

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – NOVEMBER 2022



Cllr Stephen Burroughes - Framlingham Division

- **£7.8M REDEVELOPMENT OF FOXHALL RECYCLING CENTRE TO BEGIN**

It was announced on October 4th that work on a major expansion of the Foxhall Recycling Centre near Ipswich is set to begin. RG Carter Ltd has been appointed by Suffolk County Council as contractor for the £7.8 million project, with work scheduled to start on October 17. The new design will increase capacity for cars on site, reduce queuing and improve access from Foxhall Road, and provide greater capacity to meet future growth. The site will have a raised level construction, giving better access to the containers for users without the need for stairs. Containers can also be emptied without the need to close the site.

The funding includes £794,414 from East Suffolk Council through the Community Infrastructure Levy collected from new housing developments in the East Suffolk area. Work is scheduled to complete in early 2024 and the site will remain open to the public during construction. RG Carter will work alongside Concertus Design and Property Consultants on the scheme.

The project will be conducted in phases to keep the centre operational throughout the build, but at certain times this may result in fewer booking slots being available to the public. The Re-use shop will change location in the new layout and will need to be closed for a period early next year to allow this to take place.

The project will also see the installation of a feeder lane from Foxhall Road, making access into the site safer. Of the 11 recycling centres around the county Foxhall accounts for 19% of recycling and waste, collecting more than 12,500 tonnes a year.

- **SUFFOLK ROADS SAFE PARTNERSHIP ROLLS OUT ANPR DEVICES TO TARGET SPEEDING MOTORISTS**

This innovative project is part of the Suffolk Roadsafe Partnership between Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Constabulary thanks to a £400,000 grant from the council's 2020 fund. Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) will be rotated around sites where there is a problem with speeding or rat-running on roads with a 20mph or 30mph speed limit. There are ten of these devices and they work like conventional SIDs by displaying the speeds of drivers to them as they approach, encouraging them to slow down. However, the difference is that if a driver continues to ignore the speed limit the ANPR camera will take a picture of them and record the date, time, speed, vehicle registration and a photo of the vehicle. In certain cases, persistent offenders will be reported to Suffolk Constabulary and, while no one will be prosecuted as a direct result of the devices, they may be visited by a police officer who will speak to them about their driving. The information shared with the police will also help them decide on where speed enforcement vans should be deployed going forward. It is no exaggeration to say that speeding is one of the biggest areas of complaint that we as councillors receive, and it is understandable why.

The £400,000 for the ANPR SIDS project was from the Suffolk 2020 Fund, a £3 million fund set up for investment in emerging policy priorities.

Work on setting up and enabling this, and other projects, began in early 2021 and it is now that we are starting to see the fruits of those labours, a range of new community projects that will benefit people for years to come.

- **AIR QUALITY SURVEY LAUNCHED IN IPSWICH**

On October 6th, Suffolk County Council Public Health launched an Air Quality survey in the Ipswich area to help inform future intervention in the town. The survey aims to measure current levels of understanding about air quality and current work going on in this area to mitigate its impact, in order to inform future approaches

to improve air quality in the town. The survey was supported by an air quality event held on Ipswich Cornhill on Monday 24 October between 11am and 3pm.

This event was held in conjunction with local partners, Ipswich Borough Council, the University of Suffolk, the NHS and Healthwatch Suffolk, and aimed to raise awareness of the effects of poor air quality on health and wellbeing, promote work that is currently going on to mitigate those effects and engage with residents about what approaches could be explored to tackle this important health issue. To find out more about Air Quality in Suffolk and to complete the survey, please visit [Suffolk Air Quality | Healthy Suffolk](#).

