

## SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – NOVEMBER 2021



### *Cllr Stephen Burroughes - Framlingham Division*

#### • EXTRA COVID-19 SUPPORT HEADING TO SUFFOLK

Public health bosses in Suffolk have welcomed the Government's commitment to provide extra resources to help fight COVID-19 in the county. It comes as pressure on the county's hospitals is reaching critical levels due to more people needing treatment - and some of the highest rates of infection in the country.

A request for additional support was submitted earlier this week by Public Health Suffolk - on behalf of public sector partners - and is intended to secure in additional support, funding and resources to help the NHS avoid unsustainable pressure. The additional support will include:

- Support for the vaccination efforts by extending opening hours and creating pop up vaccination clinic within our communities
- Help to coordinate on the ground door knocking campaigns
- Help to reduce transmission in schools with increased testing and additional temporary powers
- Funding for COVID-19 awareness raising communications and advertising.

From Monday 1 November, Suffolk will therefore become an 'enhanced response area' (ERA) for up to five weeks. This approach has already been used in other parts of the country to help reduce the rate of COVID-19 transmission within the community and is also being taken in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough at the same time. To help reduce the spread, residents in Suffolk are now being encouraged to:

- Get fully vaccinated and your booster when it's due
- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water
- Always wear a face covering in crowded areas
- Ventilate indoor spaces
- Get tested regularly and stay at home if you feel unwell

It's the latest move to slow the spread of virus which has made a particular impact among Suffolk's school age children and, consequently, their parents and grandparents. Earlier this month, additional measures, including siblings of children with COVID self-isolating, restrictions on visits to schools and older children and adults wearing face masks, were reintroduced. The face mask policy starts on Monday 1 November.

Any such support does not mean any additional restrictions on people's movements or actions. It is not a lockdown or like the tiering system that was trialled in England in 2020. Instead, it will boost the county's ability to raise awareness, tackle outbreaks and encourage people to get vaccinated.

#### • CABINET TO STUDY £50 MILLION PLAN TO BOOST SUFFOLK BUS SERVICES

On October 7<sup>th</sup> it was announced that wider coverage, cheaper fares, improved ticketing, and better evening and weekend services are among proposals forming part of a £50 million plan.

Subject to approval by the Suffolk County Council Cabinet, the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) will be submitted to the Government by the end of the month. Following on from the submission of the BSIP, the council, bus operators and other stakeholders will be working together to establish a countywide Enhanced Partnership. This will enable the BSIP proposals to be delivered, building on experience gained from the existing Ipswich Quality Bus Partnership.

The funding bid is being made to the government's £3 billion fund under its Bus Back Better national bus strategy for England.

Suffolk County Council will be asking for a minimum of £50m over three years - £15m each for the first two years and £20m for the third.

**A report to Cabinet members said:**

“The Bus Back Better National Bus Strategy provides a real opportunity to be ambitious in delivering a bus service for Suffolk that will support sustainable transport and the Council’s carbon reduction ambitions.”

Other proposed features include:

- Reviewing service frequency on Suffolk’s key corridors, including evenings and weekend services
- Simplified services - including regular timetabled buses and 'demand-responsive' services
- Expanding the experimental Katch electric demand-responsive bus, which is currently being piloted between Framlingham and Campsea Ashe for Wickham Market station to other rural areas
- Identify and implement bus priority opportunities and changes to parking on key corridors, with particular focus on the ‘last mile’ where buses are delayed by congestion approaching key destinations
- Lower fares for those aged up to 25
- Contactless touch-on and touch-off ticketing and daily fare caps
- Multi-operator ticketing o Expanding rail and bus ticket options (PlusBus)
- Develop existing park and ride sites as mobility hubs and identify new ones to serve rural areas or new development sites o Explore merging Ipswich's two bus stations into one main hub
- [Bus Back Better strategy for England](#) (GOV.UK)

• **NEW DISCOVERIES OF SUFFOLK’S ANGLO-SAXON PAST UNEARTHED IN THE DEBEN VALLEY**

It was announced on October 11<sup>th</sup> that archaeologists had uncovered evidence of settlement and community 1,400 years ago at the time of the earliest East Anglian kings.

Archaeological excavation near Rendlesham is adding to Suffolk’s rich history, with archaeologists uncovering evidence of settlement and community 1,400 years ago at the time of the earliest East Anglian kings. The discoveries have come as part of the community archaeology project Rendlesham Revealed: Anglo-Saxon Life in South-East Suffolk, run by Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service and funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, who awarded a grant of £517,300 for the four-year project.

