

**SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCILLOR’S REPORT – JULY 2021**

 ***Cllr Stephen Burroughes - Framlingham Division***

* **Independent review of Suffolk’s SEND services to be carried out**

It has been announced that a multi-agency team from Lincolnshire will carry out an independent review into SEND provision. This review will be carried out by a senior professional with no links to, or direct involvement with, Suffolk’s provision and will focus on the processes, communication protocols and family-facing elements of SEND services within Suffolk County Council. The SEND (special educational needs and disability) review will focus on the processes, communication protocols and family-facing elements of SEND services within Suffolk County Council. It will not look at specific cases or the provision given to specific children. The review will start next week and will be completed within six weeks. The report, with any recommendations, will be published on Suffolk County Council’s website, shared with those who contributed to it and also scrutinised, in public, by members of the council’s newly established Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee.

The review team from Lincolnshire will consist of two senior officers from Lincolnshire County Council, performance analysts and the chair of the county’s parent carer network. SEND services in Suffolk are delivered in partnership by Suffolk County Council, Suffolk’s NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups and education settings.  The review will look at:

* The effective flow of cases
* Communication with young people and families
* Processes for dealing with incoming enquiries from young people and families in a timely manner
* A focus on the family-facing elements of the service
* The allocation of provision and, where appropriate, placement in a timely way for children

In recent weeks, there have been calls from some parents and carers of children with SEND - known as the Campaign for Change (SEND Suffolk) - for a lawyer-led audit of the council’s compliance with the legal requirements set out for the service. Suffolk County Council has considered this request, but has decided not to move forward with it because:

1. It is the role of Ofsted to inspect all aspects of SEND provision, including those that would be included in such an audit. Ofsted and CQC has already made two monitoring visits to Suffolk and have identified areas of progress as well as areas of improvement
2. A new national SEND inspection framework is being launched, meaning further detailed inspections will take place
3. The county council already has an internal and external auditing process for Education, Health and Care Plans
4. There is an established complaints procedure for parents and carers who feel that the service they are receiving is not appropriate or sufficient

Suffolk County Council is eager to work collaboratively and productively with the Campaign for Change group, and parents and carers not involved or represented by the group, to make improvements in SEND services. In Suffolk nearly 18,000 young people are supported in some way through local SEND services, including 5,900 with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) or those receiving support in education settings. Demand has grown very significantly. Prior to the 2014 national SEND reforms, Suffolk held approximately 3,000 statements of SEND.

* **Suffolk County Council launches the new Cassius service**

On June 1st, Suffolk County Council launched the new Cassius service, partnering with Alcove, Rethink Partners and Provide CIC to deliver their innovative care technology service to people in Suffolk over the next 3 years. From July, the Cassius service will give our social work practitioners, occupational therapists and other front line professionals, new ways to support people to live better and independent lives. Initially the service will launch with a high impact, targeted range of technology that will continue to grow into the full Cassius collection. This means that the technology can be customised to meet people’s needs and to address individual challenges which will help them live independently at home for longer.

Cassius will focus on technology that promotes independence and provides monitoring and assessment in the first instance, but that is data driven to provide impactful insights into people’s needs – this will help inform more targeted care and support where it is needed, and give people, loved ones and care providers peace of mind, real-time information and back-up support if it is needed. In the coming months, this will develop into a wider, more integrated package of technology that will support additional needs and opportunities.

* **Suffolk County Council launches consultation on potential housing development**

It was announced on June 11th that as part of its priority to deliver more sustainable housing in Suffolk, the council is looking for people’s views of a potential new housing development. Suffolk County Council is intending to submit a planning application for a residential development on land it owns to the east of Bramford Road. Development on land owned by the county council, is one of the council’s priorities and is part of the council’s wider housing approach to help provide new housing in Suffolk. The current proposals set out a development of up to 120 highly sustainable homes, surrounded by significant green space, accessed from Bramford Road.

* The proposals for the development include:
* Low carbon heating via heat pumps.
* Local energy generation through solar panels.
* Grey water recycling, where water used in items such as sinks, dishwashers, showers, and baths is cleaned and returned for use in toilets or washing machines.
* A focus on increased biodiversity and increasing green spaces.
*  **Just one jab is half a job – keep testing and get second vaccination**

Suffolk residents are being encouraged to jab, test, protect the rest as lockdown eases. Health bosses in Suffolk are urging people waiting for their second COVID-19 vaccination to take regular tests to help curb the spread of the virus. People are being asked to test twice a week and to take their vaccine as soon as it is offered to them. Of the Suffolk population of 761,350, a total of 629,889 are eligible to receive the vaccine.

NHS vaccination figures show that of those eligible, 62% (393,477) have had two doses, but 38% (236,412) have only had one dose - or no vaccine at all. That figure does not even include children who are not eligible for a vaccine but can - and do - get infected. This means that almost four in ten people in Suffolk have had either one or no jabs at all and therefore risk catching the virus or passing it on to other people.

The Delta variant of the virus is now the most prevalent in the UK and the concern for health bosses is that although the vaccine is highly effective - more than 80% after two doses – one dose is only around 33% effective. (2)

The figures do not record how many eligible people have refused a vaccine, but Stuart Keeble, Director of Public Health for Suffolk, said they showed the importance of getting both vaccinations when offered and testing regularly to break its spread.

* **Suffolk County Council launches Ipswich’s first Park & Cycle initiative**

On June 15th it was announced that commuters are now welcome to park at Martlesham Park & Ride site for FREE and cycle into Ipswich Town Centre. Working in partnership with First Eastern Counties, the Park & Ride site has put in place a [**cycle map**](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/News-Articles/Park-Cycle-Martlesham-map-June-2021.png) which details three dedicated routes into the centre of Ipswich, and there is a route suitable for every ability:

* Green route – direct route into the town centre. 29 mins – 8.5km / 5.3 miles
* Yellow route – direct /low traffic route into the town centre - 32 mins – 9.3km / 5.8 miles
* Blue route – low traffic route into the town centre - 39 mins – 11km / 6.8 miles

As part of the scheme, there is also available for use Sheffield bike stands, and 24hr security patrols complemented by CCTV coverage for bikes left over night. To find out more details visit [**www.suffolkonboard.com/parkandcycle**](http://www.suffolkonboard.com/parkandcycle) and follow @suffolkonboard on Twitter.

* **Refurbishment of Bailey Bridge set to begin**

On June 17th it was announced that the bailey bridge crossing the River Blyth and connecting Southwold with Walberswick is set to close on Friday 2 July 2021 to enable vital refurbishment works. Since Suffolk County Council and its local elected members committed funds to undertake this major refurbishment, concerted efforts have been made to engage with key stakeholders and identify ways of mitigating the impact this closure will have locally. It has been fully recognised that the closure of this bridge at a time where lockdown is easing will present a challenge to local residents, businesses and visitors to the town. However the safety of those using the bridge has to be the priority. In light of the impact that this closure could have on local businesses and those using the bridge for commuting purposes, a number of mitigation measures have been explored to take place during the closure. These include:

* A support package of £5k per month, for the programmed duration of the works, for local residents directly impacted by the closure of the bridge – to be administered by the local councils
* Longer working hours and a longer working week so the work can be completed as quickly as possible – shortening the programme of work from 16 weeks to 12 weeks
* Temporary traffic measures in Walberswick for the duration of the work to better support those travelling into the area.

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

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