

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – FEBRUARY 2020



Cllr Stephen Burroughes - Framlingham Division

• SUFFOLK CELEBRATES CQC SUCCESS

Suffolk's recent Care Quality Commission statistics are in and Suffolk is now top of the table for comparator local authority areas. In Suffolk, 89.04% of Adult Social Care locations are rated as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission, the standards agency for adult care. When it comes to the national rankings, Suffolk is performing equally well. Ranked as fourth nationally for 'Good' or 'Outstanding' rated care locations, Suffolk shines out as a great area for adult social care. This is particularly impressive when it is considered that Suffolk has over 100 more adult social care locations than any of the other areas listed in the top ten. More information regarding the CQC ratings of local authority areas or individual care locations can be found on the [Care Quality Commission website](#).

• CLLR HICKS LEADER'S STATEMENT ON THE IPSWICH NORTHERN ROUTE

Since Suffolk's Public Sector Leaders (SPSL) first took the decision to pursue development of an Ipswich Northern Route (INR), I have been clear, as leader of Suffolk County Council (SCC), that the project must be fully collaborative and follow the processes set out by the Department for Transport (DfT) if it is to enjoy any realistic chance of success. This week, SCC met our commitment to SPSL to undertake phase one of the DfT process, by publishing the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC). This concluded that there was a good economic business case to continue the project to phase two. However, alongside the SOBC, SCC outlined five issues which would need to be considered if SCC were to recommend whether the project proceeds. These issues are:

- The way Government allocates funding for road projects has evolved since 2016. There is now a need to provide not only a compelling business case for the road itself, but also to show how the road will enable or support additional housing growth. This need for additional housing falls under the remit of district and borough councils. SCC, as the transport authority for Suffolk, will need clarity on the willingness and ability of the district and borough councils to deliver such growth, beyond that already committed to in their respective local plans.
- The need for widespread political support, both at a national and local level, to proceed to the next stage, factoring in the levels of public support and any local changes to the political landscape as a result of the May 2019 and December 2019 elections.
- A petition received from the STOP! campaign, which is against the project, is scheduled to be responded to by a meeting of Suffolk County Council on 13 February 2020.
- Serious consideration of the climate emergency declared in 2019.
- Acceptance that the scheme has no realistic chance of succeeding in gaining government funding as a "road only scheme".

So far, we have received responses from Ipswich Borough Council, East Suffolk Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and Babergh District Council. We have also received a response from Tom Hunt, MP for Ipswich. Dr Dan Poulter, MP for Central Suffolk and North Ipswich, and Dr Therese Coffey, MP for Suffolk Coastal, have also made their views on the Ipswich Northern Route clear prior to publication of the SOBC this week. This is a complex issue for everyone in Suffolk. The SOBC suggests there is a strong business case to proceed. However, pursuing a project of this scale and financial size clearly needs widespread political support as, without this, Government is unlikely to even support the next phase when £3m is needed to complete the Full Business Case.

Furthermore, without agreement of the district and borough councils to build the additional houses necessary to secure government funding (above those already agreed within their local plans), I do not believe this project can proceed with any degree of success. Therefore, after careful consideration of the above and the wider political views, along with the very real concerns of families and businesses located close to any of the proposed routes, and all the responses received, it has become increasingly clear that, as Leader of Suffolk County Council, I am now in a position to recommend to my Cabinet that the Ipswich Northern Route should not proceed to the next phase of development.

To bring the uncertainty surrounding this issue to an end for all concerned, I will be bringing a paper to a meeting of Cabinet on 25 February where the final decision will be made, which we must do as the highways' authority for Suffolk. To avoid pre-empting my own Cabinet's decision, I do not intend to offer further commentary beyond this statement.

• NEW PERMIT SCHEME AIMS TO ADDRESS ROADWORK DISRUPTION

On 28 January, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet gave the go-ahead for a new permit scheme that they hope will reduce delays on Suffolk's roads caused by roadworks. The introduction of a roadworks permit scheme for the county's roads

will give Suffolk County Council's Network Assurance Team enhanced powers to place conditions on work carried out by utility companies and other organisations, including Suffolk Highways.