Summer 2021 saw the first season of archaeological excavation, which uncovered the remains of buildings and pits over a wide area indicating an extensive settlement whose inhabitants were engaged in farming and craft working. Evidence that helps build up a picture of everyday life over 14 centuries ago includes:

- bones from butchered cattle, sheep and pigs, indicating the types of livestock that were kept and the meat that was eaten
- items associated with spinning and weaving, including spindle whorls and loomweights
- melted metal fragments and slag which indicate iron smithing and the manufacture of copper-alloy objects
- pottery vessels for cooking and storage
- items of dress, including a copper-alloy brooch and buckle

Soil samples were also taken which will give evidence of crop farming and the local environment of the past.

Discoveries of other periods of history were also made:

- field boundary ditches and pits pointing to agriculture and activity in the Bronze Age
- a settlement enclosure of the Iron Age
- a First World War training trench, probably dug by a battalion of the Territorial Force in 1914 or early 1915

The excavation was undertaken by local volunteers under the guidance of a small expert team co-ordinated by Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service and staff from the Suffolk Office of Cotswold Archaeology.

More than 150 volunteers from the local community contributed to the summer's fieldwork, including from Suffolk Family Carers, Suffolk Mind and the local Rendlesham and Eyke primary schools.

The next season of archaeological fieldwork will take place in Summer 2022 and local people will again be able to sign up and volunteer. To find out more about the Rendlesham Revealed project visit [heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/rendlesham](https://heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/rendlesham)

- **MPS FROM NORFOLK, SUFFOLK AND ESSEX AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS, UNITE TO PROTECT THE COUNTRYSIDE AND COMMUNITIES FROM THE WORST IMPACTS OF NEW PYLONS AND CABLES**

It was announced on October 12<sup>th</sup> that the Off Shore Electricity Grid Task Force (OffSET) has been set up to review and respond to the Government's Offshore Network Transmission Review (OTNR).

A new group of MPs from across the region, under the chairmanship of Sir Bernard Jenkin, and including County Councillors from the region, has been set up to ensure that the emerging proposals of the Government's Offshore Network Transmission Review (OTNR), and proposals to change the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Planning regime, are effectively scrutinised.

The Off Shore Electricity Grid Task Force (OffSET) supports the government's commitment to meet the target of Net Zero by 2050, and the aspiration to deliver 40GW of Offshore Wind, by 2030. However, this will result in a succession of electricity generation and connection projects in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex, over the coming decades, which will have significant impacts on the environment and communities of the region.

The group believes that these ambitions and targets cannot be met, on an "at any cost" basis. Therefore, the further development of the onshore transmission system, and the connection of offshore wind farms, and interconnectors, will require a new deal for communities and the environment. It remains a key priority that we speed up the Government's timetable to transition to the offshore transmission system, in order to protect our communities from the damaging effects of multiple cable corridors.

As well as scrutinising and responding to new policies and initiatives, the group will be a contact point for Ministers and senior officials, as well as for the National Grid, Crown Estate, and Ofgem, to engage with Regional Leaders. The group will also be inviting key stakeholders and community groups to meet with them, to better understand the impacts, and opportunities, of Net Zero transmission and generation infrastructure in the region.

- **SUFFOLK BUSINESSES WORK HARD TO ENSURE WE ACHIEVE NET ZERO CARBON BY 2030.**

Creating the Greenest County Awards 2021 sponsors show how they are making a difference. Suffolk facilities management company Vertas, Opus People Solutions and design and property consultants Concertus are coming together to sponsor Suffolk's Creating the Greenest County Awards, taking place on 12 November at The Hold in Ipswich.

As we approach the United Nations COP26 event in November, all three companies are working hard to improve their environmental credentials and help Suffolk move towards its net zero carbon 2030 target.

Vertas has committed to minimising the impact of its operations on the environment, particularly emissions to air, land and water, and continually improving its environmental performance. Driving positive change through its supply chain has eliminated the use of single use plastic cutlery throughout its sites, instead using wooden alternatives, removing over 1,000,000 plastic items a year.

Vertas has also focused on eliminating the waste it produces, over the last 12 months it has collected 18,720 litres of cooking oil to turn into biodiesel and recycled 500,000 kilos of waste paper back into paper products, which is the equivalent of saving 8,500 trees.

Opus has recently achieved ISO14001 certification for environmental management, offering green travel discounts, a Cycle 2 Work scheme and ensuring printed materials are made from recyclable/sustainable materials and come from environmentally responsible suppliers to encourage positive change.

Concertus is passionate about using sustainable design to reduce its carbon footprint whilst delivering the best engineered solutions for the built environment. Adopting the approach of Fabric First, it is committed to

recommend environmentally friendly and sustainable materials, and is currently delivering two Passivhaus certified care homes – Hockliffe Road (one of the first registered Passivhaus care homes in the UK) and Steppingley Road (the largest registered Passivhaus care provision in the UK).

