the Conservatives - we all have a right to feel safe.

**Repair shabby Suffolk highways** - Potholes, muddy verges and broken road signs are a poor advert for our county. The Conservatives might not have any pride in our county, but we do. Labour would end broken Conservative promises by cleaning up our highways and embarking on a focused programme of works to fix Suffolk's potholes problem.

**Decarbonise Suffolk's roads** - Labour will commit to installing a minimum of 300 rapid new charge points; aid the rollout of electric buses throughout the county; and improve cycling and walking routes which make sense of the roads and paths we have to share space cleverly with other road users.

**Pursue viable infrastructure, not vanity projects** - Labour will put an end to Tory wastage by only pursuing infrastructure projects which are needed, viable and economically sound.



# ENVIRONMENT & PUBLIC PROTECTION

**At a time when we need to see decisive action on climate change, the Conservatives are paying lip service. A handful of EV charge points is simply not going to cut it.**

Labour will be far more ambitious for Suffolk, embarking on a significant flooding and water capture programme; planting a tree for every person in Suffolk; and encouraging the expansion of the natural environment.

It is also clear that striving towards net zero and economic prosperity need not be mutually exclusive. That is why our co-op green investment group will help kickstart the green recovery right here in Suffolk, creating new jobs and investment.

We will also end years of Tory grandstanding by fighting for a better deal for our county when it comes to large energy projects. This is how Labour will **deliver a cleaner, greener Suffolk:**

# LABOUR will:

**Protect and expand our natural environment** - Plant 750,000 trees, one for every person in Suffolk; manage our county's road verges to benefit wildflowers and other nature; and properly maintain and extend Suffolk's public rights of way network.

**Invest in green energy** - Labour would establish a co-operative green investment group for renewable energy and clean technology projects. This would drive down the prices of installation, reduce energy bills for homeowners and business, increase council revenue and help the drive to net zero. Suffolk-based renewables firms will be used in order to create jobs and boost investment in the local economy. Where suitable, disused land and excess building space will be used for community renewable projects.

**Fight for a better deal for Suffolk** - The Conservatives have been all talk and no action when it has come to large energy projects - Suffolk will lose out as a result. Labour would demand new infrastructure that would mitigate in the short-term and leave a long-term benefit; seek far greater environmental conservation; and work with developers and education partners to establish a centre of excellence to ensure Suffolk's residents are able to fill the thousands of jobs that will be created over the next decade.

**Safeguard our communities from flooding** - Our rural communities hit by flooding have been forgotten by the Conservatives - Labour would invest in flood defences as well as developing water capture schemes to be reused in farming, environmental habitats and industry.

**Stop gambling with Suffolk's Fire and Rescue Service** - The Conservatives have put the lives of Suffolk's firefighters at risk by slashing the number of firefighters on engines. Labour would restore the five crew minimum, reduce response times and embark on a recruitment and retention drive.



# THANK YOU

To the NHS staff who have risked their lives to keep us safe; to the care workers who have held our loved ones' hands when we couldn't be there; to the teachers and school staff who have gone over and above for our children; to the shopworkers, delivery drivers and farmers who have kept us fed; to everyone involved in the vaccination programme who are saving lives; to all the charities and voluntary organisations who are a lifeline to so many people; to the individuals and businesses who continue to support their neighbours and their communities. **Thank you.**