At present, public utilities simply need to inform Suffolk County Council of the dates when they are planning to do their works. Under a permit scheme, they would have to ask for permission and the council can either approve, refuse or amend their request as they see fit.

Applicants would also have to pay a fee when applying for a permit to do roadworks. The cost will vary depending on the duration of the proposed work, the strategic importance of the affected road, and the time of day the work is due to take place. If roadworks occur outside of the peak congestion periods, the fee could be reduced. The permit scheme is used successfully elsewhere in the country and there is typically a reduction in congestion on the network. The permit scheme will provide more power to control proposed roadworks. It places responsibility on the applicant to better plan their work. There will be a cost to the local authority to administer the permit scheme because they will need to recruit additional staff and amend existing software to cater for permits. However, the costs associated with the additional work involved will be recovered through the fee income associated with the scheme, making it cost neutral. The scheme starts 1 April 2020.

• **DON'T LET YOUR WASTE BE FLY TIPPED**

Suffolk residents are being urged to dispose of their waste safely to protect the countryside as part of a new fly-tipping campaign. Last year in Suffolk, there were 3,496 incidents of fly-tipping reported to councils, which costs taxpayers and landowners hundreds of thousands of pounds to clear. Incidents ranged in size from a few bags of household waste left on street corners, up to tipper loads of industrial waste discarded in Suffolk's countryside. The SCRAP fly-tipping campaign is aimed at residents and businesses whose waste is sometimes fly-tipped by unlicensed operators. It aims to remind people that they should only allow licensed waste carriers to take waste away for them. The fly-tipping campaign brings together all of Suffolk's councils, along with the Environment Agency, Suffolk Constabulary, the Forestry Commission, the Broads Authority and rural business groups the National Farmers' Union (NFU) and the Country Land and Business Association (CLA). The Suffolk Waste Partnership says people can avoid an unlimited fine by following the SCRAP code:

- Suspect ALL waste carriers.
- Check with the Environment Agency on 03708 506 506, or on their website, that the provider taking your waste away is licensed.
- Refuse unexpected offers to have waste taken away & what will happen to your waste.
- Paperwork should be obtained – get a full receipt.

For more information about fly-tipping and legal ways to get rid of unwanted items, please see www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk/fly-tipping

• **BURY ST EDMUNDS SET FOR £150,000 WORTH OF IMPROVEMENTS TO ANGEL HILL**

Suffolk Highways plans to repair areas of blockwork, and improve two existing crossing points, on Angel Hill and Crown Street in Bury St Edmunds. While onsite, teams will also be upgrading and reprogramming the traffic signals on Northgate Street junction. The £150,000 project is due to take place between 17 February and 27 March 2020.

Suffolk Highways has worked in collaboration with Bury St Edmunds Town Council and West Suffolk Council to agree suitable construction methods and timeframes. Businesses have also been engaged with to address their concerns and ensure the works cause minimal disruption to trade.

The works will require Angel Hill and Crown Street to be closed in two phases.

- **Phase 1 – Honey Hill to Northgate Street:** Vehicles travelling from Crown Street will be provided access to Churchgate Street and Angel Hill. Vehicles entering Angel Hill via Abbeygate Street may turn left and proceed via Northgate or Eastgate Street. Pedestrian access will be maintained at all times.
- **Phase 2 – Churchgate Street to The Athenaeum:** Vehicles travelling from Northgate or Eastgate Street can access Angel Hill. Vehicles travelling from Crown Street can access Churchgate Street. Pedestrian access will be maintained at all times.

In an attempt to alleviate parking issues for Zone D permit holders, West Suffolk Council has agreed to allow them to make use of Ram Meadow car park, free of charge.

Whilst Suffolk Highways currently is unable to provide an exact date on which the road closure setup will switch from Phase 1 to Phase 2, both key stakeholders and residents of Angel Hill and Crown Street will be updated once works have commenced onsite.