#### • **SUFFOLK CONTINUES TO CREATE THE GREENEST COUNTY WITH £150,000 FOR NEW TREES**

It was announced on October 15<sup>th</sup> that a joint bid by a number of Suffolk's authorities has secured funding from the Forestry Commission to plant around 3,000 trees this coming planting season.

Suffolk County Council submitted the bid on behalf of itself, Ipswich Borough Council, Babergh District Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and West Suffolk District Council. The successful bid will see £149,712.55 come into the county for new trees, from the Local Authority Treescapes Fund. The fund targets treescapes that have been neglected or suffered damage in the past, including disused and vacant community spaces and those affected by tree diseases such as ash dieback. The locations are chosen where they are likely to be experienced directly by people, as well as on improving the age structure of trees in all the project areas.

One of the interesting methods being adopted to re-establish woodland as part of this project, is the Miyawaki method. It is regarded as one of the most effective tree planting methods for creating cover quickly on neglected land, or land that has previously been used for construction or agriculture. It uses natural principles, such as using trees already native to the area and replicating natural regeneration processes, and is particularly effective in the urban environment.

The planting will also contribute to Suffolk's commitment to support the Queen's Green Canopy project. Suffolk is working towards linking up existing woodland with the planting of new trees and hedges to connect communities and encourage natural corridors for biodiversity, aiming to plant a tree for every resident.

#### • **FACE MASKS BACK AS ADDITIONAL MEASURES BROUGHT IN TO REDUCE COVID-19 TRANSMISSION IN SUFFOLK SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION SETTINGS**

From October 20<sup>th</sup> face masks and restrictions on visitors were reintroduced to Suffolk schools to help slow the current rate of transmission in education settings. SCC are advising that the following measures be implemented from the 1 November 2021.

- **Staff** in all education settings (primary, secondary, and higher education) to wear face coverings in communal areas outside of the classroom, unless exempt for medical reasons.
- **Students** in all secondary and higher education settings to wear face coverings in communal areas outside of the classroom, unless exempt for medical reasons.
- All education settings to restrict entry to their site to essential visitors only.
- Any visitors to wear a face covering while on-site, this includes adults collecting children in the playground.

On October 6, SCC introduced a new sibling policy, which advised children and young people aged between 4 and 18 years to stay at home when a sibling they live with tests positive for COVID-19. This applies to schools with an outbreak of Covid-19 and is still in place.

The number of cases within children and young people aged 10-14 has increased by almost 15% and cases amongst 15–19-year-olds has increased by 32% in the past week of data. This means that in October alone school children in Suffolk have lost 26,264 days of education due to positive cases of Covid-19. There has also been an increase in cases amongst other age ranges across Suffolk, which may be due in part, to family transmission. These measures will be reviewed during the week commencing Monday 15 November 2021.

#### • **500<sup>TH</sup> INDEPENDENT JOURNEY MADE BY YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS WITH SEND**

It was announced on October 22<sup>nd</sup> that students with special educational needs and disabilities have completed more than 500 journeys on public transport after taking part in travel training. The travel training helps build self-esteem and confidence by supporting young people and adults to use all forms of public transport, or walking routes. Trainers work one-to-one with the students to enable them to travel to their place of education or for work. Commissioned by Suffolk County Council in 2015, the Independent Travel

Training Service is delivered by Essex County Council and has helped more than 500 students across the county.

- **LORRY ROUTE PLAN REVIEW IN SUFFOLK**

The technical and community led review of lorry routes that considers changes to the highway network since the plan was updated in 2011. The technical and community led review of lorry routes that considers changes to the highway network since the plan was updated in 2011. This includes:

- new strategic roads
- new Lorry Watch areas
- Air Quality Management Areas in Suffolk

Councillor Richard Smith MVO, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Transport Strategy and Waste responsible for the ongoing review of the county's Lorry Route Plan. The review will involve two parts and will update and validate the County Council's existing lorry route network plan

The technical review is currently taking place. It'll look at a range of evidence including:

- Collision records and traffic data
- Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) for weight, width and height restrictions
- The resilient road network and its strategic road network diversions as well as GPS data – showing the origin and destination of trips, routes taken and the locations of building strikes
- Public complaints
- Data from Lorry Watch schemes

#### Community led review

The community led review will run from **22 October 2021** to **17 December 2021**.

Suffolk County Council is seeking the views of Parish and Town Councils about their local issues and intelligence. Information will be gathered by a survey sent to all of Suffolk's Parish and Town Councils and their County Councillor will then be asked to endorse the key issues for their area. Each local council will be limited to three issues within their community to ensure fair and equal representation across the county.

The review will be completed in Spring **2022** where the County Council plan to publish a new interactive Lorry Route map. For more information click here: [Lorry Route Plan review in Suffolk | Suffolk County Council](#)

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

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