

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – MARCH 2018

Cllr Stephen Burroughes - Framlingham Division



• **CONSULTATION ON FUTURE OF LOWESTOFT RECORD OFFICE**

Suffolk County Council has announced that it will hold a public consultation over the future of the Record Office Service in Lowestoft. The storeroom in the current Record Office building is not sustainable to continue holding Lowestoft's archive material. Its basement location means that it is prone to flooding and damp hazards, at risk of mould growth and fire resistance is not up to the required standard. This, along with the general decline in visitors and the council's ongoing requirement to make savings in line with its objectives to fill the budget gap of £56m by 2021, means that changes need to be made to the service in Lowestoft.

The results of the formal consultation will be presented to Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Committee later in the year for a final decision to be made on the future service provision. For further details of the consultation process, visit www.suffolkarchives.co.uk

• **PROPOSAL TO CHANGE HOME TO SCHOOL TRAVEL**

On Wednesday 28 February 2018 the consultation to help find a long-term solution to providing affordable home to school transport closed. In Suffolk, £21 million of taxpayers' money is spent every year getting children to and from school. Suffolk County Council has already introduced a number of efficiency changes to the service saving around £2.6 million. Now, like many other councils across the country, the authority needs to consider making more significant changes across a number of areas, including home to school travel.

The consultation highlights the challenges faced with funding and asks residents for their thoughts on how we adapt to the changing education landscape in Suffolk as schools continue to become more independent, moving away from being historically under local authority control, with new powers to set their choice of admissions, adjust term dates and manage school travel plans.

The council's current school and post-16 travel policies go above legal requirements, the consultation seeks views on changing these policies, giving the opportunity to explore local solutions as well as three alternative options for children aged 5-16 and 16 plus.

Over 3500 people have already responded to the school and post-16 travel consultation surveys, over 151 people attended one of the consultation workshops and 36 people attended the 'Have your say' event where alternative solutions were presented. All of the feedback gathered will be carefully and thoroughly considered by Suffolk County Council's Cabinet in June 2018. www.suffolk.gov.uk/schooltravel.

• **SUFFOLK TO USE DRONES TO HELP MANAGE BLUE LIGHT SERVICE INCIDENTS**

On 15 February saw the official launch of the use of two Small Unmanned Surveillance Aircrafts in Suffolk. The technology, commonly referred to as drones have been developed and funded by Suffolk Resilience Forum for use across the county. As part of a multi-agency Air Support Unit, the drones will be used by Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, Suffolk Constabulary, Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Lowland Search and Rescue and Norfolk & Suffolk 4x4 Response.

The drones will provide a range of aerial surveillance options to support emergency services and voluntary organisations across a wide range of incidents including:

- large-scale open fires or complex structural fires
- urban area search and rescue
- major incident or disaster response

- investigative support
- hazardous materials response including Environmental Impact Assessments
- road traffic accidents
- significant multi-agency events
- missing persons searches
- pre-planned operations and risk information gathering

By improving the ability to see and understand what is happening from the air, the drones will **support** emergency services and voluntary organisations to inform the decisions they make when dealing with an incident. They will also help to reduce risks to the public and emergency service workers.

The drones and camera equipment cost around £42,500 and they are based at Woodbridge Fire and Police station, have 24/7 emergency response capability and can be used by 17 specially trained remote pilots.

The drones will provide important visual information which will be used alongside experienced operational commanders to complete the decision-making picture and help resolve incidents as quickly and safely as possible. The drones have already been used a number of times, most recently at the fire at Saxmundham train station to not only provide pictures of fire spreading and possible collapse in areas that may not have been possible for firefighters to access or see, but also to assist the joint investigation team to determine the location and possible cause of the fire.

- **MORE THAN 97% OF STUDENTS GET THEIR PREFERRED SECONDARY SCHOOL**

This year, Suffolk County Council received its highest number of applications from parents and carers indicating which secondary school they would prefer their child to be educated at from September 2018 in Year 7. The total was 7,447. Last year it was 7171. 91.61% of applicants received offers for their first preference school and 97.23% of applicants received an offer for one of their top three preferred schools. This percentage figure of 91.61% equates to a total of 6822 pupils.

Families who applied online will be able to log on to the council's Online Service from today to see their school place offer, and will receive an email to confirm this offer. We will also send letters by second class post today (March 1), to all applicants, including those who made a paper application, to give more details about the next steps open to them.

With the current extreme weather, some letters may be delayed by a day or two as the postal service works hard to maintain their services and schedules in this cold spell. Any parents or carers with children born between 1 September 2006 and 31 August 2007 and who have not yet applied for a school place should make an application immediately by downloading the CAF1 application form from the council's website: www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions

For further information, such as how to view your offer online, and for guidance on what to do if you have not received your preferred offer, please read our [School admissions FAQ page](#).

- **ALIGNMENTS OF IPSWICH'S UPPER ORWELL CROSSINGS UNVEILED**

The preferred alignments of Ipswich's Upper Orwell Crossings have been announced today by Suffolk County Council.

The main crossing is proposed to connect to the existing highway at the Rapier Street roundabout on Wherstead Rd, west of the river, and at a new junction, north of Cliff Lane on Holywells Road, east of the river. The bridge crosses the river at an angle and incorporates an opening section over the navigation channel.

The second crossing, will provide a new vehicular link to the Wet Dock Island site and is proposed to be accessed from Felaw Street. The third crossing is a refurbishment of the existing swing bridge over the lock for

use by cyclists and pedestrians. These crossings will improve journey times through and around Ipswich, benefitting those that live and work in the town.

The images of the preferred alignments do not show details of the structure or any of the supporting piers, as the design of the crossings continues and will be announced ahead of the formal consultation later this year.

On March 6, the crossings' project team will be hosting a public information day in the ground floor foyer of Dance East. The event, which will run between 12noon and 7pm, is a drop-in event and will give members of the public the opportunity to meet the team and ask questions about the Upper Orwell Crossings.

The timeline for the crossings remains on track and it is anticipated construction of the crossings will begin in 2020 with completion scheduled for 2023. Ground investigation works are continuing, with samples being taken on land and in the riverbed.

Good progress is being made and the works in the River Orwell are likely to be finished ahead of schedule. The samples collected as part of this process are vital as it will affect the type and depth of foundations for the bridge and approach embankments. The team continues to work with affected landowners, businesses and a wide range of stakeholders to minimise impacts on those most located closest to the crossings and is very grateful for their cooperation to date.

Weekly updates on the ground investigations are being published and these, along with more information can be found at www.suffolk.gov.uk/upperorwellcrossings

- **COMMONWEALTH DAY MONDAY 12 MARCH**

As I am sure you are all aware this year is a special year for the Commonwealth and will be one the largest gathering of national leaders that UK has ever hosted. However, the Commonwealth is much more than a collection of Member States. In order to celebrate the Commonwealth, there are variety of events happening across the UK and it would be fantastic if the communities within Suffolk could get involved. If you are interested in hosting an event to celebrate the Commonwealth please visit the following site to find out more: www.chogm2018.co.uk

For further information or questions please contact me at: stephen.burroughes@suffolk.gov.uk

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