- **COST OF LIVING TO IMPACT COUNCIL'S BUDGET**

Suffolk County Council is keen to hear from Suffolk residents, businesses and local communities, as it decides its budget for next year. An online survey has been launched, and a number of focus groups will be held, for you to have your say on the services which are important to you. A summary of your responses will be included in the report considered by the council when agreeing the budget in February 2023. The budget setting process includes your thoughts, advice from council officers, elected members from political groups, businesses and partners in health and other public service organisations across Suffolk. The two main ways in which the council can increase its budget, are an increase in the money it receives from Government, and by increasing its share of council tax bills.

Last year, Suffolk County Council increased its overall share of council tax by 2.99%, the equivalent of 80p per week for a Band D property. It continues to lobby central government, alongside many local authorities, to evidence the need for more funding for local services.

With careful financial planning and management, the council has saved hundreds of millions of pounds in recent years. This has been achieved through transformation programs which have made the organisation leaner, whilst still protecting many services from large-scale reductions. It also committed £12.8m to the decarbonisation of its estate, which has already achieved impressive results. One of the council's main operational buildings has seen a year-on-year reduction in gas consumption by 84%, meaning financial and carbon savings. A proposed budget will be presented at a Cabinet meeting in January 2023 and the final budget will be discussed at Full Council in February 2023. The online survey is open throughout October and November, and focus groups are being organised with local community groups and for members of the public. Details of these will be shared on the council's website and social media channels in due course.

- **NEXT ROUND OF NEW SEND PLACES AGREED BY CABINET**

On October 11th the Council's Cabinet agreed a new wave of funding to continue its programme to provide places for children and young people with SEND. The £3million agreement marks the start of Phase 3 of the Capital Programme to create three additional specialist units providing 42 additional places for students with special educational needs and disabilities. This follows Phase 1 of the programme which created 825 new places across Suffolk and Phase 2, which was signed off in June 2022, and will create up to 73 new places.

So far, £45million has been allocated by Suffolk County Council to deliver the new places for Phase 1 and Phase 2 - £15million of which has been provided by the Department for Education.

In addition, Cabinet also agreed to support the Department for Education's High Needs Provision Capital Funding (HNPCF) for 2023/24 of £7million to be spent on the development of units attached to mainstream schools to support students with social, emotional and mental health problems and speech, language and communication needs. This will create up to 168 new spaces, and is an addition to previous funding agreed from the Department for Education in 2022/23 for up to 78 new places.

The third item signed off by cabinet is support for the application for funding for two free schools from the Department for Education. One of these will be in east Suffolk and support children with severe learning difficulties and the second will be built in Sudbury for those with autistic spectrum disorder and complex social,

emotional and mental health problems. If the bids are successful, both schools will teach children and young people from across Suffolk.

In total, Suffolk will deliver up to 1,317 new places for children and young people with SEND by 2025/26.

The next step for Phase 3 is for schools across Suffolk to express an interest in having a specialist unit and, following these expressions of interest, the most suitable sites will be chosen. This programme for improved provision is informed by the SEND Sufficiency Plan 2022-25.

• **MORE SUFFOLK RESIDENTS TO BENEFIT FROM DIGITAL SERVICES AND THRIVE ONLINE**

Suffolk County Council's Cabinet has approved a suite of digital inclusion recommendations aimed at helping people get online. Following a Policy Development Panel (PDP) review of what more could be done to remove barriers to accessing services online, and increase levels of digital inclusion in the county, the following recommendations were approved to go ahead:

- Creation of a Digital Inclusion Fund, aimed at funding community projects that support increased digital inclusion
- Adoption of the Digital Health and Care Guiding Principles developed by Healthwatch Suffolk, in co-production with service users, to underpin the Council's own development of online services
- Commitment of up to £77k to the community 'Digital Champions' initiative and training offer, enabling its expansion across the county and extending the initiative until October 2023
- Further development of the council's pioneering approach to digital health and care through its Cassius service.

These approved recommendations will provide the blueprint for a Digital Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan which will span the next three years; setting out to have a positive impact on those who are missing out on the benefits of being online, in areas such as job prospects, finances, learning opportunities, health, and wellbeing. Helping people to become digitally included will, in turn, bring wider social benefits.