- **NEW RECYCLING CENTRE OPENS IN BURY ST EDMUNDS**

The £3.9million flagship site in Fornham Road, Bury St Edmunds, opened on 16 January and replaces the now closed recycling centre at Rougham Hill. The new recycling centre is part of the West Suffolk Operational Hub, a £23million project by West Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council to manage waste by relocating a number of facilities to a single site.

The centre is the first open air site in Suffolk where all containers can be accessed by the public from ground level, removing the need for steps. Visitors are able to recycle the same wide range of materials as they did at the Rougham Hill recycling centre. There is also an onsite Reuse shop selling items either reclaimed from the skips or donated directly by the public, with proceeds going to the Benjamin Foundation.

- **SUFFOLK TO HOST FINAL STAGE OF THE WOMEN'S TOUR IN 2020**

The world's top cyclists will return to Suffolk this June as the county hosts the final stage of The Women's Tour on Saturday 13 June. It will be the first time since 2014 that Suffolk has hosted the final stage of The Women's Tour, with riders tackling a route from Haverhill to Felixstowe. To mark the announcement, organisers joined Suffolk partners at the Port of Felixstowe, the UK's biggest and busiest container port, and one of the largest in Europe, which will feature in the closing kilometres of the 2020 race.

Since 2014, The Women's Tour has covered more than 560 kilometres of racing in Suffolk, with the county hosting the opening stage of the race in 2015, 2016, 2018 and 2019, as well as the final stage of the first edition in 2014. The six stages during that period (in 2014 two stages of the race visited Suffolk) have seen over 250,000 spectators cheer on the riders at the roadside in the county, with a net economic impact since 2014 of in excess of £5.3 million for the Suffolk economy.

This will be the first time that Haverhill has hosted The Women's Tour, while Felixstowe last hosted the race in 2014, when Stage Three began in the East Suffolk town. In addition to Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council, the stage is also supported by local sponsors Palmer Group and Vertas Group, and West Suffolk Council and Babergh & Mid Suffolk Council. More details of the 2020 Women's Tour route will be announced in the coming weeks, as well as further information about the route of the Suffolk stage of the race.

- **DATE AGREED FOR PLANS TO TACKLE SUFFOLK'S PARKING PROBLEMS**

Councils in Suffolk are ramping up activity in order to take on responsibility for local parking management from 6 April 2020. Parking patrols in Suffolk will soon be managed by district and borough councils, in a bid to improve parking locally and drive down nuisance and unlawful parking in towns and villages across Suffolk. Traditionally, roadside parking offences were a matter for the Police. However, parking has become a lower priority for them, so Suffolk County Council is transferring this responsibility to local district and borough councils under a process known as civil parking enforcement, or CPE.

Councils already manage public car parks in many towns and villages, so the changes make sense. Suffolk Constabulary is supportive of the move because the transfer of responsibilities will enable them to spend additional time on keeping communities safe and arresting and bringing offenders to justice. Moving the responsibility from the police to local councils requires that statutory notice is given in Parliament. The parliamentary order was laid on 9 January 2020.

CPE has been running successfully in Ipswich since 2005. Both Ipswich Borough Council and all the district councils have been working collaboratively with Police and Suffolk County Council in the planning stages to ensure a smooth implementation county-wide.

- **REVIEW OF CHILDREN'S CENTRE SERVICES TO EXPAND LOCAL OFFER**

On 10 January, Suffolk County Council launched a review of its Children's Centre service, with a view to strengthening its current family offer and expanding services. There will be no reduction in service budget as a result of this review. In fact, any savings made through the process, such as on existing building costs, will be re-invested back into the 0-19 service to strengthen the current offer to families and to help develop future provision for young people and their families across Suffolk. It is important to note that this also means there will be no staff redundancies as part of this review. The consultation will run for seven weeks until 5pm on Sunday 1 March 2020. Details of the process, all supporting information and the consultation questionnaire can be found on the council's website at www.suffolk.gov.uk/ccconsultation.

