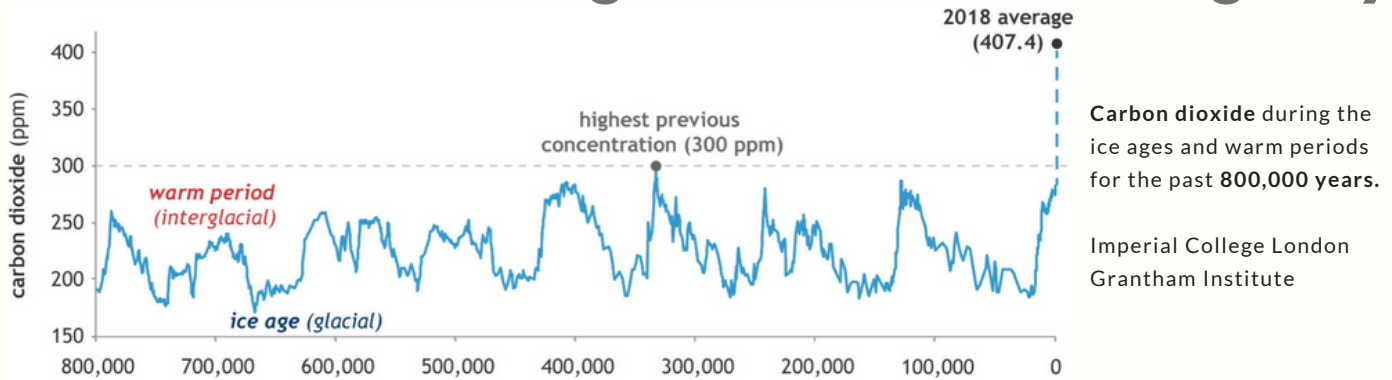


CLIMATE CHANGE FACTSHEET

1. Understanding the Climate Emergency



How will climate change affect us?

The declaration of the **Climate Emergency** by Local Authority Members has prompted a **demand for information** about climate science and legislation by the **general public** and local decision makers. This factsheet aims to provide a brief summary of relevant data to foster a deeper understanding of climate change and how it **affects** us here in **Suffolk**.

For more information on these issues, the following websites are useful in providing evidence and background information:

- The **IPPC** and the scientific evidence: <http://www.ipcc.ch/about>
- **International agreements** and the UN: <http://www.unfccc.int>
- **UK Committee on Climate Change**: <http://www.theccc.org.uk>
- **UK flood risk** information: <http://www.gov.uk/check-flood-risk>
- **Met Office**: <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/climate-change>
- **Health**: <http://www.who.int/globalchange/summary/en/index5.htm>
- **Impacts for Suffolk**: <http://www.greensuffolk.org/assets/Greenest-County/Adaptation/General/What-risk-to-Suffolk.pdf>

WHAT ROLE FOR UK INSTITUTIONS?

In the UK it is the role of certain institutions to monitor progress towards achieving the targets set out in the Climate Change Act. The main body is the **Committee on Climate Change**, which gives independent advice to the government on how to prepare for climate change impacts. It is currently chaired by the Rt Hon Lord Deben (John Gummer), a Suffolk-based former Environment Secretary and Suffolk Coastal MP.

KEY MECHANISMS

THE IPPC AND THE UNFCCC

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPPC) is the body set up in 1988 to coordinate and assess scientific evidence on climate change. With a secretariat in Bonn, It uses all available evidence to make periodic assessments which inform the international discussions known as the Conference of Parties (COPs) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This convention began in 1992 in Rio, when the first convention was signed by 197 countries. Since then significant updated agreements have been made in Kyoto (1997), Copenhagen (2009) and in Paris (2016).

PARIS AGREEMENT 2016

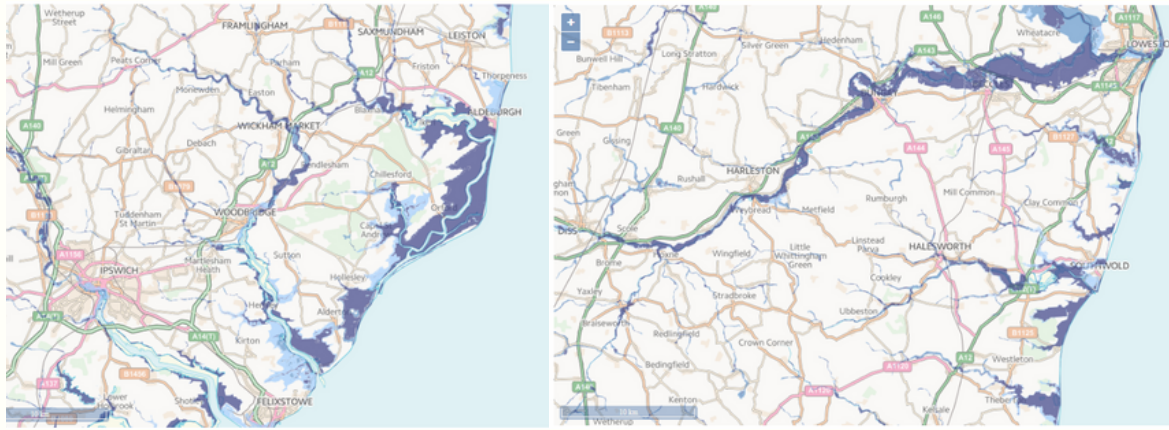
The most significant UN agreement, signed by 194 nations, agreed to keep warming since pre-industrial levels to 'well below 2°C' with a goal to keep it within 1.5°C. It is up to each nation to set their own voluntary Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the goal, and to monitor their progress towards it. In order to meet this target, we must act now otherwise global warming is likely to exceed 1.5°C between 2030 and 2050.