The County Council and its partners want Suffolk to be a place where residents understand the benefits of being online, are aware of opportunities, feel safe and confident online and are supported to develop their skills and thrive in an increasingly digital world.

• **LAUNCH OF 'CHILDHOOD' – SHORT FILM TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE NEED FOR FOSTER CARERS**

In a ground-breaking national collaboration, 56 Local Authorities across England have worked together to create a short film to raise awareness of fostering. It is aimed at finding more people who may be interested in becoming foster carers and providing nurturing, positive homes for children and young people across the country who need them. The new film, simply called 'Childhood', highlights the impact of neglect on children, particularly brothers and sisters who may be left at times to try and care for each other. It shows the journey of 'Sophie' and 'Charlie' who are in a very difficult home situation where their needs are not being met, to being nurtured and supported through foster care to attend school and be able to enjoy their hobbies and interests. In other words, have a childhood. Watch the short film on YouTube.

Councillor Stephen Burroughes, Deputy Cabinet Member for Fostering and Adoption, said:

"Children in need of foster carers are some of the most vulnerable members of our society and helping them grow into successful, confident and resilient young adults can be hugely rewarding.

"It's really important to get more people talking about foster care and I would encourage Suffolk residents to look at their own lives to consider whether they have the patience, compassion and the spare room required to provide a child with the secure home life they need."

The aim is that this film will be shared on all 56 participating council's social media and other platforms, right across the country, reaching many more people and leading them to consider whether the rewarding role of fostering could be an option for them.

If you think you might be interested or know someone who might be interested in becoming a foster carer, then please don't hesitate to get in touch on 01473 264800 or alternatively visit our the Fostering page on our website for more information.

- **NEW FEN BRIDGE OVER RIVER STOUR**

The newly installed replacement Fen Bridge, which crosses over the River Stour and links Dedham and East Bergholt has been opened to the public. Following the closure and subsequent removal of the previous wooden arch bridge, a great deal of activity took place to design, fabricate and install its replacement. The 13-tonne, 23.7 metre-long bridge was lifted into place late September. Works then took place to fix the bridge to the supports, modify the existing supports to suit the new bridge dimensions, and reconstruct the steps on the approaches. Comprised of a pair of painted arched steel beams supporting Ekki hardwood decking and parapets, the bridge was prefabricated off-site, delivered to site in one piece and lifted into position using a large mobile crane. The design life of the new bridge is 120 years and replaces the former timber beam bridge which was erected in 1985.

The process for replacing the bridge not only involved the design and fabrication, but also how the bridge would be transported to site, the land requirements needed and obtaining environment consents to work over the water course. This included constructing and then removing approximately one kilometre of temporary access track, including four temporary bridges crossing buried services from Dedham Road across the meadows to the bridge site to provide access for the large mobile crane and delivery of the new bridge.

- **FIRST SECTION OF GULL WING BRIDGE IN LOWESTOFT PLACED OVER EAST SUFFOLK RAILWAY LINE**

The first major steel section of the Gull Wing bridge in Lowestoft has been moved into its final position over the East Suffolk railway line. This is following a successful weekend-long track possession and a complex engineering operation. Leading civil engineering and building contractor Farrans is constructing the bridge for Suffolk County Council. The North Approach Viaduct (NAV1) section arrived at the construction site on Lake Lothing on Tuesday March 1 on a barge following a 32-hour crossing from Victor Buyck Steel Construction in Ghent in Belgium. It weighed 380 tonnes on delivery. Since then, the bridge has had a reinforced concrete deck and parapets added to it and in its move to its final position it weighed close to 1,450 tonnes.

The operation began at midnight on Friday evening and concluded on Monday at 5am when the line was returned to Network Rail. NAV1 was moved using self-propelled modular transporters (SPMTs), multi-axle hydraulic units which can be added together depending on the length of the load.

Sixteen individual axles in two rows of two maneuvered the section into its final position.

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

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