Anyone who does not have internet access can complete the online questionnaire at their local library for free or request a hard copy or easy read version of the questionnaire by calling 0345 603 1842. An extensive period of research and evaluation into current service provision was undertaken ahead of developing the proposal. This involved local analysis of each centre to understand how many local families have access to the site, who uses it, and how far it is from other community facilities that deliver family services, including local libraries.

As a result of this research, a proposal has been developed, which suggests the following approach:

- Develop 16 full-time Family Hubs.
- Develop 11 part-time Family Hubs.
- Re-purpose nine sites that do not offer suitable accommodation for a Family Hub or are in an area where there are not enough nursery places. The sites will be re-purposed for nursery provision or school provision.
- Increase the existing Outreach service across Suffolk
- Close two buildings that cannot be re-purposed as a Family Hub and are unsuitable for use as nursery or school provision.
- Retain and improve the existing service offer through Suffolk Libraries.

What is a Family Hub?

Family Hubs will be at the heart of the service going forward and will provide the location from where services are delivered and coordinated. The proposal is to have at least one main Family Hub in each area of Suffolk and provide services from other community sites closer to families. A Family Hub offers a range of services to families for all children and young people aged 0-19 and carers, with a particular focus on supporting the most vulnerable. Part-time Family Hubs will be smaller sites incorporating a number of services e.g. Midwifery, Speech and Language, Child Health Clinics, and group work delivered by the council or its partners. Part-time Family Hubs allow staff to provide Outreach services at other venues in nearby rural communities. When the part-time Family Hub is not in use by Family Hub staff, the building can be used by partners to maximise usage.

What is Outreach?

One way to support the most vulnerable families is by bringing services closer to them through Outreach. Outreach refers to services that the council can deliver on a mobile basis, in locations where they are needed. This will support existing community activities such as parent and toddler groups and use some of the community venues such as community centres, village halls, and sports centres to deliver Outreach services.

Working with the community ensures delivery of the right services for families. This could be providing a Stay and Play group or offering tailored individual family support. Outreach provides help, information, advice and guidance to isolated families who, without it, might not otherwise have access to such services.

What is meant by Re-purposing?

Some existing Children's Centre buildings have been identified as potential sites to support the delivery of much needed additional nursery and school provision. These sites would be re-designated from their current use and provide primarily nursery services in addition to some Outreach services for families. Underpinning the review is the fact that no savings are being made as result of adopting this approach. Any potential savings made through re-purposing or closing current sites will be reinvested into the service to support the additional Outreach offer and support services managed through Family Hubs.

• **SUFFOLK'S ANGLO-SAXON PAST GETS £500,000 NATIONAL LOTTERY GRANT**

On 9 January, it was reported that a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant has been awarded to Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (SCCAS). The grant is to fund a large, community archaeological project to uncover the hidden archaeology in the Deben valley in south-east Suffolk. Rendlesham Revealed: Anglo-Saxon Life in South-East Suffolk will connect the unique stories of the princely burials of Sutton Hoo and the site of the royal palace at Rendlesham. This will put them into the context of the wider Anglo-Saxon communities and landscapes of which they were part.

Made possible by money raised by National Lottery players, the £517,300 grant will unlock at least a further £200,000 in match funding from local and national partners, universities and volunteers. This match funding includes smaller cash grants generously given by the Institute of Archaeology at University College London, the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History, The Sutton Hoo Society and Council of British Archaeology East. This project has also been made possible by the kind support of local landowners. Local people will be a vital part of this four-year community archaeology project. SCCAS and their partners will directly engage local residents, schools, young people and volunteers from south-east Suffolk and Ipswich. Supported through The National Lottery Heritage Fund, there will be a range of opportunities for local people to volunteer and be trained in on-site archaeological survey and excavation, as well as taking part in hands-on experimental archaeology events, specialist and family workshops, guided walks and exhibitions. These activities will take place in south-east Suffolk and Ipswich from summer 2020-2023.

For further information from my report or questions please contact me at:

stephen.burroughes@suffolk.gov.uk

Cllr Stephen Burroughes

County Councillor for the Framlingham Division, Suffolk County Council, Twitter @CllrStephenB