CLIMATE CHANGE ACT 2008

This was the first time in the world that a reduction of greenhouses gases was put into law, making the UK world leader in terms of ambition.

The Act's original target was to reduce emissions by 2050 to 80% lower than 1990 levels, however this has been amended in 2019 to a **100% reduction target** by 2050.

The Act also sets targets for work towards preparing for the drought and flooding we will see as a result of changes.



Flooding maps of the Suffolk Coast show the extent and risk of flooding from rivers or the sea:

Very low (light blue)
 Low (medium blue)
 High (dark blue)

[HTTPS://FLOOD-WARNING-
 INFORMATION.SERVICE.GOV.UK/
 LONG-TERM-FLOOD-RISK](https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/long-term-flood-risk)

How will climate change affect us in Suffolk?

Despite the **stark warnings** we see in the news about the current and future effects of **climate change** on our health and livelihoods, the gradual changes in the past decades have made it difficult for the public and decision makers to grasp what it actually means for us here in Suffolk. In the last few years we have seen **more evidence** of the effects, which your constituents may have written to you about. These include:

- **Increased summer droughts** require more irrigation. Some Suffolk farms are now drier than Jerusalem.
- **Increased intense rainfall** events cause surface water flooding on roads, causing travel disruption.
- **Increased storm events** (such as Ciara and Dennis) combined with spring tides, cause **storm surges** up our estuaries and coastal **flooding and erosion**. This damages properties and business premises. Combined with **sea level rises** from warming oceans, **significant flooding and inundation** will occur (see box on Coastal Partnership East below).
- All of the above can **disrupt our critical infrastructure**, including the **food** and **medical** supply chains, which, combined with the **disease** risks which are a byproduct of these impacts, could be **life threatening**.

Coastal Partnership East (CPE) is a partnership between Great Yarmouth Borough Council, North Norfolk District Council and East Suffolk Council. In Suffolk CPE manages East Suffolk Council's coastal assets and frontages from Corton in the north to Landguard Point in the south. Climate change, resulting sea level rise and more extreme weather present increasing challenges for coastal communities and businesses along one of the fastest eroding coastlines in western Europe



www.coasteast.org.uk

What is my Council doing in response to the Climate Emergency declaration in 2019?

Suffolk County Council:

The Council is investigating ways to cut carbon and harmful emissions on a spend to save basis, with the ambition to make all council buildings, schools and services carbon neutral by 2030.

East Suffolk Council:

The climate emergency task group, which is made up of a cross-party group of members, is reviewing the recent climate emergency report it commissioned and is reporting quarterly to Cabinet on proposed actions. Updates are online:

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/environment/climate-change/east-suffolk-environment-task-group/>

West Suffolk Council:

The Council has set up a taskforce that has produced a road map of around 50 initiatives, agreed by the Cabinet, to build on their already successful work to reduce greenhouse emissions to net zero by 2030. You can read more online at: <https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/protecting-our-environment/>

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils:

In 2019 the Council set up a taskforce engaged with environmental experts to develop an action plan which was unanimously approved by Cabinet in 2020, forming the two councils' first Carbon Reduction Management Plan.

Ipswich Borough Council

The Borough has declared a climate emergency and produced a plan of action which Cabinet approved in 2020.

What about biodiversity?

Climate change will impact human lives in the same way as it will affect all living things. The impacts of more extreme temperatures and weather events affect **habitat** and **food availability** for animals, whilst **plants** will be badly affected by **drought**. On coasts and estuaries, **salt water inundation** will render farmland **unproductive** at best, unusable at worst.

There is also lots of evidence of the impacts of **pollution** on wildlife, be it **air** or **water** pollution. Aside from these gradual impacts, there is a significant risk that **human migration** will cause changes in land use which will encroach on wild spaces where nature thrives. In Suffolk, particularly in our AONBs and nationally important nature reserves, nature **needs protecting**, for its inherent value and for the **ecosystem services** it provides to sustain human life.

To find out how UK legislation protects biodiversity see:

www.jncc.gov.uk/our-work/uk-bap/

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